

Party Outcomes in Hybrid Regimes in the Western Balkans and Beyond

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Abstract

Most political parties that had been ruling in hybrid regimes lost power as these regimes ceased to exist i.e. democratized. Yet, some of these parties remained politically dominant notwithstanding the regime change. This PhD thesis aims to offer a plausible explanation of their different political fates (here defined as *party outcomes*). Its main focus is on the incumbent parties in hybrid regimes that existed in Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro during the last decade of the 20th century. In addition, the thesis looks at a larger population of similar cases with the ambition to contribute to a better general understanding of the diverging party outcomes.

The thesis puts forward a theoretically innovative model explaining the party outcomes, founded upon the two assumptions: (1) the diverging fates of dominant parties in hybrid regimes are determined by these parties' (lack of) institutionalization; (2) (the lack of) their institutionalization is determined by the salience of the national question in the process of political mobilization leading to the regime establishment. Process tracing method is employed to test the presence in the three cases under observation of the thus constructed causal mechanism linking the hypothesized conditions (*nationalist mobilization* and *the lack of party institutionalization*) and party outcome (*the loss of power*). The theoretical relevance of the results of the analysis, supported by numerous causal process observations (including, among others, 27 in-depth interviews), is subsequently assessed within a broader empirical domain.

Without eliminating the possibility of alternative explanations, albeit challenging some of the most relevant findings of the related literature, the thesis finds the empirical validity of the research model strongly corroborated by the aforementioned three cases. At the same time, the model is found to be applicable to a number of cases beyond the established empirical framework.

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I dedicate this thesis to her.

Declaration

I hereby declare that no parts of this thesis have been accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions. This thesis contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

Ivan Vuković,

1 May 2014

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List of abbreviations

ADEMA – Alliance for Democracy in Mali

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

DEPOS – Democratic Movement of Serbia

DPP – Democratic Progressive Party (Taiwan)

DPS – Democratic Party of Socialists (Montenegro)

DS – Democratic Party (Serbia)

DSS – Democratic Party of Serbia

FNRJ – Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia

FSLN – Sandinista National Liberation Front (Nicaragua)

FSN – National Salvation Front (Romania)

HDS – Croatian Democratic Party

HDZ – Croatian Democratic Union

HPSS – Croatian People's Peasant Party

HRSS – Croatian Republican Peasants' Party

HSLS – Croatian Social Liberal Party

HSS – Croatian Peasant Party

HTV – Croatian Television

HZDS – Movement for Democratic Slovakia

ICG – International Crisis Group

IMF – International Monetary Fund

JNA – Yugoslav People's Army

JUL – Yugoslav United Left (Serbia)

KMT - Kuomintang

KNS – Coalition of People's Accord

KPH – Communist Party of Croatia

KPJ – Communist Party of Yugoslavia

KSHS – Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes

LSCG – Liberal Alliance of Montenegro

MASPOK – Nationalist political movement in Croatia active in 1970-1971

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDC – National Democratic Congress (Ghana)

NDH – Independent State of Croatia

NDI – National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (United States)

NGO – nongovernmental organization

NS – People's Party (Montenegro)

OSCE/ODIHR – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

PDS – Senegalese Democratic Party

PDSR – Party of Social Democracy (Romania)

PNC – People's National Congress (Guyana)

PNDC – Provisional National Defense Council (Ghana)

PPP – People's Progressive Party (Guyana)

PRI – Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico)

PRSC – Social Christian Reformist Party (the Dominican Republic)

PS – Socialist Party (Senegal)

RTCG – Radio Television of Montenegro

RTS – Radio Television of Serbia

SANU – Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

SDP – Social Democratic Party (Croatia)

SDPCG – Social Democratic Party of Montenegro

SDS – Serb Democratic Party (Croatia)

SDSM – Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

SFRJ – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SKCG – League of Communists of Montenegro

SKH – League of Communists of Croatia

SKJ – League of Communists of Yugoslavia

SKS – League of Communists of Serbia

SPO – Serbian Renewal Movement

SPS – Socialist Party of Serbia

SRJ – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SRS – Serbian Radical Party

UDBA – Yugoslav State Security Administration (Secret Police)

UJDI – Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VMRO-DPMNE – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity

WWII – Second World War

ZAVNOH – State Anti-Fascist Council for National Liberation of Croatia

INTRODUCTION

The global wave of political transitions from authoritarianism toward the end of the preceding century has brought democratization to a significantly smaller number of countries than originally anticipated by most scholars (Carothers, 2002). At the same time, political regimes characterized by the combination of (formal) democratic and (substantial) authoritarian elements began to flourish worldwide. Labeled 'hybrid' (Karl, 1995) due to the specific structural arrangement, these regimes soon became 'the new stars in the constellation of nondemocratic governance' (Schedler, 2010: 69). As a part of the process of their proliferation, originating from the crisis of the Yugoslav authoritarian political system in the late 1980s, such regimes emerged in Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro. Democratic political institutions, including multiparty electoral competition, were formally established in the three states. In essence, however, the genuine change of character of their political systems did not take place. The incumbents' extraction of the state resources, political control of the media, repression against political opponents, and, as a consequence, the lack of free and fair elections, marked the first phase of their post-communist political transition.

During this period, the playing field for political parties in Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro was heavily skewed in favor of the ruling ones. The resultant 'hyper-incumbent advantage' (Greene, 2007) of the Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije* - SPS), the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* - HDZ), and the Democratic Party of Socialists (*Demokratska partija socijalista* - DPS) over political competitors was to ensure the durability of their governance in the face of the institutionalized risk of electoral turnover. And indeed,

largely due to the privileged political status, these parties managed to overcome a number of electoral challenges and consolidate power despite very negative general results of their rule. Yet, in the elections that marked the end of hybrid regimes and the beginning of democratization in the three states, the SPS, HDZ, and DPS performed differently. Whereas the former two suffered defeat to the nearly unified opposition, the Montenegro's incumbent party, albeit facing a threat as serious, scored another electoral triumph and thus remained in office notwithstanding the regime change.

Within the universe of hybrid regimes that experienced democratic transformation in the post-Cold War era, one may identify many similar examples of both the continuity and the turnover in power. As noted by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way in the most referenced study of hybrid regimes, 'democratization may be overseen by authoritarian governments [...] or they may occur after those governments fall from power' (2010: 21). However, if one was to find in the existing literature on hybrid regimes a theoretically valid explanation for these diverging fates of their ruling parties (*party outcomes*) it would be in vain. At the moment, it can therefore only be speculated about possible reasons why some of these parties lost power as the regimes in which they had governed ceased to exist, while others managed to stay in office despite the regime change. On the other hand, extensive research has been done with the ambition to explain why some hybrid regimes recently collapsed whereas others consolidated and survived to date. As a result, the factors influencing their political dynamics and shaping their different developmental trajectories in the period after the end of the Cold War have been clearly identified and thoroughly elaborated.

Potential causes of the academic neglect of hybrid regime party outcomes are many. The one this thesis recognizes as the most important relates to the tendency of interested scholars to analytically equate hybrid regimes and their ruling parties. The lack of differentiation between the two makes them unable to address a rather high incidence of the regime survival irrespective of ruling party turnover(s) and, vice versa, the lack of change in government notwithstanding the regime alteration.¹ Consequently, these scholars are also bound to overlook the party outcomes in question. In spite of the constantly growing academic interest for hybrid regimes and the significant progress made in studying their functioning, diverging political fates of their dominant parties thus remain of one the most puzzling issues in contemporary comparative politics.

The main purpose of this doctoral thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of this extremely interesting yet poorly investigated political phenomenon. The research goal it thereby seeks to achieve is twofold. Firstly, the thesis has an ambition to identify potential determinants of the different party outcomes in hybrid regimes in Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro. Secondly, it aims, more generally, to produce a new knowledge about the diverging political fates of dominant parties in hybrid regimes applicable to a larger sample of the cases.

A number of traits shared by the observed cases – in view of which this thesis selected them as ‘most similar’ (Gerring, 2007) – make the above said outcome variance unexpected. The three regimes, as previously mentioned, grew out the crisis of the Yugoslav one-party socialist system. The political and socio-economic conditions in which they developed were, albeit specific, much alike. Relative to

¹ In relation to the former group of cases, there are still a very few articles critical of the approaches that do not distinguish between electoral turnovers and democratization. For a good example, see: Wahman (2012).

political rivals their ruling parties enjoyed significant – and a similar kind of – advantage. At the same time, the levels of the opposition coordination and activity during hybrid regime period were comparable across the cases. Among them one also finds several important and theoretically relevant differences concerning, above all, institutional origins (communist-successor/anti-establishment) of the three parties, their economic policies (state-ownership/privatization), and the scale (high/low) of political oppression of those challenging their dominance. Yet, these differences do not translate either into the expected party outcomes.

Without solid theoretical grounds to rest on, the thesis builds an innovative argument explaining the political fates of the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Croatian Democratic Union, and the Democratic Party of Socialists. As their main determinant, it identifies (the lack of) these parties' institutionalization. The thesis points to *the structure* of power of the three parties as crucial for the process of their institutionalization. It thus takes a different analytical approach than most of the related studies on party organizations in which *the amount* of their power is taken as the sole analytically relevant category. Furthermore, to find reasons for the existence of the different structures of power in the SPS, HDZ, and DPS, the thesis looks at the political processes leading to the establishment of hybrid regimes in which the parties dominated. It thereby singles out the salience of the national question in these processes as the key factor influencing the emergence of a given type of leadership in the three parties, crucial for shaping their power structures.

To test the presence in the cases under observation of the causal mechanism linking the hypothesized conditions (*nationalist mobilization* and *the lack of party institutionalization*) and party outcome (*the loss of power*), process tracing method is employed as the major tool of causal inference in qualitative research (Beach and

Pedersen, 2012; Brady and Collier, 2010; George and Bennett, 2005; Mahoney, 2012). Based on intensive, open-ended interviewing, participant observation and document analysis, it helps in understanding the meaning and role of established regularities as well as in discovering previously unknown relations between factors (Venesson, 2008: 234). The findings of the in-depth analysis thus carried out are, consistent with the second major goal of the thesis, subsequently judged against a larger population of cases of the democratized hybrid regimes. Possible identification of the cross-case causal pattern would mark a decisive step forward in the process of theory-building in this field. At the same time, the systematic comparative study of their dominant parties should provide a valuable insight into the internal political dynamics of hybrid regimes. In this respect, potential relevance of the thesis is significant as almost all credible indicators show that a considerable share of the world countries belong to the 'hybrid regime' category (Hale, 2011: 26).

In line with the aforementioned, the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 introduces general concepts and theories used in the analysis. It further points to the recent global proliferation of hybrid regimes, their distinct character and the different developmental trajectories in the post-Cold War period. In addition, it calls attention to the academic neglect of the diverging party outcomes in democratized hybrid regimes. Chapter 2 chapter begins by discussing in detail the reasons behind the lack of scholarly interest for this particular issue. Subsequently, a possible explanation of the different party fates is put forward. In developing the research model, the chapter offers a new look into – and challenges some of the major findings of – the literature on hybrid regimes and political parties. The following section brings an extensive elaboration of the choice of the research method and the case selection criteria.

Chapters 3 and 4 represent the central part of the thesis. They examine the presence of the causal mechanism underlying the research model in the cases of Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro. To that goal, the 20th century political development of these states is reviewed comprehensively and systematically, with the focus on the following elements: the importance of the national question in the dominant political processes during this period; the structure of power in the party organizations under investigation, and the significance of the political roles they played in the hybrid regime era. The last chapter contains a comparative analysis of party outcomes in the democratized hybrid regimes identified by Levitsky and Way (2010), aimed at testing the applicability of the research model beyond the established empirical domain. A total of thirteen cases from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and post-communist Europe are examined. In this respect, thus far missing yet well-needed criteria for defining the minimum life span and the necessary level of electoral competitiveness of hybrid regimes are proposed.

Finally, it should be mentioned that certain segments of this thesis have been published in the following articles by the author: 'Political Dynamics of the Post-Communist Montenegro: One-Party Show', *Democratization*, published online on 20 August 2013; 'The Socialist Party of Serbia 1990-2000: Political Impotence of the Organizational Omnipotence', *Graz University, Center for Southeast European Studies*, Working paper No. 3 (August 2012); 'Diverging Party Outcomes in Hybrid Regimes: The Cases of Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro', *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 81-104 (2011); 'The Post-Communist Political Transition of Montenegro: Democratization Prior to Europeanization', *Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 59-77 (2010).

1. HYBRID REGIMES: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

1.1. Global proliferation

Global political landscape has been lastingly changed in the last quarter of the 20th century. During this period, the form of government has been altered in nearly 100 countries worldwide. Faced with the tide of political changes, scholars have sought to understand their causes, explain consequences, and predict their future development. Despite considerable differences in terms of the analytical approach, most of them agree that the global movement toward democracy has been its main feature. Known as the third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991), this major political process has brought about the following changes in different parts of the world:

'The fall of right-wing authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s; the replacement of military dictatorships by elected civilian governments across Latin America from the late 1970s through the late 1980s; the decline of authoritarian rule in parts of East and South Asia starting in the mid-1980s; the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s; the breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of 15 post-Soviet republics in 1991; the decline of one-party regimes in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa in the first half of the 1990s; and a weak but recognizable liberalizing trend in some Middle Eastern countries in the 1990s' (Carothers, 2002: 5).

And indeed, democracy has by any conception expanded dramatically at a recent time. As a result, it ceased being mostly a 'Western' phenomenon and 'went global' (Diamond, 2010: 93). In this respect, Freedom House reports indicate that the overall number of democratic states has doubled subsequent to the 1974 Portuguese revolution,² which has made democracy dominant and, according to some, the only

² Available at:

legitimate system of political rule in the modern world. 'There are no longer respectable alternatives to democracy; it is a part of the fashionable attire of modernity, Fareed Zakaria thus notes (1997: 42). In a similar vein, Aurel Croissant and Wolfgang Merkel maintain that 'a glance back at the three decades of the third wave indicates that political alternatives to democracy have since lost much of their appeal – not only from an ideological point of view; their empirical relevance seems much diminished' (2004: 1).

For that reason, hardly any other subject in the final decades of the last century has influenced the research agenda of political science more than the transformation of authoritarian and 'totalitarian' political regimes into pluralist democracies (Ibid). The matters of democracy and democratization have occupied the central position within the realm of contemporary comparative politics (Bunce, 2000: 703). Yet, contrary to 'overly optimistic' scholarly expectations (Levitsky and Way, 2002: 51) transitions from authoritarian regimes in this period led in rare instances only to creation of stable democratic political systems. More than 3/4 authoritarian breakdowns from 1972 to 2003 brought about the establishment of another authoritarian regime (Hadenius and Teorell, 2007: 152). At the same time, in order to legitimate governance and ensure political survival, most of the authoritarian newcomers introduced limited multiparty competition (Ibid).

Summarizing the effects of the late 20th century global political change, two broad developments might be identified as its most important traits. On the one hand, taking into account the persistence of old liberal democracies as well as an inconsiderable incidence of outright democratic breakdowns, one might fairly argue that we have witnessed a clear trend of democratic stability in this period. Despite

difficulties encountered, 'no well-established or consolidated democracies have been recently lost' (Plattner, 2010: 82). Yet, more dominant of the two trends relates to the global proliferation of regimes that combine elements of democratic and authoritarian governance. Soon after the results of the third wave began to clarify, many of its students thus came to realize that a great number of the new born democracies had, apart from multiparty electoral competition, almost nothing to offer. Put differently, it has become apparent that many of these new political regimes in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the former communist world differ profoundly from the older western democracies (Wigell, 2008: 230). Shedding a light to their murky character, Jason Brownlee writes that by 2001 'five dozen of these regimes blended liberalization with repression and signified the durability of authoritarianism during a period that had augured global democracy' (2007: 16). Moreover, before the end of the preceding century, autocrats allowing some form of multiparty elections outnumbered those who did not by more than two to one (Schedler, 2002a: 47).³ Formally embracing democratic principles while at the same time regularly resorting to blatant abuses of human and political rights, these regimes' incumbents in effect failed to make a clear-cut break with the non-democratic past.

As a result, the world has witnessed proliferation of so-called 'hybrid' political regimes.⁴ In essence, these ambiguous systems 'combine rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy, the existence of some formal democratic institutions, and respect for a limited sphere of civil and political liberties with essentially illiberal or even

³ Bearing this in mind, Croissant and Merkel admit that the global trend of democratization could become less of a triumph of political liberalism and liberal democracy than a success story for 'hybrid' or 'ambiguous regimes' (2004: 2).

⁴ Dealing with political regimes in Central America in the last decade of the 20th century, Terry Lynn Karl (1995) was the first scholar to use the concept. Morlino identified two sorts of regimes to which it could be applied: those preceded by a period of authoritarian or traditional rule, followed by liberalization and partial relaxation of the restrictions on pluralism; or those which, following a period of minimal democracy, are subject to the intervention of non-elected bodies (e.g. the military) that place restrictions on competitive pluralism yet without creating a more or less stable authoritarian regime (2009: 281).

authoritarian traits' (Ottaway, 2003: 3). The fusion of democratic procedures and authoritarian practices in a way that formal existence of the former masked the political reality of the latter thus provided the basis for the establishment of hybrid regimes.⁵ The most important of these democratic procedures relates to multiparty electoral competition. De jure or de facto non-existent in authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and 1970s, elections serve as the basic source of legitimacy of their contemporary hybrid equivalents and 'a means by which they try to reproduce themselves' (Lindberg, 2009: 89). Different in terms of 'the weight accorded to authoritarian and democratic elements', hybrid regimes share 'the common feature of tolerating competition for political office' (Bunce and Wolchik, 2010: 43).

The end of the Cold War has given a particularly strong impetus to the process of their global expansion.⁶ Following the collapse of communism, under the conditions of emerging liberal hegemony and global promotion of democracy and human rights, very few governments were willing to continue advocating non-democratic systems of governance.⁷ Yet, even though the post-Cold War international environment undermined autocracies and encouraged the diffusion of multiparty elections, it did not necessarily bring democracy (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 19). Authoritarian rulers increasingly adopted the forms of democracy during this period even as they resisted substantive democratization (Brownlee, 2009: 515).⁸

⁵ Arguing that this type of regime is a contemporary world product, Larry Diamond calls attention to the fact that Juan Linz's 1975 encyclopedic *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* 'contains barely a mention of multiparty electoral competition within authoritarian regimes' (Ibid).

⁶ In that context, Michael McFaul underlines that the transition from communism in Europe and the former Soviet Union has only sometimes – in 8 out of 28 cases, to be precise – led to democracy (2002: 212).

⁷ In this regard, Ottaway reminds that until the end of the Cold War many governments, often supported by their countries' leading intellectuals, openly rejected liberal democracy in the name of people's democracy or communal cultural traditions that precluded the egoistic individualism on which, they claimed, liberal democracy is based (Ibid: 4).

⁸ The change was particularly striking in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of de jure single-party regimes fell from 29 in 1989 to zero in 1994, and in post-communist Eurasia, where only one de jure one-party regime (Turkmenistan) endured through the 1990s (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 19).

Consequently, in addition to more new democratic states, the USSR's demise yielded over a dozen of other regimes with noticeable autocratic counter-currents (McFaul, 2002: 227).⁹

Table 1. Numbers and percentages of electoral democracies 1989-2014

Survey edition*	Year Under Review	Number of electoral democracies	Total number of countries	Total percentage of electoral democracies †
2014	2013	122	195	63
2013	2012	118	195	61
2012	2011	117	195	60
2011	2010	115	194	59
2010	2009	116	194	60
2009	2008	119	193	62
2008	2007	121	193	63
2007	2006	123	193	64
2006	2005	123	192	64
2005	2004	119	192	62
2004	2003	117	192	61
2003	2002	121	192	63
2001-2002	2001	121	192	63
2000-2001	2000	120	192	63
1999-2000	1999	120	192	63
1998-1999	1998	117	191	61
1997-1998	1997	117	191	61
1996-1997	1996	118	191	62
1995-1996	1995	115	191	60
1994-1995	1994	113	191	59
1993-1994	1993	108	190	57
1992-1993	1992	99	186	53
1991-1992	1991	89	183	49
1990-1991	1990	76	165	46
1989-1990	1989	69	167	41

Source: Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2014*¹⁰

An impressive global expansion of electoral democracies,¹¹ whose overall number grew by 60 per cent in less than five years of the post-1989 transition (see *Table 1*), was hence followed by ‘startling spread of multiparty elections *without* democracy’ (Schedler, 2010: 69). Throughout Latin America, Africa and Eurasia, by legalizing opposition parties and allowing for competitive elections whilst manipulating the process so as to ensure political survival, authoritarian rulers discovered ways ‘to acquiesce to internal and external demands for democratization

⁹ Having that in mind, Bruce Gilley writes that ‘the post-1989 has thought us to be pessimistic about democracy, even as global democracy has advanced in certain distinct ways’ (2010: 166).

¹⁰ The complete report available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world#.UzIhIKhdUID>.

¹¹ These systems, as noted by Arch Puddington, are defined by universal adult suffrage, competitive multiparty political system, regularly contested elections without massive, outcome-changing fraud, and considerable public access of major political parties to the electorate through open campaigning and the media (2007: 3).

while still maintaining their hold on power' (Howard and Roessler, 2006: 365). As a result, roughly a third of all regimes have arguably fallen into the hybrid category (Hale, 2008: 1). This way, hybrid regimes have become not only the modal form of government in the developing countries but also 'the most widespread political system in the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century' (Howard and Roessler, 2006: 365).

1.2. Structural ambivalence

Hybrid regimes are characterized by an inherent functional tension. Their incumbents are forced to operate within the specific institutional arrangement, enclosed by authoritarian control, at one side, and democratic uncertainty at the other. In effect, says Schedler, they will always strive to constrain, contain, and control their own institutional creations, i.e. try to make sure that, nominally democratic, they remain substantively authoritarian (2009: 8). At the same time, though 'meant to be tame domestic animals' (Schedler, 2010: 71), these institutions still represent a potential danger to the stability of hybrid regimes. Because of the structural ambivalence rooted in the coexistence of authoritarian incumbents and meaningful democratic institutions, major political change in hybrid regimes is, to quote Howard and Roessler, 'never certain, but often possible' (2006: 380).

On the one hand, albeit authoritarian in nature, hybrid regimes bear a considerable structural resemblance to democratic political systems. In fact, when judged by the institutional set up, hybrid regimes may seem 'virtually indistinguishable from liberal democracies' (Schedler, 2010: 70). As noted by Levitsky and Way (2002), these 'competitive authoritarian' regimes comprise four

arenas (*electoral, legislative, judicial, and media*) of democratic contestation.¹² Their existence yields ‘dynamic process of repeated interaction between the government and the challengers’ (Alexander, 2008: 931). Opposition forces can thus compete in a meaningful way for executive power and periodically challenge, weaken, and occasionally even defeat autocratic incumbents (Levitsky and Way, 2002: 54). Stated another way, unlike full-fledged authoritarian leaders that can ‘rest easily on the eve of elections because neither they nor opposition leaders expect anything but an incumbent victory’ (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 12), officials in these regimes fear a possible opposition triumph. Faced with electoral as well as inter-electoral opposition challenges, they are, however powerful, hence ‘forced to sweat’ (Ibid).¹³

On the other hand, keeping in mind the risk of political defeat, hybrid regime leaders have mastered manipulative techniques which, most of the time, enable them to stay in office without jeopardizing international standing.¹⁴ By raising the cost of formal, i.e. single-party authoritarian rule, ‘the post-Cold War international environment created incentives for incumbents to employ informal mechanisms of coercion and control while maintaining the formal architecture of democracy’ (Ibid: 27). Instead of resorting to naked repression, electoral fraud, or other potentially very costly sorts of blatant power abuse, they make use of incumbency to create unfair

¹² In addition to these, some scholars (Ekman, 2009; Schedler, 2010) identify civil society (i.e. the public) as another crucial element of political dynamics in hybrid regimes.

¹³ And indeed, in the Balkans and the countries of the old Eastern Bloc only, ‘the years from 1996 to 2009 saw no fewer than fourteen major attempts to oust semi-authoritarian regimes by means of elections’ (Bunce and Wolchik, 2009b: 93).

¹⁴ Hybrid regime incumbents thus habitually manipulate the electoral process by obstructing the formation and the articulation of voter preference and distorting popular will expressed in the polling stations; disempower and fragment legislatures so as to make them objects of their direct control; neutralize the threat of independent judiciary by limiting its jurisdiction and ‘packing’ the system with loyal servants; impose restrictions on (free) media content and consumption; and regularly violate civil and political rights of opposition politicians and activists as well as other potential challengers of their power (Levitsky and Way, 2002: 42).

conditions of political competition and thus thwart opposition challenges. In that regard, one would rightfully argue that a degree of incumbent advantage – guaranteed, for the most part, by pork-barrel spending and privileged access to media and finance – is basically a matter of political routine even in liberal democracies. However, what we find in hybrid regimes is hyper-incumbent advantage, i.e. ‘uneven playing field’ (Schedler, 2002b) in which those in power are systematically favored to the extent that the opposition’s ability to organize and compete in elections is seriously impaired (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 10).

Uneven playing field in hybrid regimes is created on the basis of incumbents’ privileged access to resources, media, and the law. When the first one is concerned, incumbents regularly employ several mechanisms in order to create or maintain resources disparities and thus render the opposition politically uncompetitive. The one most commonly employed relates to direct partisan use of public resources. Unlike democratic systems where the incumbent party or parties and those in the opposition have to raise money by the same means, in these regimes ‘the governing party enjoys a huge advantage, because it can dip into the state treasury to finance its election campaign’ (Ottaway, 2003: 147). Besides, liberal economic reforms and related privatization programs serve as another vast source of incumbent financing. In the course of these processes, ruling parties may use discretionary control over credit, licenses, and state contracts to transfer assets into the hands of their prominent supporters. At the same time, opposition financiers are usually ‘blacklisted’ and denied the access to these resources (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 10). Furthermore, during electoral campaigns in particular, incumbents are likely to heavily exploit the state machinery – buildings, vehicles, and other infrastructure – and mobilize public servants to achieve their own political goals.

Along the resource disparities, incumbent privileged access to media constitutes another important element of uneven playing field in hybrid regimes. In situations where the only television and radio stations with national audience are state-owned, governing party has an easy task of establishing absolute media control. And while incumbents benefit from their partisan coverage, the opposition is effectively denied the possibility of media promotion. The existence of private television and radio stations does not necessarily prevent incumbent monopoly in the access to media. In fact, by using a variety of corrupt means, such as bribery, patronage, and proxy ownership, they usually manage to politically 'absorb' most of the private media entities. In addition to resources and media, skewed access to the law stands for the third crucial dimension of the uneven playing field in hybrid regimes. Through bribery, intimidation and other illicit activities, state officials exert considerable political leverage over judiciaries, electoral commissions and other purportedly independent legal bodies of significance. As a result, they systematically favor incumbents, allowing them to violate democratic procedures without running any legal risk. At the same time, their political opponents often fall victims to the manipulation over these institutions (Ibid).

1.3. Diverging party outcomes

In order to maintain political power, hybrid regime incumbents thus regularly bring into play the 'menu of manipulation' (Schedler, 2002b) which is to compensate for each of the abovementioned formal democratic concessions. When trying to compete against them, opposition movements therefore 'face an uphill battle' (Howard and

Roessler, 2006: 370).¹⁵ Nonetheless, different trajectories of hybrid regimes in the course of the last two decades show that the final score of such games is much harder to anticipate than one, keeping in mind the uneven playing field, would normally think. Albeit indisputably unfair, political competition in hybrid regimes in many instances proved to be real. By looking at 35 examples of competitive authoritarian regimes in Africa, Asia, Central America, and post-communist Europe, Levitsky and Way (2010) thus identify three distinct paths they followed between 1990 and 2008.

Table 2. Competitive authoritarian regime trajectories 1990-2008

Democratization	Unstable Authoritarianism	Stable Authoritarianism
Benin	Albania	Armenia
Croatia	Belarus	Botswana
Dominican Republic	Georgia	Cambodia
Ghana	Haiti	Cameroon
Guyana	Kenya	Gabon
Macedonia	Madagascar	Malaysia
Mali	Malawi	Mozambique
Mexico	Moldova	Russia
Nicaragua	Senegal	Tanzania
Peru	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Romania		
Serbia		
Slovakia		
Taiwan		
Ukraine		

Source: Levitsky and Way (2010)

As shown in *Table 2*, a considerable number of these regimes democratized during the observed period. In a few cases, the process of democratization was overseen by authoritarian governments, whereas in others it followed their collapse. At the same time, ten regimes, most of which African, experienced one or more

¹⁵ In his famous reference to the 1994 Mexican general election, intended to emphasize the extent to which the incumbent Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was privileged in access to media and resources, Jorge Castaneda wrote that the electoral process resembled 'soccer match where the goalposts were of different heights and breadths and where one team included eleven players plus the umpire and the other a mere six or seven players' (1995: 131).

transition changes but still failed to democratize. Even though their authoritarian incumbents were overthrown at least once in the last two decades, subsequently formed governments were not democratic. Finally, the same number of regimes Levitsky and Way focus on remained stable throughout this period. Following their establishment, authoritarian incumbents or their hand-picked successors stayed in power for at least three consecutive presidential/parliamentary terms (Ibid: 22).

A number of scholars tried to identify the causes of their ‘diverging fates’ (Levitsky and Way, 2005) in the course of the last two decades. They highlighted a dizzying variety of factors, such as leadership, historic contingency, regime’s economic performance, and opposition strength and strategy, which supposedly determined this variance. Thus, for instance, primarily concentrated on the Georgian, Serbian, and Ukrainian cases of democratic breakthrough, McFaul lists the following elements which, in his view, were crucial for ousting non-democratic leaders in these countries: a semi-autocratic rather than fully autocratic regime; an unpopular incumbent; a united and organized opposition; an ability quickly to drive home the point that voting results were falsified; enough independent media to inform citizens about the falsified vote; a political opposition capable of mobilizing tens of thousands or more demonstrators to protest electoral fraud; and divisions among the regime’s coercive forces, i.e. ‘splits among guys with guns’ (2005: 6).¹⁶ These and other factors brought to light by the recent literature on hybrid regime ‘outcomes’ – to use Levitsky and Way’s (2010) notion – can crudely be grouped into three categories: Western democratizing influence, incumbent (state and party) power, and opposition (political and communal) activity.

¹⁶ McFaul also identifies several ‘unessential factors’ in this regard, including: the state of economy, or level of economic development, splits between hard- and soft-liners, the relationship between incumbents and the West, Western democracy-assistance programs, the pivotal role of the opposition leader, etc. (Ibid: 15).

The collapse of the Soviet Union, as an ideological, military and economic alternative to the West, and the 'growing consensus that democracy is the only system which confers legitimacy upon a government' (Gershman and Allen, 2006: 36), rendered domestic political arenas of regimes worldwide increasingly open for various sorts of international political influence.¹⁷ The United States and other Western powers thus stepped up efforts to encourage and defend democracy, thereby raising the external cost of authoritarianism and creating incentives for elites in developing and post-communist countries to adopt the formal architecture of Western-style democracy (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 17). Unlike earlier related theories (Lipset 1959a; Almond and Verba 1963; Moore, 1966; O'Donnell, 1973; Linz and Stepan 1996) primarily structured around domestic variables, more recent analyses took the international environment very seriously.¹⁸ Widespread democratization in the last twenty years, say Levitsky and Way, thus turned the debate on regime change from *whether* international factors matter to *how much* they matter (2010: 38).¹⁹

¹⁷ These included democracy-assistance programs by Western governments and international organizations (Ethier, 2003; Gershman and Allen, 2006; Ottaway and Chung, 1999) direct democracy promotion, largely by the United States (McFaul, 2004; Peceny, 1999; Carothers, 1991, 1997, 1999), and multilateral conditionality, most often applied by the European Union (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Vachudova, 2005).

¹⁸ In his work with O'Donnell, Schmitter accordingly claims that it 'seems fruitless to search for some international factor or context which can reliably compel authoritarian rulers to experiment with liberalization, much less which can predictably cause their regimes to collapse' (1986: 18). However, in view of the spatial and temporal dimensions of the aforementioned political transformation, he later wrote that it was 'time to reconsider the impact of the international context upon regime change' (1996: 27).

¹⁹ To answer the question, the authors bring together a large number of mechanisms of international leverage, thus creating a concise theoretical framework based on the two dimensions of the post-Cold War international environment. Building upon their 2005 work, Levitsky and Way argue that the variation in Western *leverage*, measured by governments' vulnerability to external democratizing pressure, and, in particular, governments' *linkage* to the West, as the density of their ties to the United States, the European Union, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions is central to understanding the effectiveness of international democratizing pressure during the last two decades (Ibid: 43). They warn, however, that one should not draw simple equality between Western influence and regime democratization as, in the absence of linkage, transitions characterized by weak states, parties, and civil societies create numerous opportunities for incumbent abuse and are likely to result in a new competitive authoritarian government (Ibid: 71). And indeed, in Central Europe and the Americas - where linkage is extensive - democratization was widespread (not a single competitive authoritarian regime survived after 2004), whereas in the regions characterized by medium and low levels of linkage - such as

Another widely acknowledged determinant of the diverging hybrid regime outcomes relates to their incumbents' power capacities. In this regard, building upon Way's 2005 work on post-Cold War transition in the former Soviet Union and his path-breaking 2008 study of the color revolutions,²⁰ Levitsky and Way set out two elements critical for competitive authoritarian stability: state coercive capacity and incumbent party strength. Effective state and party organizations, they argue, increase incumbents' odds of surviving opposition challenges by enhancing their capacity to prevent elite defection, co-opt or repress opponents, defuse or crack down on protests, and win (or steal) elections (2010: 56). Contrary to many recent analyses (O'Donnell, 1993, 1999; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Carothers, 2002) accentuating significance of the state strength for democratization, Levitsky and Way's thus enlightens its role in sustaining non-democratic governance. At the same time, mainly pursuing the existing line of argument which, stretching back more than half a century back,²¹ has recently been articulated by a number of scholars (Geddes, 1999; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Haber, 2006; Brownlee, 2007; Hale, 2008; Magaloni, 2006, 2008), they identify strong parties as the second element of crucial importance for authoritarian stability.²²

East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and the former Soviet Union - the pattern is strikingly different (as many as ten out of 25 competitive authoritarian regimes survived) (Levitsky and Way, 2005: 32).

²⁰ The term relates to the following set of events: 'Bulldozer' Revolution in Serbia (2000); 'Rose' Revolution in Georgia (2003); Ukrainian 'Orange' Revolution (2004); and Kyrgyz 'Tulip' Revolution a year later. For more on the topic, see: Beissinger (2007), Bunce and Wolchik (2006), Fairbanks (2009), Tucker (2007), Way (2009).

²¹ Political scientists have long advocated the importance of party organizations for political stability. See, for instance: Duverger (1954), Huntington (1968), Sartori (1976).

²² In her seminal piece on democratic transitions, Barbara Geddes shows that, in the post-Second World War period, single-party regimes lasted, on average, considerably longer (23 years) than personalist (15 years) and military (nine years) ones. She argues that, through control over the allocation of educational opportunities, jobs, and positions in government, 'single parties can typically claim the loyalty (or at least acquiescence) of many of the most able, ambitious, and upwardly mobile individuals in the society, especially those from peasant and urban marginal backgrounds whose social mobility might otherwise have been quite limited' (1999: 134). Building upon her work, Beatriz Magaloni writes that 'autocratic political parties play the

Finally, much of the literature on the post-Cold War development of hybrid regimes concentrates on the strength, cohesion, and strategies of opposition forces. Highlighting the factors such as organized labor (Bellin, 2000), civil society (Fish, 1995), mass protests (Tucker, 2007), and insurgency (Wood, 2000), scholars sought to explain the process of undermining regime stability ‘from within’. In that sense, two elements (opposition strategic coalition and widespread public mobilization) came to be recognized as crucial for regime survival. Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik gave the most important contribution to their better understanding, arguing that ‘competitive-authoritarian regimes are effective at staying in power not just because of their structural capacity and their ability to hide weaknesses, but also because the opposition is divided and disputatious, and citizens are demobilized and disunited’ (2009a: 71-2).²³ Therefore, adjacent to the previously elaborated element of incumbent power, they propose so-called *electoral model* which ‘involves specific set of strategies for winning elections that was fashioned, applied, and transferred by a transnational network of Western, regional, and local democratic activists’ (Ibid: 72).²⁴ For Bunce and Wolchik, the diffusion of these opposition techniques is what lies between structural (incumbent-related) factors and electoral change in the post-

functional role of making intertemporal power-sharing deals between the dictator and his ruling coalition possible, increasing the longevity of dictatorships’ (2008: 24). She thereby accentuates ‘the problem of commitment’, arguing that ‘the credibility of the power-sharing deal crucially depends on the party’s ability to effectively control access to political positions and on the fact that the party can be expected to last in the future’ (Ibid: 2). According to Brownlee, this largely depends on the party elites’ success in resolving their core conflict during the period of regime formation (2007: 37).

²³ For this reason, they posit that even though the Bulgarian, Serbian, Georgian, Ukrainian, and Kyrgyz regimes had all been in serious trouble for years, their leaders managed to hold on to power (2009b: 102).

Similarly, Howard and Roessler regard the ability of opposition elites to come together – not by giving up their own parties and interests or by submitting to a charismatic leader, but by supporting a single candidate (despite regional, ethnic, and ideological differences) or forming a strategic coalition (whether formal or informal) for the specific goal of winning an election (2006: 371) – as crucial for regime change.

²⁴ In this context, Bunce and Wolchik mention the following activities: orchestrating large-scale voter-registration and turnout drives; forming a united opposition, linked to NGOs, that campaigns ambitiously throughout the country; making extensive use of rallies, rock concerts, street theater, and alternative media; and pressuring regimes to improve the quality and transparency of electoral procedures through domestic and international election monitoring and parallel vote tabulation (Ibid).

communist Europe (Ibid).²⁵ Following the line of their argument, Mark Beissinger (2009a) claims that the revolutions that took place in the post-communist states were parts of a single interrelated wave. These events, he argues, represent examples of a 'modular phenomenon' in a way that each successful democratic revolution has produced an experience that has been consciously borrowed by others,²⁶ spread by NGO's and emulated by local social movements (2007: 261).

1.4. Theoretical discussion

In a nutshell, recent global political development has to a great extent been marked by a sharp increase in number of hybrid regimes. Such political dynamics, as expected, generated considerable academic attention. Given the democratic edifice of these regimes and, in particular, regularly organized multiparty electoral competition as the basic source of their political legitimacy, political parties naturally came into the analytical focus of the interested scholars. As noted by Levitsky and Way, strong parties are particularly important for their political dynamics 'because, unlike other authoritarian regimes, incumbents must retain and exercise power through democratic institutions' (2010:61). In line with a broader theoretical argument, party organization, as outlined above, thus came to be acknowledged as one of the key determinants of development of these regimes.

²⁵ The diffusion effects across the region are summarized by Bunce and Wolchik in the following way: 'The Slovaks drew help from Bulgarians and Romanians, who had themselves been influenced by Serbia's remarkable protests in 1996 and 1997; Slovak activists in turn helped their Croatian and Serbian counterparts in 2000. Graduates of Serbian elections in 2000 assisted the Georgians in their 2003 showdown with Eduard Shevardnadze. Finally, Serbs and Georgians, along with Slovaks, Poles, and Czechs contributed to the eventual victory of Viktor Yushchenko over Viktor Yanukovich in the Ukrainian presidential contest of late 2004' (2006: 12).

²⁶ Beissinger lists its six major elements: 1) the use of stolen elections as the occasion for massive mobilization against pseudo-democratic regimes; 2) foreign support for the development of local democratic movements; 3) the organization of radical youth movements using unconventional protest tactics prior to the election in order to undermine the regime's popularity and will to repress and prepare for a final showdown; 4) a united opposition established in part through foreign prodding; 5) external diplomatic pressure and unusually large electoral monitoring; and 6) massive mobilization upon the announcement of fraudulent electoral results and the use of non-violent resistance tactics (Ibid).

Nonetheless, many important questions concerning political parties in hybrid regimes still lack satisfying answers. In particular, much remains unclear about the dominant parties in such regimes, labeled by Ora Reuter and Rostislav Turovsky their ‘most important non-democratic institutions’ (2012: 3). In this regard, perhaps the most thought-provoking puzzle relates to diverging political fates of those parties. Namely, in the countries that have undergone democratic transition from hybrid regimes in the last two decades, regime collapse was, as a rule, causally linked with turnover in power. However, as demonstrated in *Table 3*, a number of countries that have democratized during this period saw the end of hybrid regime without experiencing such political change.

Table 3. Fates of ruling parties in democratized hybrid regimes

Country	Democratic change year	Turnover in power
Benin	1992	Yes
Croatia	2000	Yes
The Dominican Republic	1998	Yes
Ghana	1996	No
Guyana	1992	Yes
Macedonia	2008	No
Mexico	2000	Yes
Montenegro*	1998	No
Nicaragua	1990	Yes
Peru	2000	Yes
Romania	1996	Yes
Serbia	2000	Yes
Slovakia	1998	Yes
Taiwan	1996	No

*Source: Author’s list based on the previously outlined Levitsky and Way’s list of hybrid regime democratizers; *Montenegro is added to the list as another case from this category; The cases of Mali and Ukraine are left out as this thesis argues that these countries did not witness the establishment of a stable democratic regime (see the last chapter); Although such regime was, following the years indicated in the table, founded in Benin, Ghana, Guyana, and Nicaragua (the reason why they are listed above), these cases are also found to be conceptually problematic (see Ibid)*

And while different developmental trajectories of hybrid regimes in the post-Cold War period are, as elaborated above, thoroughly studied, those of their ruling parties have largely been neglected. The next thesis chapter seeks to explain the determinants of the diverging party outcomes in democratized hybrid regimes and to highlight the reasons behind the lack of academic interest for this particular political phenomenon.

2. DOMINANT PARTIES IN HYBRID REGIMES

2.1. Current understanding

2.1.1. The challenges of conceptualization

In an attempt to emphasize the importance of appropriate conceptualization for the research in political science, Levitsky writes that ‘poorly or ambiguously defined concepts pose a straightforward problem for the causal analysis: if we cannot agree on the phenomena we are studying, then arguments about their causes and effects will be confusing and contested’ (1998: 83). In a similar tone, Robert Adcock and David Collier argue that ‘the clarification and refinement of concepts is a fundamental task in political science, and carefully developed concepts are, in turn, a major prerequisite for meaningful discussion of measurements validity’ (2001: 529). More to the point, Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen note that specification of the meaning of the concept, which provides ‘the anchor for all subsequent decisions’, affects the entire process of data generation (2002: 7). The lack of knowledge about the diverging party outcomes in hybrid regimes speaks strongly about the importance of bearing in mind such observations as much of the aforementioned academic neglect of this political phenomenon arises precisely from conceptual confusion.

Namely, just as any other form of political regime, hybrid regimes first and foremost represent ‘the rules and procedures that determine how national, executive leaders are chosen’ (Howard and Roessler, 2006: 366). In one of the most comprehensive definitions offered to date, Leonardo Morlino thus characterizes them as ‘institutional sets that have been persistent, be they stable or unstable, for about a decade, have been preceded by an authoritarianism, a traditional regime (possibly

with colonial characteristics), or even a minimal democracy and are characterized by the break-up of limited pluralism and forms of independent, autonomous participation, but the absence of at least one of the four aspects of minimal democracy (2009: 282).²⁷ However, in most of the related works, hybrid regimes as specific systems of rules by which political actors compete are simply equated with parties in power. In other words, scholars of democratization, in general, do not make a necessary analytical difference between the two.

Numerous examples from the post-Cold War period of the regime survival in the face of at least one turnover in power make obvious the conceptual fallacy underlying such analyses. In these cases, following an electoral triumph, opposition challengers simply took over the power mechanisms and continued ruling in the same manner as their political adversaries. As a result, the predominantly non-democratic political practice persisted notwithstanding the removal from office of those who had institutionalized it. Electoral revolutions thus often proved to be 'symptoms of the problems of hybrid and authoritarian regimes, rather than solutions to their ills' (Kalandadze and Mitchell, 2009: 1404).

In Albania, for instance, hybrid regime survived several changes of incumbent parties during the last two decades.²⁸ Following an introduction of political pluralism, it turned out that neither of the two major parties, the Democrats and the Socialists, had democratic credentials but instead 'perpetuated authoritarian rule inimical to the strengthening of the rule of law and further democratization' (Dolenec, 2013: 88). And

²⁷ Morlino here refers to: universal suffrage, male and female; free, competitive, recurrent, and fair elections; more than one party; and different and alternative media sources.

²⁸ The opposition Democratic Party of Albania scored a landslide victory (62.3 per cent of the vote) in the 1992 parliamentary election. Five years later, the Democrats lost to the Socialist Party which triumphed again in the June 2001 parliamentary election. In July 2005, however, the Democratic Party returned to power. The last incumbent turnover in Albania took place after the June 2013 parliamentary election, won by a Socialist-led coalition.

while the former's rule resulting from the 1992 electoral victory was characterized as 'increasingly dictatorial and authoritarian',²⁹ the opposition triumph in 1997 did not alter the rules of political game. The level of power abuse declined but the country remained non-democratic as 'the Socialist government used libel suits to bully the media; opposition activists were occasionally attacked or arrested and state media, courts, and electoral authorities were politicized and deployed on behalf of the governing party' (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 122). For the same reasons, even in 2008, Albania was 'nearly democratic, but still competitive authoritarian' (Ibid: 124).

At the same time, initially praised as a democratic breakthrough, the 2003 Rose Revolution failed to bring about substantial regime change in Georgia. Notwithstanding important reform achievements, in particular in the field of anti-corruption, it soon became clear that Mikheil Saakashvili, the new, almost unanimously elected president,³⁰ did not have a clear democratizing agenda. The Georgian political arena remained uncontested after the Revolution, with no viable opposition to Saakashvili (Kalandadze and Orenstein, 2009: 1049). Under these circumstances, Saakashvili found it easier to work within the framework of the existing political system than to attempt to change it wholesale (Hale, 2006: 313). This was strongly confirmed by the new government's failure to organize clean presidential elections in 2008.³¹ Accordingly, in the 2009 Freedom in the World report, Freedom House asserted that 'Georgia is not an electoral democracy'.³²

²⁹ As noted by an International Crisis Group 2000 country report (available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/albania/087-albania-state-of-the-nation.aspx>).

³⁰ In the election held on 4 January 2004, Saakashvili got 96 per cent of the vote.

³¹ The OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission thereby identified a number of problems, including the abuse of state resources, the intimidation of public employees and opposition activists and the biased coverage by privately owned media outlets, which made the implementation of OSCE and Council of Europe commitments uneven and incomplete (report available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia/30959?download=true>).

³² Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2009/georgia#.UtVjrrQx7OM>.

Similar examples of regime continuity undisrupted by changing political dynamics are found outside the post-communist political sphere. In Senegal, to mention one of them, the Socialist Party (PS) that had undemocratically ruled the country since the 1960 independence, lost the 2000 presidential election. Yet, supposedly democratic new government led by the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) turned out to be not so democratic. The party's political calculation changed substantially following the takeover of power:

'Once in control of the presidency and with the right to rule by decree, including the power to modify the electoral system, Wade [the PDS's Secretary General and the 2000 presidential candidate] could install a system designed to be more representative of the voters' wishes or to maximize the opportunities for his supporters. Significant numbers of leaders deserted the PS and opportunistically moved into the PDS fold. Coupled with greater resources now available for the PDS, including the full weight of the presidency this made the highly inequitable system the PDS had previously attacked suddenly seem attractive' (Creevey et al, 2005: 487).

In the following period, the government took further steps to increase electoral advantages and there were no clear signs of improvements in civil liberties (Wahman, 2012: 9). Therefore, despite the 2000 electoral turnover, Senegal did not experience a democratic transition.³³ Instead, Ottaway notes, it 'has been and arguably remains a semi-authoritarian state' (2003: 91).³⁴

Reuter and Turkovsky write that, in spite of an increasing number of important studies on ruling parties in hybrid regimes much remains unclear about their inner

³³ In fact, in view of the resultant increased level of personalism, many political analysts concluded that, if the alternation in power led to any democratic changes in Senegal, it was actually to the worse (Wahman, 2010: 9).

³⁴ Some authors argue that the last presidential election, organized successfully in February 2012, might be a signal of genuine democratic change in this country. For more, see: Kelly (2012).

workings (2012: 2). The cases mentioned above strongly confirm that a clear conceptual differentiation between the regimes and their dominant parties represents the first step toward a better understanding of the latter. At the same time, the next section of this chapter shows that it is also a *conditio sine qua non* for explaining different political fates of the ruling parties in hybrid regimes.

2.1.2. Diverging party outcomes

Conforming to the erroneous conceptualization, while studying hybrid regimes' diverging fates in the last two decades, scholars have generally paid little attention to the diverging fates of dominant parties in these regimes. As previously said, a significant number of countries throughout the world underwent democratic transition from hybrid regimes in this period. Out of the 35 observed countries, Levitsky and Way thus counted 15 that recently experienced democratization,³⁵ i.e. the establishment of free and fair elections, broad protection of civil liberties, and a level playing field (2010: 21). In these countries, regime collapse was, as a rule, causally linked with turnover in power. In other words, the process of democratization, as a substantial alteration of the rules of political game hitherto serving interests of an incumbent party, would usually be initiated by its electoral defeat.

In Slovakia, for instance, the defeat of Vladimir Meciar's Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) in the 1998 parliamentary election represents the critical juncture in the process of the country's democratic transition. Even though the party came first by tight margin,³⁶ a majority of Slovaks voted against its authoritarian political practices which included disrespect for the rule of law, favoritism, corruption,

³⁵ Those are: Benin, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Macedonia, Mali, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Taiwan, and Ukraine.

³⁶ The HZDS won 27 per cent of the vote and 43/150 seats, against the 26.3 per cent and 42 seats of the main opposition political force, Slovak Democratic Coalition.

the intertwining of crime with politics, and a confrontational nationalist policy (Butora and Butorova, 1999: 80). Four opposition parties subsequently formed the coalition government and set in motion the process of genuine democratization in Slovakia. In the following period, 'elections were free and fair, restrictive media laws were overturned, and laws dictating balanced coverage on public television were enforced' (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 92).

Another thoroughly studied 'liberalizing electoral outcome' – to use the notion of Howard and Roessler (2006) – relates to the 2000 Mexico's general election. It marked the end of the seven decade-long rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which, as reported by the 2003 Freedom in the World report, had 'dominated the country by means of its corporatist, authoritarian structure maintained through co-optation, patronage, corruption, and repression'.³⁷ At the same time, the party's 2000 electoral defeat marked the end of the Mexican hybrid regime. Although the PRI had initiated certain political reforms in the second half of the 1990s, the country became 'fully democratic' only after its 2000 removal from office (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 160). That, in Schedler's words, was the moment of the 'democratic revelation' which undoubtedly qualified Mexico as an electoral democracy (2000: 5).

On the other hand, while in most transition states the regime change went hand in hand with incumbent electoral defeat, a number of countries that have democratized in the post-Cold War period saw the end of hybrid regime without consequently experiencing such political change. Regardless of the loss of the hyper-privileged political position caused by the regime collapse, incumbent parties in these cases managed to stay in office. Thus, they would initiate and, in large part, oversee

³⁷ The report available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2003/mexico#.U0QOmgiSwIA>.

the process of democratic transition. In Macedonia, for instance, the ruling VRMO-DPMNE party remained in power even though democratization took place in the period subsequent to its 2006 electoral victory. Based on a number of Freedom House, OSCE/ODIHR, and the U.S. Department of State reports, Levitsky and Way write the following about this particular case:

‘By 2008, Macedonia had democratized. There were few reported incidents on media harassment, and there existed a robust private media – with national reach – that reflected a variety of viewpoints. Although the 2008 parliamentary elections were crisis-ridden due to violence and manipulation in Albanian regions, the VMRO-DPMNE-led government responded by re-running elections that were deemed unfair or fraudulent, sending a massive police contingent to the region and encouraging a large international-observer presence. Consequently, conditions improved in the second round. The 2009 presidential election, which was won by VMRO-DPMNE candidate Gjorge Ivanov, was characterized by an open media environment and no serious incidents of violence or fraud’ (2010: 127-8).³⁸

The regime change thus gradually unfolded in this country even though the ruling party did not alter as a result. Similarly, in Ghana, the process of democratization was supervised by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) of Jerry Rawlings. Following their landslide triumph in the 1992 general elections, political reforms changing the non-democratic regime character were implemented. As noted in the 2012 Countries at the Crossroads report on Ghana:

‘A new constitution was promulgated in 1993 that provides for a popularly elected president and legislature, a two-term limit to presidential tenure, a bill of rights, an independent judiciary, an ombudsman, and a media commission, among other measures.

³⁸ In addition, the 2011 parliamentary election was deemed by the OSCE/ODIHR as ‘competitive, transparent, and well-administrated throughout the country’ (report available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/83666?download=true>).

While significant deficits remain, democracy, protection of rights, and the quality of governance under the Fourth Republic have steadily improved, and the military has come under significant civil control'.³⁹

As a result, the next general elections in Ghana, held in December 1996, were judged free and fair by international observers.⁴⁰ Moreover, while the 1992 elections' results were heavily contested, the opposition now accepted the outcome even though Rawlings was re-elected the president and his party won a majority of seats.⁴¹ In the following period, another Freedom House report said, 'the country slowly continued to consolidate democratic institutions'.⁴² Thus, as in Macedonia, the regime change in Ghana did not bring about an immediate turnover in power.

How did it happen, one may ask, that while most parties that had been ruling in hybrid regimes lost their power when these regimes ceased to exist, some of them remained politically dominant notwithstanding democratic changes? Or, to paraphrase Levitsky and Way (2010), what are the determinants of the diverging party outcomes in hybrid regimes? Focusing on institutionalization of hybrid regime dominant parties, the remainder of this chapter offers a potential explanation of this exceptionally interesting yet largely understudied political phenomenon.

³⁹ Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2012/ghana#.U0QP4aiSwlA>.

⁴⁰ The NDI, for instance, reports that 'successive democratic elections in 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 have each been seen by domestic observers and the international community as successive improvements over the previous poll'. See: <http://www.ndi.org/ghana>.

⁴¹ Rawlings won 57.4 per cent of the vote and his National Democratic Congress got 53 per cent.

⁴² Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/1998/ghana#.UtVm4rQx7OM>.

2.2. Solving the puzzle

2.2.1. Party institutionalization

The 'indispensability' of political parties for democracy has long been known and constantly reaffirmed in political science. Parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties, Elmer Schattschneider (1942) wrote seven decades ago. Likewise, Seymour Lipset (1959b) defined democracy as a political system which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office, that is, through political parties. In words of Giovanni Sartori, representation, one of the fundamental principles of democracy, takes place 'through and by parties' (1976: 24).

Following this path, many students of the third wave of democratization came to acknowledge the key role played by political parties in the process of democratic consolidation (Pridham, 1990; Dix, 1992; Lewis, 1994; Mainwaring, 1999; Randall and Svasand, 2002; McAllister and White, 2007). As nicely summarized by Natasha Ezrow, parties are important to new democracies for the following reasons: they make government accountable for its actions; prevent the rise of anti-party politicians; habituate the public to democratic norms and practices; articulate and aggregate interests; recruit, nominate and socialize political leaders; and form and sustain governments (2011: 3). At the same time, these authors emphasize the importance of parties' institutionalization for functioning of the newly established democracies. All their studies have 'a common thread in that political parties that form stable relations with the public and have a strong organizational existence, in other words institutionalized parties, are one of the chief requirements for the consolidation process' (Yardimci-Geykci, 2013: 2). To be able to play the role in

advancing democracy properly, scholars agree, political parties need to be 'institutionalized' (Randall, 2006: 1).

Thus, as a result of the increased academic interest in democratization, a body of literature on party institutionalization grew steadily in the decades after the 1968 introduction of the notion by Samuel Huntington. Throughout this period, a number of noteworthy attempts of its conceptualization and, in recent times, measurement have been made. Kenneth Janda, to mention some of the most relevant works, underlines the importance of public perception of the institutionalization process, arguing that an institutionalized party is one that is 'reified in the public mind' (1980: 19). Mainly focusing on parties in established democracies, Angelo Panebianco explains institutionalization as 'the way the organization solidifies', i.e. 'slowly loses its character as a tool and becomes valuable in and of itself' (1988: 49). Similarly, Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully (1995) write that institutionalized political organizations are those that are not subordinated to the interests of their ambitious leaders. Along the same lines, Levitsky understands party institutionalization as, on the one hand, 'value infusion',⁴³ i.e. the process by which an organization becomes 'infused with value beyond technical requirement of the task in hand', and, on the other, 'behavioral routinization', that is the process by which 'rules of the game' that shape social interaction within an organization become entrenched (1998: 79-80).

Summarizing these as well as other scholars' findings, Vicky Randall and Lars Svasand identify four basic elements of party institutionalization: systemness, which relates to the scope, density and regularity of the interactions that constitute the party as a structure; decisional autonomy, i.e. the party's freedom from interference in

⁴³ The notion first mentioned by Selznick (1957).

determining its own policies and strategies; value infusion, referring to the extent to which party actors and supporters acquire an identification with and commitment to the party; and reification, described as the level of establishment of the party's existence in the public imagination (2002: 13-14). And while thereby offering a conceptually sophisticated framework for the analysis, the authors still failed to provide a comprehensive tool for measuring the scale of the party organization institutionalization.

On the other hand, Randall and Svasand made a very important remark about 'an erroneous tendency in the related literature to elide the issue of party institutionalization with that of party system institutionalization' (Ibid: 6-8). The latter, they explain, is the outcome of a range of developments only some of which have to do directly with the constituent parties themselves. Similarly, Fernando Bertoa points out that it is not sufficient for individual parties to become institutionalized, for they must also function in the established context of a party system (2011: 2). For that reason, Yardımcı-Geyikci writes, 'it is critical to approach party institutionalization and party system institutionalization as two different phenomena that require separate treatment' (2013: 3).

Yet, most authors who did offer certain measurements of institutionalization thereby failed to make a conceptual differentiation between individual parties and the party system. Consequently, they either used the two interchangeably, or measured party systems and not individual parties, or applied system-level institutionalization measures to the level of individual party organizations. The main rationale behind these approaches has been the assumption that the institutionalization of a party system directly depends on that of individual parties (Ibid: 13). According to Matthias Basedau and Alexander Stroh, various aspects of party institutionalization are

neglected in empirical research primarily because the relevant data is often either difficult to obtain or not available whatsoever:

'While we have little difficulty capturing objective quantitative data on party ages or changes in electoral support (volatility), even for large numbers of parties, subjective quantitative data such as party identification or trust in parties require costly survey polls. Information on features such as organizational strength or coherence will sometimes be impossible to obtain without in-depth field research' (2008: 11).

At the same time, rightfully arguing that 'single parties and the party systems remain different phenomena and it is important to analyze them separately' (Ibid: 6), Basedau and Stroh put forward probably the most comprehensive existing model of party institutionalization measurement. Using Randall and Svasand's conceptualization, they also propose a four-dimensional model consisting of the following elements: roots in society, relating to the strength of ties between the party organization and the society in acts in;⁴⁴ autonomy, i.e. the level of independence from powerful individuals within or interest groups outside the party;⁴⁵ organizational strength;⁴⁶ and coherence, that is the party's ability to act as a unified organization.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Often referred to in the institutionalization literature (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Mainwaring, 1998; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001), this particular dimension Basedau and Stroh measure by the following indicators: party age relative to independence, party age relative to multiparty period, volatility of electoral support in the most two recent legislative elections, and the strength of links to civil society (qualitative assessment) (2008: 12-13).

⁴⁵ Also mentioned by a number of authors (Panebianco, 1988; Dix, 1992; Levitsky, 1998; Randall, 2006), autonomy is measured by Basedau and Stroh with respect to the following indicators: number of alternations in party leadership, changes in electoral support after such alternation(s), decisional autonomy from individuals and groups (qualitative assessment), and popular appreciation of particular party, i.e. the level of popular identification with it (Ibid).

⁴⁶ It is measured by membership strength, regularity of party congresses' organization, the amount of material and personal resources, and nationwide organizational presence (Basedau and Stroh, 2008: 12-14).

⁴⁷ Building upon the work of Dix (1992), Mainwaring (1998), Kuenzi and Lambright (2001), and Basedau (2007), the authors use three indicators to measure the level of party's coherence: prevalence of floor-crossing and/or defections from the parliamentary group during the legislative period, tolerance for intraparty dissidence (excluding massive violations of party statutes and principles), and relations between the factions within a party (whereby 'moderate relations as opposed to splits and heavy infighting work best for coherence') (Ibid).

Thus created institutionalization index, Basedau and Stroh use to analyze 28 political parties in nine countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The significance of general contribution they made to bridge the gap between the theoretical elaboration and empirical study of party institutionalization cannot be overemphasized. However, when it comes to the analysis of political parties in hybrid regimes, certain limitations of their measurement model – as argued in the following section – become fully apparent.

2.2.2. Party institutionalization in hybrid regimes

A considerable number of hybrid regimes, as thoroughly elaborated in the previous chapter, did not last too long. In fact, in the post-communist world, most of them democratized within a decade after the establishment. Therefore, a number of institutionalization indicators mentioned by Basedau and Stroh are either irrelevant (e.g. party age) or often inapplicable (e.g. party leadership alternations) in these cases. The same goes for Bertoa's measurement model which, in line with the work of Webb and White (2007), implies the existence of the two basic dimensions of party institutionalization: social rootedness and organizational systemness. When it comes to the latter, the author uses the average age of a party organization as the basic indicator of the level of its systemness. Average party age, he argues, has been widely regarded by scholars as the most important measure of an organization (2011: 8-10). At the same time, to measure rootedness in society, Bertoa employs Lewis' Index of Party Stabilization which, he explains, 'involves the progressive enhancement of the proportion of the total vote for political parties in a given election over time – by 20 per cent for a party's second appearance in the parliament, 40 per cent for the third, 60 per cent for the fourth, 80 per cent for the fifth, and so forth'

(Ibid: 9). Both indicators, thus, presuppose rather longer existence of party organizations which, as already suggested, renders the measurement of their institutionalization in many hybrid regimes impossible.

Furthermore, the fact that while focusing on party organization strength most institutionalization students tend to ignore its structure and take its amount as the only analytically relevant category, represents another major obstacle to better understanding of party institutionalization in hybrid regimes. Namely, there is strong empirical evidence that, regardless of their power capacity, parties in newly created (formally) democratic systems regularly serve as ‘little more than the personal mobilization instruments for ambitious politicians’ (Randall and Svasand, 2002: 19).⁴⁸ Moreover, whereas such personalistic leadership may ‘contribute at the initial stages to party cohesion and survival’, in the longer run, and in the absence of effective routinization, ‘it could seriously inhibit institutional development’ (Ibid).⁴⁹ Therefore, for successful research on political parties in countries without a longer tradition of political pluralism, the knowledge about the structure of their power is absolutely crucial.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, scholars regularly fail to look inside it while analyzing the level

⁴⁸ In his analysis of party organizations in post-communist Europe, Petr Kopecky thus notes that the most likely organizational forms to develop in this particular political context are ‘formations with loose electoral constituencies, in which a relatively unimportant role is played by the party membership, and the dominant role by party leaders’ (1995: 517). John Ishiyama explains this by the following reasons: a) parties are likely to be forced to appeal to a wide clientele of voters, largely because parties cannot count on voters having preexisting party loyalties, since under authoritarian rule such loyalties between party and individual simply did not exist; b) parties are likely to favor relatively small memberships because parties do not depend on members for financial resources (rather they rely on the state), and small membership limits the probability of the emergence of potentially powerful challenges to the existing leadership; c) the depoliticized citizenry in post-communist systems are unlikely to identify intensively with all-encompassing ideologies and party symbols; rather citizens are more likely to identify with strong personalities (2002: 273).

⁴⁹ In this regard, focusing on political parties in the Third World countries, Randall notes that when the party leader is the national president, the organizational vitality and adaptability of the party are likely to suffer (1988: 179).

⁵⁰ I would like to thank Anelle Mendez for helping me with this formulation.

of institutionalization of political parties. Instead of opening that black box, they most of the time seek merely to describe its surface.⁵¹

Thus, for instance, albeit mentioning internal organization as one of the two dimensions of party institutionalization, Bertoa (2011), as outlined above, takes party age as the basic measurement unit. Alike him, Yardımçı-Geyikci uses two-dimensional model of party institutionalization, consisting of 'organizational development' and 'roots in society'. The former, indicating the strength of party organization, the author operationalizes by referring to the following indicators: membership strength, territorial comprehensiveness and financial resources (2013: 4). At the same time, a number of authors did point out organizational independence from powerful individuals as one of the main preconditions for party institutionalization. Yet, most works on party internal organization deal with this particular issue merely in the context of party system institutionalization analysis (Huntington, 1968; Janda, 1980; Mainwaring, 1998; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001; Randall and Svasand, 2002; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2005; Webb and White, 2007; Bertoa, 2011). In fact, the only study that focuses entirely on institutionalization of political parties and thereby accentuates the significance of their decisional autonomy is the one by Basedau and Stroh (2008). In their words:

'The independence from Big Men, who might create parties as electoral vehicles to get access to power rather than emerging from them, may be best captured through the number of changes in the leadership, if any, since the founding of the party and the subsequent changes in electoral support' (Ibid: 13).

⁵¹ Even those authors interested particularly in hybrid regime political parties tend not to pay attention to the structure of their power. Building upon their work, Levitsky and Way thus use two variables to operationalize party strength: *scope*, referring to the size of a party's infrastructure (i.e. degree to which it penetrates the national territory and society), and *cohesion*, proving incumbents' ability to secure the cooperation of partisan allies within the government, in the legislature, and at the local or regional level (2010: 61-64).

For the reasons mentioned above, however, the measurement they here propose cannot serve the purposes of research on the institutionalization of political parties in hybrid regimes. Thus, practical operationalization for measurement of political party institutionalization remains not only underdeveloped in the pertinent literature (Ibid: 22), but basically unusable in the analysis of party institutionalization within this specific political context.

If the discussion so far has helped to clarify meaning and criteria of party institutionalization, Randall and Svasand suggest, we need finally to consider how this process is affected by the circumstances of democratic transition (2002: 16). At this moment, however, widely applicable considerations of that sort are yet to be offered. In light of that and with the aim of explaining the diverging outcomes of dominant political parties in hybrid regimes, the next chapter puts forward a new, parsimonious model of party institutionalization.

2.2.3. The model

This thesis argues that in the context of recently pluralized political systems party institutionalization primarily relates to the process through which a given party organization acquires political influence irrespective of its leader's. In line with that, to be able to stay in office in the face of collapse of the hybrid regime, its incumbent party needs to be institutionalized. As explained in the preceding chapter, in case of the existence of a viable democratic (anti-system) alternative, hybrid regime survival depends on incumbent party's survival in power. In simple terms, if challenged by democratic opposition, the ruling party needs to ensure continuity of electoral triumphs for the regime to last. At the same time, a numerous examples outlined in the first section of this chapter show that incumbent party survival in power is not

necessarily contingent upon regime survival. That is to say, the party may continue ruling in the face of regime collapse. And whether this will be the case depends predominantly on its own power.

Namely, in order to survive the regime change in office, the party first needs to alter the content of political competition by initiating democratic reforms. For that to be possible, political power needs to be vested in the incumbent party. Yet, many examples of recently pluralized political systems show that the power is usually concentrated in the hands of a single individual within the party. The personalization of political authority within a given incumbent party, as thoroughly elaborated in the following chapters, effectively precludes its institutionalization. When the authority gets concentrated in the hands of a single individual ‘the politics of personality prevails, making it more difficult for parties to develop coherent programs and identities’ (Ishiyama, 2002: 279). The institutionalization of political parties is, for this reason, limited as long as a party is the personal instrument of a leader or a small coterie (Mainwaring, 1999: 27).

Accordingly, in political competition with the opposition, these parties rely predominantly on the strength of their leaders’ personal political appeal. At the same time, this makes the course of their political development contingent upon their structurally determined political dependence on those in charge. Hence, at a moment of regime change, an incumbent party thus organized is likely to share political destiny of its leader. Put differently, as the political authority within the regime is monopolized by its leader, the party is likely to lose power as the regime collapses. To avoid this, that is to be able to stay in power notwithstanding the regime fate, the party needs to have a sufficient amount of decisional autonomy, i.e. to be institutionalized.

Therefore, to comprehend the reasons behind the diverging fates of hybrid regime dominant parties, one should primarily look at their institutionalization. In the aforementioned works, however, despite the conceptual and theoretical richness as well as a number of valuable measurement models, we cannot find an appropriate tool for such research. This, as previously explained, is a result of the analytical neglect of the power structure of these parties which in newly established formally democratic regimes represents the key for understanding their functioning. With an ambition to venture beyond the confines of the current literature on political parties in hybrid regimes and, in particular, to offer a potential explanation of their diverging fates in the last two decades, this research proposes a simple two-dimensional model of party institutionalization (*Table 4*).

Table 4. Party institutionalization model

Dimensions	Indicators
Internal (Organizational)	(De-) personalization of power in party organization
External (Affectional)	Popular perception of party organization

The internal dimension of the model relates to the composition of power within party ranks. It shows the level of power personalization in a party organization. In general, the way decision-making power is structured within a political party tells a lot about the way it operates. As pointed out by Panebianco, ‘in order to examine a party’s organizational order we must first investigate its power structure: how power within the organization is distributed, how it is reproduced, how power relations get modified and with what organizational consequences’ (1988: 21). In hybrid regimes, as elaborated above, (the lack of) institutionalization of ruling parties – critical for their

survival in power – is determined by the distribution of power within their structures. For that reason, to comprehend a party's given political purpose and there from infer about the course of its political development, one should look inside of its organizational structure rather than at the amount of its power.

In this regard, considering the relatively short lifetime of most hybrid regimes and the resultant inapplicability in these cases of the aforementioned indicators measuring party institutionalization, we need to identify an alternative way to assess the level of power personalization within a given party organization. In addition to the data collected through the much-needed in-depth qualitative research, the assessment, if possible, should also be based on the analysis of the composition of party leadership and central bodies. The argument here is that in cases of power personalization, party heads will seek to ensure obedience to their authority through constant and significant changes of these organs' makeup.

The external dimension of the party institutionalization model refers to the popular perception of party organization. Building upon the existing literature, it shows the extent to which a party becomes established in the public imagination as 'a factor shaping the behavior of political actors' (Randall and Svasand, 2002: 23). This is important for the overall political dynamics of hybrid regimes as their survival is usually conditioned by electoral performances of their ruling parties. At the same time, these parties are, as previously mentioned, often 'more like entourages around party leaders than real party organizations with party programs' (Amundsen, 1997: 293). For this reason, the content of - and the success in - their political communication with the electorate is determined by the ensuing 'pathological fixation on their leaders' characteristics' (Ihonvbere, 1996: 21). In other words, the electoral

result of ruling parties in hybrid regimes depends as a rule on the political strength of personal appeal of those at their top.

To assess real political ‘weight’ of a hybrid regime dominant party, one should, then, find a way to measure it against the political ‘weight’ of its leader. In (semi-) presidential political systems, in which a party leader is expected to run for presidency, the juxtaposition of his and his party’s electoral results in an observed time period seems like the most efficient method of analysis. In parliamentary systems of governance, in which a party leader is likely to partake in legislative elections, a party’s electoral results should be compared to those of its presidential candidate(s). In both cases, opinion polls data, if possible to obtain, should serve as a complementary source of information on the public perception of a party and its leader.

To summarize the argument, whether the ruling party will survive in power the collapse of hybrid regime (*party outcome*) depends on the way its power is internally structured and the way its organization is publicly perceived (*party institutionalization*). Having said that, the question remains why did some of these parties manage to institutionalize while the others did not. And, in particular, what explains the diverging patterns of their power organization. Put differently, why in the first place do dominant parties in hybrid regimes differ in terms of the level of power personalization?

2.2.3.1. Nationalist mobilization

Nationalist mobilization, to paraphrase Susan Olzak (1983), could be broadly defined as the process by which groups organize around some feature of national identity (such as nation’s history, language, symbols, culture) in pursuit of collective political

ends. Such political actions generally differ from ethnic/racial movements by the presence of demands for legitimate rights to sovereignty and/or authority to administer a specific territory as well as grievances founded upon the fact that such demands are not now being satisfied (Hechter, 2000; Olzak, 2013). Specific goals of nationalist movements vary (political autonomy, state-building, national unification, secession, etc.) depending on the given empirical context. At the same time, they typically share a number of defining traits, including the ideational primacy of the national question, the process of intense and massive popular mobilization, and the group loyalty to a leader who serves as a socially constructed symbol of the national struggle.

Primarily focused on the post-communist political context, the present study will argue that the salience of the national question in the process of political mobilization preceding the establishment of hybrid regime is what determines the structure of power of its dominant party. Fueled by the widely held ‘frustrated national ideals’ – referring to the strength of anti-communist/-establishment reform ideologies ‘based on the collective goal of national renewal’ (Horowitz, 2005: 11) – nationalist movements played a major role in redesigning political landscape of the post-communist states. The late 1980s collapse of European and Eurasian communist regimes inevitably led to the revival of national ideas, long-time kept under wraps of the official ideology. As noted by Bunce, ‘if the momentous changes of 1989-91 took communism off the political agenda, they also reminded us that another powerful idea, the nation, was still very much in play’ (2005: 407). Numerous examples across the region confirmed that nationhood, however politically ‘framed’,⁵² indeed

⁵² This is to say that political movements centered on the idea of nation do not necessarily aspire for an independent state creation. Their objectives, as Bunce points out, depend on ‘what national leaders define as the most desirable and politically practical ways to maximize their own power and the rights, representation,

‘generates collective power, creates a “we” (unity, legitimacy, permanence), enables mobilization and representation and produces people who are ready to make the highest of sacrifices for a political community that is both modern and based upon ethno-cultural and historical factors’ (Kuzio, 2001: 170).⁵³ What is more, national movements contributed significantly to the demise of communist regimes. As noted by Mark Beissinger:

‘It would be impossible to understand post-communist politics today without reference to the national dimension of the communist collapse – one of the reasons why any serious discussion of communism’s demise needs to explicate nationalism’s role in this process rather than treat it merely as a consequence of the collapse’ (2009b: 346).

Across the collapsing communist world, the national question emerged as a highly important and potentially highly profitable political issue. A great number of communist-successor parties therefore adopted what Ishiyama labels ‘the national-patriotic strategy’ which, through associating them with nationalism, was supposed to attract a wide variety of people (1998: 77). And while former communists thus sought ‘to find a new purpose’ in the new context of post-communism (Ziblatt, 1998: 119), similar political tactics was also embraced by various recently founded political organizations.

At the same time, regardless of political background, most of these parties were dominated by charismatic individuals embodying the national idea which they were structured around. The formation of the national movements in post-communist

and resources of the nations they claim to represent’ (2005: 410). Therefore, as demonstrated by the example of re-Sovietization of Belarus identity under Lukashenka, a pursuit of national interest can go completely against its conventional understanding.

⁵³ Analyzing the way the republican elites throughout the Soviet Union sought to politically benefit from the nationalist resurgence during that period, Mikhail Molchanov writes the following: ‘Where ethnicity had heretofore been politically dormant, it now came in handy. Where elements of grassroots nationalism had previously existed, they received a major boost as economic growth slowed down and job prospects declined’ (2000: 264).

countries created a breeding ground for the emergence of charismatic political leaders. As originally pointed out in Max Weber's classical study (translated by Gerth, 1958), charismatic leader differs from other political leaders by the ability to inspire loyalty toward himself as the source of authority, apart from an established status (quoted in *Willner and Willner*, 1965: 80-81). His charismatic appeal resides with the perception of his followers and, as a rule, stems out of their material and/or spiritual distress.⁵⁴ Charismatic leader then comes forward and 'presents himself in a convincing way to the sufferers as one who can lead them out of their distress by virtue of special personal characteristics or formula for salvation' (Tucker: 1977: 388). The need for charismatic leadership, 'as a bridge between discredited past and the uncertain future', is usually articulated in times of major social change, when the basis of traditional legal authority is undermined and a climate of uncertainty and unpredictability prevails (Willner and Willner, 1965: 80-81).

Such atmosphere, most often exemplified by the colonial age's terminal phase, was also characteristic for the last period of the communist era. Culminating in the late 1980s, institutional and ideological crisis uprooted the very foundations of the multinational communist states. At the same time, it exacerbated submerged sense of national grievance across multiple groups and created a tide of nationalist mobilization (Beissinger, 2002: 47). Where those grievances (frustrated national ideals) were found, it was then likely to expect the emergence of charismatic leaders that would politically advance the national program against the existing regime. In the breakdown of other means of legitimizing authority, these leaders would seek to

⁵⁴ As emphasized by Panebianco, the charisma does not necessarily result from the leader's messianic components but from 'a state of acute social stress that gets the people ready to perceive as extraordinarily qualified and to follow with enthusiastic loyalty a leadership offering salvation from distress' (Ibid).

evoke and associate with themselves the sacred symbols of their culture, promising to destroy the current order and build a new one (Willner and Willner, 1965: 84).

Among them, we find cases of leadership such as Lech Walesa's, Vaclav Havel's, and Milan Kučan's, which greatly contributed to the process of post-communist democratization in their respective countries.⁵⁵ Yet, the list of those, including Croatia's Franjo Tuđman, Serbia's Slobodan Milošević, Slovakia's Vladimir Mečiar as well as a number of political leaders in post-Soviet states, who used the national question to perpetuate authoritarian rule is certainly longer. The process of necessary transformation of their popular legitimacy into political authority resulted in the creation of highly personalized systems of governance. As political power thus came to be concentrated in the hands of these leaders, their respective party organizations, accordingly, came to be subordinated to their individual political goals. In these cases, hence, we witnessed the creation of monocratic form of headship 'defined by the prime role of a single person in the shaping of a group's decision', where 'the entire organization tends to identify with him' (Schonfeld, 1981: 231).

As anticipated by Panebianco's genetic model of party organization and development, the organizational characteristics of these parties were thus determined by the manner in which they originated and consolidated. It is critical for the process of the party's formation, Panebianco wrote, 'whether or not the party is essentially created by, and vehicle for, a charismatic leader [...] who imposes himself as the undisputed founder, conceiver, and interpreter of a set of political symbols which become inseparable from his person' (1988: 50). And indeed, albeit in a certain regard programmatic, i.e. (re)built to 'advertise ideals about a desirable

⁵⁵ Interestingly, Russia's Boris Yeltsin is also mentioned in this context on the basis of his success in thwarting the attempted hard-line coup d'état in August 1991 (Bernhard, 1998)

society as the collective good they promise to produce' (in this case, protection and promotion of the national interest), these political organizations took a form of the charismatic party, representing 'not much more than an unstructured mass of people rallying around a leader' (Kitschelt, 1995: 449). Yet, due to political conditions favorable to their national-patriotic strategy, a number of them triumphed in the first multiparty elections. This, as explained in the first chapter, marked the inception of hybrid regimes in many post-communist countries.

Consequently, throughout the following period, these countries were ruled by political organizations in which the decision-making power was effectively monopolized by their leaders. The dominance of the national idea in the course of political mobilization leading to the establishment of these hybrid regimes thus resulted in the personalization of power within their respective dominant parties. As demonstrated in *Table 5*, these parties would therefore fail to institutionalize and eventually lose power when the regime change took place. Following the same logic, in post-communist countries which, subsequent to the introduction of multiparty competition, saw the formation of hybrid regimes but had not experienced the aforementioned rise of nationalist sentiment the regime dominant parties are expected to have a rather different, i.e. de-personalized structure of power.

Table 5. Causal mechanism* explaining the effect of nationalist mobilization on party outcomes in hybrid regimes

Theoretical level	Frustrated national ideals	Nationalist mobilization		The lack of party institutionalization		Party defeat
Empirical Level	The presence of a strong anti-regime reform ideology structured around the collective goal of national renewal	Broad-based and intensive political action is set in motion with the aim of fulfilling this goal	Political legitimacy is transferred from the mobilized group to a charismatic leading figure of a party organization faction best representing the national movement	Political power is personalized within the party organization triumphant in the elections establishing hybrid regime	Dominant party politically relies on the strength of its leader's personal appeal, thus having no decisional autonomy and political interests irrespective of his	The party loses power in the elections marking the regime change

Source: Author's model; *the mechanism is shaded

In a nutshell, the model this research will test rests upon two presumptions. First, diverging fates of the dominant parties in hybrid regimes, i.e. the fact that while most of them lost power as the regime change took place a number of them managed to stay in office were determined by these parties' (lack of) institutionalization. Second, (the lack of) institutionalization of hybrid regime dominant parties was determined by the character of political mobilization leading to the regime establishment, i.e. the salience of the national question in this process.

The next section explains the choice of a particular methodological tool employed in the case study analysis testing the model as well as of criteria used for selecting the given cases.

2.3. Methodology

2.3.1. Process tracing method

The theoretical model put forward in the preceding section implies the existence of an observable causal mechanism which links the party outcome in question (*the loss of power*) with the given conditions (*nationalist mobilization and the lack of party institutionalization*). The most important tool of causal inference in qualitative and case study research (Brady and Collier, 2010; George and Bennett, 2005; Mahoney, 2012) and, according to some, the only one that permits a systematic analysis of causal mechanisms (Beach and Pedersen, 2012) is process tracing. In broad terms, process tracing can be defined as an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence – often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena (Collier, 2011: 824). As noted by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, this particular method of qualitative analysis, attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between independent variables and the outcome of the dependent variable (2005: 206). As they effectively explain in the following paragraph, process tracing is about what lays in-between observable effects and their potential causes:

‘Suppose that a colleague shows you fifty numbered dominoes standing upright in a straight line with their dots facing the same way on the table in a room, but puts a blind in front of the dominoes so that only number one and number fifty are visible. She then sends you out of the room and when she calls you back in you observe that domino number one and domino number fifty are now lying flat with their tops pointing in the same direction; that is, they co-vary. Does this mean that either domino caused the other to fall? Not necessarily. Your colleague could have pushed over only dominoes numbered one and fifty, or bumped

the table in a way that only these two dominoes fell, or that all the dominoes fell at once. You must remove the blind and look at the intervening dominoes, which give evidence on potential processes' (Ibid: 206-7).

As noted by John Gerring, process tracing allows us to 'peer into the box of causality' so as to 'locate intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purported effect' (2007: 45).⁵⁶ By 'attempting to trace the theoretical causal mechanism(s) linking X and Y', process tracing goes beyond correlations and, hence, differs from most comparative analysis methods (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 12). In this regard, process tracing proved to be a very useful methodological tool as it can 'identify single or different paths to an outcome, point out variables that were otherwise left out in the initial comparison of cases, check for spuriousness, and permit causal inference on the basis of a few cases or even a single case' (George and Bennett, 2005: 215).

Whether it focuses on 'the unfolding of events' or, as this thesis does, 'situations *over time*' (Collier, 2011: 824) process tracing usually comprises two research stages: clarification of the theoretical model and its subsequent empirical verification. In the second phase, the process is traced 'in a very specific, theoretically informed way' through 'a series of theoretically predicted intermediate steps' (Checkel, 2008: 363). Yet, process tracing can take different forms primarily depending on the nature of the causal process under investigation. In this regard, one can differentiate between the processes characterized by linear causality (straightforward chain of events); those in which the outcome results from the convergence of several conditions, independent variables or causal chains; those

⁵⁶ To that goal, one must perform 'the difficult cognitive feat of figuring out which aspects of the initial conditions observed, in conjunction with which simple principles of many that may be at work, would have combined to generate the observed sequence of events' (Goldstone, 1991: 59).

where casual variables that are not independent of each other interact; and, finally, *path-dependent* processes (which this thesis argues to have identified in the cases it analyzes) consisting of ‘a sequence of events, some of which foreclose certain paths in the development and steer the outcome in other directions’ (George and Bennett, 2005: 212). Dealing with the last type of causal processes, process tracing can assess ‘to what extent and how possible outcomes of a case were restricted by the choices made at decision points along the way’ (Ibid: 213).

Contingent upon the character of the analyzed process, the design of process tracing can vary from ‘detailed narrative’ with no theoretical ambitions to more general theory-based explanation (Ibid: 210-211). This thesis uses process tracing as ‘analytic explanation’ which aims to convert a historical narrative into an analytical causal explanation couched in explicit theoretical forms, while focusing on ‘what are thought to be particularly important parts of an adequate or parsimonious explanation’ (Ibid: 215). Its methodological approach, as elaborated in the following section, is *theory-centric*, with the ambition of ‘building parsimonious causal mechanism that can be generalized across a bounded context of cases’ (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 19). In that sense, the thesis departs from the premise that, although historical sequences are unique *in toto*, it is possible to recognize some aspects of those sequences that are similar to those of other times and places (Goldstone, 1991: 50).

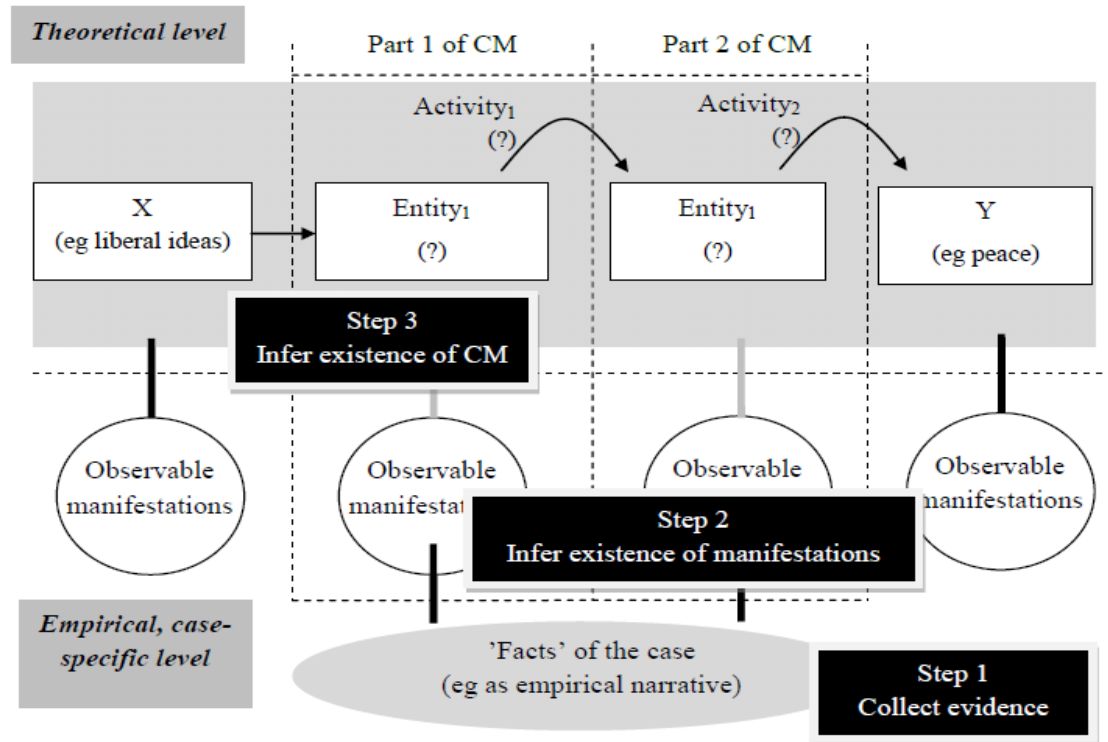
2.3.2. Theory-building process tracing

Depending on the research purposes for which it may be used, one can identify at least three different types of process tracing: *theory-testing* (testing whether a hypothesized causal mechanism is present in a population of cases of a

phenomenon), *theory-building* (building a theoretical mechanism between X and Y that can be generalized to a population of a given phenomenon), and *outcome-explaining* (crafting a sufficient explanation that accounts for a particularly puzzling historical outcome) (Ibid: 19-20).

Contrary to the last, the first two types have ‘theoretical ambitions beyond the confines of the single case’ (Ibid). In this regard, process tracing may be used as an indispensable tool for theory testing and theory development because it ‘generates numerous observations’ based on which ‘different causal paths that lead to a similar outcome in different cases’ can be identified (George and Bennett, 2005: 215). These causal paths can then serve as ‘building blocks for empirical, inductive construction of a typological theory’ (Ibid). At the same time, even though they ‘share the focus on tracing a generalizable causal mechanism by detecting its empirical manifestations’, theory-testing and theory-building process tracing differ in a sense that, in the former, theory ‘comes’ before fact, whereas in the latter, it is the other way around (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 25). Thus, while theory-testing type enables inferences to be made about whether a causal mechanism was present and whether it actually functioned as predicted in a given case, theory-building process tracing (see *Figure 1*) starts with a structured analysis of empirical material aimed to detect a plausible hypothetical causal mechanism (Ibid: 24-25).

Figure 1. Theory-building process tracing (*Democratic peace example*)⁵⁷



Source: Beach and Pedersen (2012)

This thesis employs theory-building process tracing, commonly utilized in two particular research situations: when we know that there is a correlation between X and Y, but we are in the dark regarding potential mechanisms linking the two (*X-Y centric theory building*) as we do not have theory to guide us; and when we are familiar with an outcome (Y), but where we are unsure what are the causes (*Y-centric theory building*) (Ibid: 25). In the latter case, the analysis – such as this one – traces the causal process backwards from Y toward a plausible X (Ibid).

Furthermore, most likely due to inductive character of the theory-building process tracing, which makes its practice rather demanding, this particular method is surprisingly neglected. ‘To our knowledge’, Beach and Pedersen write, ‘no attempts

⁵⁷ Bold lines represent direct inferences; shaded lines stand for indirect (secondary) inferences; shaded area shows what is being traced (Ibid)

have been made to show how it actually is done in practice in the literature' (Ibid: 25). In view of that, this thesis applies general principles of theory-centric process tracing to the specific nature of the process it investigates. Its main goal, to reiterate, is to establish an uninterrupted causal path linking the putative causes to the observed effect, at the appropriate level of analysis as specified by the theoretical model being tested (George and Bennett, 2005: 222). In addition, tracing a theoretical causal mechanism that is expected to be present across a population of cases, it includes in the theoretical model only '*systematic parts* of the mechanism [...] which are believed to have causal effects beyond the given empirical context' (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 78).

Put differently, another ambition of this thesis is to identify a causal mechanism that is generalizable to the level of a mid-range theory (Ibid: 25). Yet, the lack of a solid theoretical background – from which, in contrast, theory-testing process tracing departs – considerably limits the inferential power of theory-building process tracing. It is therefore important to acknowledge that this particular process tracing variant does not claim that the detected causal mechanism is sufficient to explain the outcome (Ibid: 26). A sufficient cause, to borrow from Mahoney et al, is the one 'whose presence inevitably leads to the outcome' (2009: 121). This thesis hence envisages the possibility of the existence of 'more than one hypothesized causal mechanism consistent with any given set of process tracing evidence' (George and Bennet, 2005: 222). At the same time, in the following section, it seeks to assess and exclude some of the potential alternative explanations of the observed outcomes.

To that goal, one could also support process tracing application by counterfactual analysis. Yet, as noted by George and Bennett, 'a plausible, useful

counterfactual case is often not possible and, if attempted, does not add much, if anything in support of a historical explanation, especially if that explanation is a very complex' (Ibid: 231). Judged by their criteria, the explanation proposed by this thesis is very complex since, on the one hand, it is given 'in the form of a sequential development over time, and not a single variable or cluster of variables at a given point in time', and, on the other, 'the causal variables in the explanation are not independent of each other but interdependent' (Ibid).

Besides, the employment of multiple types of evidence for the verification of a single inference represents 'the hallmark of process tracing' (Gerring, 2007: 172). With respect to that, the combination of different types of causal claims – to use the notion of Craig Parsons (2007) – comprised in the explanation proposed by this thesis also contributes to its complexity. Thus, the first claim (about the character of the processes of political mobilization) should be considered 'ideational' as it refers to 'what people do as a function of the cognitive, affective or instinctual elements that organize their thinking, and see these elements as created by certain historical groups of people' (Ibid: 12). Ideational instructions, as demonstrated throughout the following chapter, 'might be so powerful that someone could interpret any objective structural or institutional situation as encouraging (or at least allowing) the same actions' (Ibid: 97). The ensuing claim (about the structure of power in the political parties) belongs to the 'institutional' category given that it 'explains what people do as a function of their position within man-made organizations and rules (and within the path-dependent process implied by man-made constraints)' (Ibid: 12). Put differently, it assigns the causal force to a position within the observed institutional constraints and incentives (Ibid: 71).

Because of the absence of a well-structured theoretical framework for the analysis and, in particular, the complexity of the explanatory mechanism it puts forward, this thesis accepts the suggestion of George and Bennett that, in order to infer and construct a causal chain account of how various conditions and variables interacted over time to produce historical outcome, ‘the burden of supporting a historical explanation must be met not by using a counterfactual but by employing the process tracing method’ (2005: 231). Finally, in doing so, this thesis uses the conceptualization of conditions – and not variables – commonly applied to analyzing set-theoretical relationships. Variables, as noted by Gerring, are employed to describe probabilistic causal relationship ‘where an increase in X raises the probability of Y occurring in a given case’ (2005: 167). In contrast, when concepts are used, the focus is not upon defining the full variation of the concept, i.e. *differences in degree*, but instead the concept itself and its *negation* (that is, the concept is present or not present), i.e. *differences in kind* (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 73).

2.3.3. Case selection

Case connotes ‘an instance of a class of events’ (George and Bennett, 2005: 17), or more precisely, ‘a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time’ (Gerring, 2007: 19). Defining the universe of cases, Munck points out, is a fundamental task in any research project (2004: 109). ‘Ideally’, he writes, ‘there is a close interaction between the investigator’s understanding of this universe and choices about the theory that guides the study, the specific hypotheses to be investigated, the approach to measurement that is adopted, and the selection of cases for analysis’ (Ibid).

This is of particular importance in case study research which investigates either one phenomenon (most often nation-state) or a selected few, whereby ‘the inference pertains to provide insight into a causal relationship across a larger population of cases’ (Gerring, 2007: 86). On the one hand, both large-N cross-case analysis and case study analysis aim to identify cases that reproduce the relevant causal features of a larger universe (representatives) and provide variation along the dimensions of theoretical interest (causal leverage) (Ibid: 88). Yet, while random case-selection is regularly applied in large-sample studies, it might prove highly problematic in case study research as there is no guarantee, given the small sample, that it will provide leverage into the research question that animates an investigation (Ibid: 87). Purposive (nonrandom) selection is, therefore, strongly advised in case study analyses.⁵⁸

Seeking to explain party outcomes in three hybrid regimes, this thesis qualifies as a case study research. Consistent with the aforementioned advice, it employs the most-similar method⁵⁹ to make a case-selection. In the exploratory, i.e. hypothesis-generating studies – such as this one – the researcher looks for cases that differ on the outcome of theoretical interest but are similar on various factors that might have contributed to that outcome (Ibid: 131). The analysis thus begins with an apparent

⁵⁸ To that goal, Gerring writes, it is possible to choose between one of the following case-selection procedures: a) ‘typical’ (cases are selected as typical examples of a given cross-case relationship); b) ‘diverse’ (cases exemplify the full range of variation on X1, Y, or X1/Y); c) ‘extreme’ (cases illuminate extreme/unusual values on X1 or Y relative to some univariate distribution); d) ‘deviant’ (cases deviate from an observed cross-case relationship); e) ‘influential’ (cases with influential configurations of the independent variables); f) ‘crucial’ (cases are most- or least-likely to exhibit an outcome); g) ‘pathway’ (cases where X1 and not X2, is likely to have caused a positive outcome); h) ‘most-similar’ (defined above); and i) most-different (cases are different on specified variables other than X1 and Y) (Ibid: 90).

⁵⁹ Also referred to as the ‘method of difference’ (Mill, 1843).

anomaly: observed cases are ostensibly quite similar and yet demonstrate unexpectedly different outcomes (Ibid).

The present study reflects upon the diverging fates of incumbent parties in hybrid regimes that existed in Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro in the 1990s. While in the former two, parties that had been ruling in hybrid regimes lost power when these regimes collapsed, the latter's hybrid regime incumbent party remained in office in the face of the regime change. Such diverging party outcomes seem surprising in view of a number of similarities of the three cases. To begin with, in each country in the observed time period we saw text-book examples of hybrid regimes. Although elections were regularly organized, the ruling parties manipulated rules of the game and had, relative to the opposition, hyper-privileged access to power resources. On the other hand, such unfair political competition resulted in high-level coordination of divergent opposition groups in each state. At the same time, the period of incumbency of the three parties was marked by the violent collapse of former Yugoslavia and the resultant unprecedented socio-economic crisis. Throughout these years, unlike most post-communist European states, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia remained outside the processes of European and Euro Atlantic integration, hence largely isolated from Western democratizing pressures. Furthermore, these hybrid regimes came into being as a result of the process of political pluralization in the Yugoslav socialist federation. In fact, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia remained – at least officially – its integral parts for another two years. Previously, they witnessed more than seven decades of political development within the realms of a single political entity. In addition, following the disintegration of the communist Yugoslavia and until 2006, Montenegro and Serbia continued living in a joint state.

Thus, both the starting point in the evolution of the three hybrid regimes and the circumstances under which this process unfolded were, albeit specific, very similar. At the same time, one can also identify a number of different conditions in the cases under investigation, the most important of which relate to the institutional origins of the ruling parties (communist-successor parties in Montenegro and Serbia vs. newly-created anti-establishment party in Croatia), their economic policies (maintaining state-ownership in Montenegro and Serbia vs. privatization in Croatia), and the level of incumbent repression of the opposition forces (high in Serbia vs. low in Croatia and Montenegro).

2.3.4. Model revisited

This implies that the diverging party outcomes in question cannot be explained with reference to a number of the most important findings of the related literature.⁶⁰ Some, positing the importance of power-sharing – through the establishment of party organizations (Brownlee, 2007; Magaloni, 2008; Reuter and Turovsky, 2012), electoral competition (Blaydes, 2011; Magaloni, 2008) and legislatures (Boix and Svolik, 2013; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Gandhi, 2008; Truex, 2013) – for credibility and longevity of authoritarian rule, are linked specifically to this regime type. Others, briefly discussed below, are also applicable to the study of hybrid regimes in which the above said political institutions exist by default. Thus, for instance, writing about single-party dominance in Mexico, Greene attributed it to incumbency advantages, i.e. the dominant party's resource advantages and its ability to raise the costs of participation in the opposition (2007: 5). The former, he holds, is

⁶⁰ Given the aforementioned lack of theoretical framework for the study of dominant parties in hybrid regimes, the thesis here refers to the general theory of hegemonic party rule. Yet, even in this regard, there are a very few solid theoretical blocks for one to build his research upon. As noted by Kenneth Greene, although the work on dominant party persistence and decline goes back at least half a century, we still lack a viable theory of single-party dominance (2007: 10).

of greater significance as it allows the incumbent 'to outspend on campaigns, deploy legions of canvassers, and, most importantly, to supplement policy appeals with patronage goods that bias voters in their favor' (Ibid). Even though all the three parties under investigation had this kind of political advantage, only one managed to survive in power the collapse of hybrid regime.

Moreover, Greene recognizes the economic role of the state as another determinant of dominant party's persistence/decline. 'The magnitude of the incumbent's resource advantages rises and falls with the degree of state ownership over the economy', he posits and further elaborates:

'Where substantial portions of the economy are publically controlled by an incumbent that politically dominates the bureaucracy, agents in the private sector have fewer resources [...] that they could use to support opposition parties [...] Conversely, privatization weakens dominant parties because it limits their access to public funds, and without these funds, well-greased patronage networks run dry, the machinery of dominance seizes up, and the increasingly fair marketplace for votes allows opposition parties to expand' (Ibid: 6-34).

Contrary to this – otherwise logical – argument, the present study identified similar party outcomes in Croatia and Serbia, despite the aforementioned difference in the incumbents' economic policies. Furthermore, Greene agrees with Magaloni (2006) that the failure of opposition coordination in Mexico was a major reason behind the perpetuation of PRI's political dominance during the last decades of its incumbency. And while this argument holds in the case of incumbent collapse in Croatia and, to a great extent, Serbia, it does not explain the incumbent survival in Montenegro where we find similarly high level of coordination of the opposition forces in the later phase of hybrid regime period. Finally, neither the levels of linkage and leverage (Levitsky and Way, 2010), which were similar in all the three hybrid regimes,

nor the levels of political oppression (Wintrobe, 1998), significantly lower in Croatia and Montenegro than in Serbia, can explain the observed party outcomes.

To summarize, a number of theoretically relevant traits shared by the three cases make the observed outcomes unexpected. At the same time, the above-listed – theoretically as significant – differences between the cases do not account for these outcomes. Hence, the present study departs from the situation where the outcome (Y) is known, but where we are unsure what caused it to happen (Beach and Pedersen, 2012: 218). To build a plausible theoretical causal mechanism linking X and potential Y(s), it takes empirical evidence (party outcomes) as the starting point, using backward induction based upon the empirical evidence (Ibid: 224). Thus, while acknowledging the possibility of alternative explanations, the thesis identifies a set-theoretical causal relationship (presented in the following two chapters) between the observed outcomes and the causal conditions. In addition, arguing that the hypothesized causal mechanism has been ‘previously overlooked’ (George and Bennett, 2005: 111), the thesis subsequently seeks to tests its robustness by tracing it beyond this particular empirical domain.

In collecting empirical material, i.e. causal process observations (Brady, Collier and Seawright, 2006), the thesis uses various sources of evidence usually found in case study research, including archival records, documentation, interviews, and direct observations (Yin, 2003: 85). At the same time, as it in great part relies on potentially biased observations, the thesis, wherever possible, employs triangulation of data sources through the development of converging lines of inquiry.

3. TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HYBRID REGIMES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

3.1. Historical background

One of the central elements of the research model outlined above is the salience of the national question in the process of political mobilization leading to hybrid regime establishment. In that regard, as thoroughly elaborated in this chapter, the cases of Croatia and Serbia, on the one hand, and Montenegro, on the other, differ considerably. At the same time, complex historical processes in the three countries that brought about this variation were to a great extent causally linked. The knowledge about their common political past, that is to say, is the key for understanding the character of the post-communist political transition of each of them.

The goal of an in-depth historical analysis that follows is therefore to identify the origin and explain the development of the political ideas that framed the processes of transformation of these states into hybrid regimes. It begins by examining the establishment and functioning of the first Yugoslav state (1918-1941), important as the political processes unfolding in Croatia and Montenegro during this period largely determined the course of their later political development. The general sense of disappointment in these two states caused by the unanticipated absolute Serb domination in the inter-war Yugoslavia fueled the creation of political (socialist and national) movements that would not only greatly contribute to its collapse but also set up a political frame for the discussion of the national question in future period. The political and economic status of Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro in the

socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1991) is subsequently analyzed. The character of the processes of political mobilization which resulted in the creation – as well as determined the structure of power – of hybrid regimes in the three states was conditioned by the federal government's (lack of) success in answering the national question during this period.

3.1.1. The fog of Yugoslavia

Throughout the second half of the 19th century, the concept of political unity of the South Slav peoples had, based on their shared ethnic and cultural identity, been largely formulated and vociferously advocated within political and intellectual circles in Croatia. Fighting to fulfill the Croats' aspirations for statehood, most of the prominent representatives of the Croatian national movement were as committed to this political goal. The greatest challenge to its realization related to the unification of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire into an autonomous political entity. Once this was achieved and political circumstances allowed, they were to join their brothers from Serbia and Montenegro in a new state founded on federalist principles.⁶¹

In April 1915, political leaders of the Habsburg South Slavs formed the Yugoslav Committee (*Jugoslavenski odbor*), a Croat-dominated political body whose sole purpose was to prepare the ground for their state unification with Serbs and Montenegrins. At the meeting held on the Greek island of Corfu in July 1917, the Committee delegation agreed the basic principles for unification with representatives

⁶¹ The 1905 formation of an alliance of Croat and Serb political parties in Austria-Hungary, and, in particular, a decade-long series of its electoral triumphs in Croatia and Dalmatia on the platform of Yugoslav unity and national self-determination, demonstrated a strong popular support for these ideas. With the outbreak of the First World War, the Yugoslav movement was provided an opportunity to 'actually begin working toward the unification of all South Slavs into one political unit' (Robinson, 2011: 23).

of the Serbian government. The new state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was, accordingly, to be organized as a constitutional, parliamentary and democratic monarchy, under the rule of the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty, in which the three names and the flags, the two scripts (Cyrillic and Latin) as well as all the religions would be equal. Yet, the character of the state organization was left to be decided by majority voting in the Constituent Assembly. Leaving the question of political relations within a future joint state effectively unanswered would, in fact, largely determine the course of its overall development.

In October 1918, as it became obvious that Austria-Hungary was unlikely to survive, the Croatian Parliament (*Sabor*) proclaimed the unification of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia into a single independent state. At the same time, it recognized the supreme political power of the recently founded National Council (*Narodno Vijeće*) of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.⁶² A new state of the South Slavs in the collapsing Empire was created as a result.⁶³ With the process of their political unification being effectively brought to an end, the idea of establishment of a joint Yugoslav state finally became a matter of political reality.

At that moment, Croatian political leaders saw an unconditional unification with the Kingdom of Serbia as the best way to achieve their national goals (Irvine, 1993: 33). In their view, this meant a smooth political transfer of Croatia to the winning side in the war. More importantly, becoming a part of a larger political community was supposed to prevent Italy to fully realize its territorial pretensions over Croatian

⁶² Established in Zagreb at the beginning of October 1918, the Council was to politically represent the three nations and work on their unification into an independent, democratic state (Goldstein, 1999: 111).

⁶³ Its official name was the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (*Država Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba*).

regions of Dalmatia and Istria.⁶⁴ In the chaotic historical circumstances, practical reasons adjacent to the genuine enthusiasm for the Yugoslav idea thus prompted them to endorse the immediate establishment of an independent South Slav state (Ibid: 32). The only voice of dissent within the National Council came from Stjepan Radić, the leader of the Croatian People's Peasant Party (*Hrvatska pučka seljačka stranka* - HPSS), who insisted that, prior to its political merger with Serbia, Croatia's autonomy should be firmly guaranteed. At the Council session held on 24 November 1918, Radić voted against sending its delegation to the upcoming meeting with the Serbian officials on the occasion of which the unification was to be formalized. 'Do not rush like drunken geese into fog', he unsuccessfully – and, it turned out, prophetically – appealed to the Council members. A week later, on 1 December, the Act of Unification (*Akt o ujedinjenju*) establishing the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (*Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* - KSHS) was signed in Belgrade.

For a vast majority of Croats and their political elite, this was a historical moment of 'unification of several nations on an entirely equal foundation' (Goldstein, 1999: 113). However, their great enthusiasm for the idea of South Slav political unity gave, soon after its formal embodiment, way to even greater disillusionment. Contrary to their vision of future political relations in the newly founded state, most Serbs believed that, by virtue of previous political experience and enormous sacrifice in the victorious war campaign, they should hold a preeminent political position (Irvine, 1993: 33). Having their own internationally-recognized state from 1878, they were generally 'less receptive to the idea of South Slav unity' (Ibid: 31). Instead, as

⁶⁴ By the 1915 Treaty of London, a secret plan between Italy and the Triple Entente (France, UK, Russia), the former was promised considerable post-war territorial gains in what are today Croatia and Slovenia in return for joining the alliance. Accordingly, by mid-November 1918, Italian troops were nearby Ljubljana, entered deep into Istria, occupied the city of Rijeka and were preparing to take other parts of Dalmatia. Under such circumstances, the National Council appealed to the international community for the assistance 'none was forthcoming-except potentially from Serbia' (Ramet, 2006: 43).

evident from the activity of their political representatives during this period, they were primarily concerned with the creation of a greater Serbian state that would unify the entire nation.⁶⁵

With the Kingdom's capital in Belgrade and the Karađorđević dynasty on its throne, the Serbian political leaders 'aspired to nothing less than political, economic, and cultural hegemony within the new state and saw strict centralism as a "logical" solution' (Ramet, 2006: 37). Accordingly, prior to the adoption of its constitution, they took over control of political institutions of the new state.⁶⁶ In the course of the following administrative reform carried out throughout 1919 and 1920, the powers of the Croatian governor (*Ban*) were significantly reduced, whereas the Parliament of Croatia – the main political symbol of its statehood – was firstly deprived of political authority and then dissolved. At the same time, the Serbian bureaucracy and army spread into Croatia thereby 'alienating the local population by occasionally behaving like an occupying force' (Irvine, 1993: 33).⁶⁷ By the time elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in November 1920, a unitary political arrangement had been virtually established, without the acquiescence of Croats (Ibid). From then moment on, Serbia firmly controlled the state of political affairs in the Kingdom (see *Table 6*).

⁶⁵ The ideological foundations of the (Great) Serbian policy were laid by Ilija Garašanin, who served as Serbian Minister of Interior and Prime Minister in the mid-19th century. His statement on the Serbian national interests (*Načertanije*), published in 1844 and followed by many future generations of Serbia's political elite, called for Serbian expansion into Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and northern Albania. In this regard, the new kingdom of South Slavs was actually 'the fulfillment of the dream of unifying all Serbs in one state' (Ramet, Ibid: 37).

⁶⁶ While participating with less than 40 per cent in its population, Serbs thus came to hold 2/3 of ministries in its first, provisional government. Moreover, the list for the provisional parliament of the KSHS which, according to the King's earlier proclamation, was supposed to be constituted by agreement between the Serbian officials and the National Council representatives was drawn up by one of his ministers.

⁶⁷ 'Only strict centralization could secure the position of Serbs in Croatia', then commented their political leader and the first minister of interior in the KSHS government, Svetozar Pribićević (Janjatović, 1995: 58).

Table 6. Serbian political representation in the Kingdom (in number of months – out of a total 268 – in the governmental office)

Prime Minister	Foreign Minister	Minister of Interior	Minister of Army and Navy
264	247	240	268

Source: Jović (2009)

The Croat sense of disenchantment was shared by many in Montenegro. Albeit fighting along the victorious Allies, the country lost its sovereignty that had been internationally recognized at the 1878 Berlin Congress. Instead of joining the newly created Yugoslav state as one of its constitutive parts, Montenegro was first annexed by Serbia and as such incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats.⁶⁸ By 1920, the smallest of the South Slavic nations thus became the only one in the world that had entered the Great War on the ‘winning side’ and finished it without its independence being restored (Roberts, 2007: 335). Even though a vast majority – if not all – Montenegrins wanted their country to become a part of the first Yugoslavia, a considerable number of them stood up against the manner in which the integration had been carried out. Any union with neighboring South Slav states, they believed, was supposed to be based on the principles of equality and respect for

⁶⁸ At the moment when the Montenegro’s king Nikola I Petrović and his government were still in exile, with a heavy presence of the ‘liberating’ Serbian military in the country, so-called Great National Assembly (*Velika narodna skupština*) convened in Podgorica and, predominantly composed of the delegates favoring unconditional integration of Montenegro into Serbia, declared the following, thereby suspending the country’s legal and political system: 1. The deposition of King Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš and his dynasty; 2. The union of Montenegro with Serbia in one unified state under the (Serbian) Karađorđević dynasty, and hence its entrance into the fatherland common to our people of the three names: Serb, Croat and Slovene; 3. The election of an Executive National Council composed of five Members who will have charge of affairs until the definite accomplishment of the union of Montenegro and Serbia; 4. The present Resolution of the Assembly will be brought to the cognizance of the ex-King of Montenegro, of the Serbian Government, of the Entente Powers and of all neutral States. Delegates in support of the proclamation printed their agendas on white paper whereas a few of those who were against printed theirs on green paper. Seemingly irrelevant, this detail would – at least symbolically – mark the beginning of the great White-Green (*Bjelaši-Zelenaši*) political divide between pro-unionist and pro-independence oriented Montenegrins. In words of Mark Thompson, ‘henceforth everything in Montenegro came in two colors’ (1992: 160).

Montenegrin sovereignty (Pavlović, 2003: 89). Still, as it became apparent that a status that recognized uniquely Montenegrin characteristics was unlikely to be bestowed on the Montenegrins, disillusionment with the state of affairs moved swiftly from vocal protest to armed uprising (Morrison, 2009: 43).

Yet, by the end of 1919 the military campaign against the unification was largely neutralized and the 'Montenegrin Question' was brought to a political end.⁶⁹ The absence of the term 'Montenegrin' in the Yugoslav census held that year symbolized 'an inglorious conclusion of Montenegro's period of independence' (Ibid: 46).⁷⁰ Throughout the following years, those opposing the unification found political refuge in the Montenegrin Federalist Party (*Crnogorska federalistička stranka*) and, in particular, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije* - KPJ).⁷¹ The latter's impressive result in Montenegro in the first election for the KSHS parliament held in November 1920 clearly demonstrated the level of popular dissatisfaction with the current political situation.⁷² Within the new, politically centralized Kingdom in which Montenegro comprised only two per cent of the population, its political, cultural and national role was 'marginal' (Rastoder, 2003: 133).⁷³ Hence, as they were 'forced to recognize that the regime was failing to

⁶⁹ Already in January 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes received an international recognition.

⁷⁰ Like Macedonians, Montenegrins were officially incorporated into the Serbian national corpus.

⁷¹ In line with Lenin's principle of self-determination, the Montenegrin communists proclaimed as their main political goal the creation of 'independent Soviet Republic of Montenegro as a part of the future Balkan federation' (Andrijašević and Rastoder, 2006: 199).

⁷² The KPJ won 38 per cent of the vote in Montenegro, whereas its result at the KSHS level was 12.4 per cent. A year later, the party was officially banned.

⁷³ Ivo Banac, prominent Croatian historian, describes the socio-economic conditions in Montenegro during that period in the following terms: 'Numbered only slightly less than 200,000 people living on some 3,733 square miles [, Montenegro had] the lowest population density in Yugoslavia. But this stone wilderness [...] could not sustain even that number. The only agriculture possible was limited to a few lowland karts fields, where a bit of maize grew alongside collars, chard and potatoes. Grapes and orchards worthy of the name could be found only in the *nahije* [areas – I.V.] of Crmnica and Metohija, the latter having been won by Montenegro in 1912. There was no industry, few crafts, and little trade' (1988: 290). With almost no funds allocated to its economic development, Montenegro's national income in 1938 stood at 31 per cent of the Yugoslav average. Its share in

address economic and social ills which had placed Montenegrins near the bottom of the heap in the new Yugoslav state' (Roberts, 2007: 337),⁷⁴ even many of those who had wholeheartedly supported the decisions of the Podgorica Assembly soon became disillusioned.⁷⁵

3.1.2.Croatia: Socialist revolution of national aspirations

Winning 50 out of 419 seats in the 1920 election for the Constituent Assembly, Radić's party became the fourth strongest in the KSHS and the leading political force among Croats. Outside Serbia, the anti-unitary sentiment seemed to be dominant at that moment as members of seven out of nine parties represented in the Assembly (all but Serbia-based Democrats and Radicals) refused at its initial session to swear an oath of allegiance to the King. Nonetheless, the Serbian parliamentary majority chose to ignore these political warning signs. In sharp contrast to the Corfu Declaration which had foreseen a qualified majority voting procedure, the Assembly decided that simple majority vote would be required for adoption of the new constitution. Profoundly dismayed by the Serb 'politics of no consensus' (Ramet, 2006: 44), the two biggest opposition parties, the HPSS and the Communists, left the Parliament and boycotted its work in the following period. In addition, at a 100,000-strong protest held in Zagreb on 8 December, Radić's party was renamed the Croatian *Republican Peasants' Party* (*Hrvatska republikanska seljačka stranka* - HRSS), thus openly casting off the idea of monarchy.

the total number of Yugoslav factories was 0.52 per cent, in total assets 0.20 per cent, in driving power 0.17 per cent, in the total number of jobs 0.10 per cent, and in industrial production value 0.33 per cent (Andrijašević and Rastoder, 2006: 183).

⁷⁴ Between 1919 and 1941, the volume of government grants for investments in Montenegro was smaller than the war reparations that it should have been awarded after the First World War (Ibid: 184).

⁷⁵ The scale of popular discontent with Montenegro's status in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is demonstrated by the fact that the number of killed, arrested, detained, and tried during the 1930s was 'several dozens of times higher in percentage' when compared to the population than in any other part of the KSHS (Ibid: 207).

Notwithstanding the lack of political compromise and not without a strong symbolic overtone, the constitution of the new Kingdom was officially proclaimed on 28 June 1921, at the anniversary of the Kosovo battle.⁷⁶ The manner in which it was adopted, while ensuring 'hegemonic position of Serb political leaders in the new state' (Irvine, 1993: 36), proved extremely detrimental to the prospects for its future political development. The fact that the constitution was passed without the participation of Croatia's most significant political party and without taking into consideration the demand that Croatia be granted autonomy within kingdom, rendered the kingdom illegitimate in the eyes of many Croats (Ramet, 2006: 57). Such impression was further strengthened by an extremely hostile attitude of the KSHS authorities toward political opposition. On 29 December 1920, the government issued a decree (*Obznana*) prohibiting all activities of the Communist Party (advocating a radical change of political and socio-economic system) until the adoption of the new constitution. Interestingly, at the local elections held in March, the Communists won a number of larger cities, including Belgrade and Zagreb. Subsequently, on 1 August 1921, the Assembly passed the Law on the Protection of Public Order and the State (*Zakon o zaštiti javne bezbednosti i poretka u državi*) which, here from being in effect until the very collapse of the Kingdom in 1941, banned the Communist Party, the third strongest in the country. Albeit not outlawed, the Croatian Republican Peasant Party was, because of the firm anti-monarchist stance, also put under an enormous political pressure.⁷⁷ Still, as the repression grew over time, so did the popular support for the HRSS.

⁷⁶ This 1389 battle against the Ottoman Empire occupies the central position in the Serbian national narrative.

⁷⁷ Thus, in May 1921, its political rallies were temporarily banned by the Ministry of Interior. Previously, due to his fierce criticism of the character of the new state, the Peasants' leader, Radić, had twice been sentenced to prison by its authorities. He served nearly a year, during 1919 and 1920.

In the 1923 parliamentary election, Radić's party came second, winning twice as many votes as three years earlier. Its electoral success was certainly influenced by the 1922 adoption of a new administrative law which, organizing the Kingdom into 33 centrally controlled administrative areas by completely disregarding 'historical principle' along which the administrative lines could have been drawn, infuriated Croats (Irvine, 1993: 37).⁷⁸ Albeit prevented from campaigning, the HRSS was allowed to participate in the 1925 election for the KSHS National Assembly. In the irregular political conditions, with its leader still being held in custody, the party again came second and actually managed to slightly improve electoral result.⁷⁹ To everyone's surprise, its leadership, pushed against the wall, agreed to make significant political concessions in order to open channels of communication with the authorities. In a letter read to the Assembly on 27 March 1925, the HRSS officially accepted the ruling dynasty and the 1921 constitution and, as a proof of good faith, even dropped the word 'republican' from its name. Thus becoming a legitimate political partner to Serbian parties, the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) formed an unlikely coalition government with the Radicals four months later. Even though their agreement 'had the potential to be a turning point for the kingdom', the two parties remained 'poles apart' (Ibid: 67). Merely two years later, following numerous political scandals and the collapse of as many as seven governments, a new parliamentary election was called.

⁷⁸ Another major blow to their enthusiasm for the new state came in January 1924, when the KSHS government officially recognized Italian annexation of the city of Rijeka. At that moment, Radić was out of the country, avoiding arrest for his July 1923 speech in which he said that Croatia was imprisoned in a 'Serbian Bastille' (quoted in *Ramet*, 2006: 62). In July 1924, seeking an international support for the Croatian cause, the HRSS leader made his party a member of the Peasant International, an organization established by the Communist International a year earlier. This 'essentially empty gesture of protest' was successfully manipulated by the Belgrade authorities so as to 'translate the HRSS's advocacy of Croatian interests into treason' (Ibid: 64). As a consequence, Radić was, upon his return from Moscow, put in prison, while the activities of his party were officially banned.

⁷⁹ The HRSS won 22.4 per cent, 0.5 more than in 1923.

Politically punished for the 'unholy' coalition with the Serbian Radicals,⁸⁰ the HSS still remained the dominant political voice of Croats in the Kingdom. Moreover, the party's political leverage grew significantly after its demands for power decentralization and democratic reforms came to be supported by the Independent Democratic Party which, led by a disappointed unitarist Svetozar Pribićević, represented a majority of Serbs in Croatia. Their coalition, formed in October 1927, soon became the main target of the nationalist political circles and media in Belgrade. By mid-1928, the campaign of demonization of its leaders reached the point where public calls for their murder began to appear in various pro-regime newspapers. In such atmosphere, on 20 June, Puniša Račić, a Radical deputy, shot Radić and four other HSS delegates in the National Assembly.⁸¹ A big wave of violent anti-government protests swept Croatia during the next couple of days, leaving at least five people dead. Radić's funeral in Zagreb turned into a mass popular demonstration against the Serbian hegemony. In words of Goldstein, people in Croatia were so shocked that 'much of the desire and ambition for alliance with Serbia and association in Yugoslavia disappeared' (1999: 121).

In essence, the physical removal of its main political symbol was just a tragic confirmation of the failure of Belgrade political elite to properly address the Croatian national question. Left without a satisfying political answer for an entire decade, it remained the greatest problem of the Yugoslav state for many more to come. By the time Radić was assassinated, 'a national movement of massive proportions' was built in Croatia (Irvine, 1993: 44). Serb political elite could therefore no longer afford to ignore Croatian demands for full political emancipation. The necessity of political

⁸⁰ The party finished the third in the September 1927 election, losing six out of previously 67 seats.

⁸¹ In view of the fact that Račić was subsequently placed under house arrest but never actually trialed, one could rightfully conclude that his action was taken in cooperation with, or at least with the consent of the ruling elite circles.

reforms in the KSHS became ever more apparent in August 1928, when the Peasant-Democratic Coalition leadership made a decision to break off relations with Serbia-based parties and cease to recognize the Kingdom. In light of an unprecedented political crisis in the country, following the violent clashes with police which on the tenth anniversary of its establishment, took place in Zagreb, the King decided to abolish the Constitution and dissolve the National Assembly. On 6 January 1929, his personal dictatorship was officially introduced.

The legalization of Aleksandar's absolute political authority, through the adoption of the Law on the Royal Rule and Supreme State Administration (*Zakon o kraljevskoj vlasti i vrhovnoj državnoj upravi*), was followed by a brutal campaign against his political opponents. Within the next few months, Vladko Maček, Radić's successor in the Peasant Party, and Svetozar Pribićević were arrested, together with hundreds of communist activists. Thereby making it clear that he would not endorse any regional autonomy, let alone a federalization of the political system, the King inaugurated on 3 October an administrative organization in which the borders of nine newly founded governorships (*Banovine*) cut across national-provincial borders from the pre-WWI period.⁸² On the same occasion, the country was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav name thus came to be officially used for the first time at the moment when its parliamentary life was 'at an all-time low' (Ibid: 44).

On 3 September 1931, the King issued a new constitution which, albeit formally guaranteeing the separation of powers, actually cemented his personal political rule. The protests against the royal absolutism subsequently broke out throughout the country, in Croatia under the banned national colors. In November

⁸² In addition, determined to cut people's attachment to their historical regions, the King strictly prohibited the public display of tribal, i.e. national symbols (Ramet, 2006: 81).

1932, the Croatian political opposition released a resolution named Zagreb Points (*Zagrebačke punktacije*),⁸³ in which, while strongly condemning Aleksandar's dictatorship and Serbian hegemony, demanded federalist reorganization of Yugoslavia. As a consequence, in April 1933, Maček was sentenced (for treason) as one of the signatories to three years in prison. A few months later, his deputy and at that moment *de facto* leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Josip Predavec, was killed nearby Zagreb. During these years, political violence and political trials in Yugoslavia became 'commonplace' (Ramet, 2006: 87).

In such political atmosphere, a new, extremely nationalistic political force emerged in Croatia under the name Ustasha movement (*Ustaški pokret*). Advocating radical methods in the struggle for its achievement, this organization's ultimate political goal was creation of an independent state of Croatia in which decision-making rights in political affairs would be reserved only for 'members of Croatian people by descent and blood' (Goldstein, 1999: 126). After orchestrating a series of violent anti-government protests throughout Croatia during 1932, *Ustaše* organized an assassination attempt against King Aleksandar in the course of his visit to Zagreb in December next year. Failing this time, they managed to carry out the deadly task a year later. On 9 October 1934, the King was killed in Marseille by a Bulgarian-Macedonian terrorist associated with *Ustaše*. Although, contrary to their expectations, the regicide did not cause an immediate collapse of Yugoslavia, it certainly had a strong impact on the Kingdom's political future as the country was now left without the supreme political authority and the main guarantor of its unity.

⁸³ Available at: <http://www.domovod.info/showthread.php?322-Zagreba%28ke-Punktacije-The-Zagreb-Points-1932>.

In the May 1935 parliamentary election, the Peasant-led opposition coalition won as much as 37.4 per cent of the vote despite numerous reported irregularities and the fact that voting was public.⁸⁴ At that moment, there was a general understanding that a resolution of what had come to be called ‘the Croatian question’ was long overdue (Ramet, 2006: 105). Even though a new Yugoslav Prime Minister, Milan Stojadinović appeared genuinely interested in finding a way out of the ensuing institutional deadlock,⁸⁵ his government failed to deliver a sustainable political solution. As a consequence, in the subsequent election for the National Assembly, held in December 1938, the opposition coalition of Popular Accord, headed by the HSS president Maček, won respectable 44.9 per cent of the vote. In Croatia, its list was supported by no less than 80 per cent of the vote. In view of the electoral results, the Yugoslav government finally agreed to open negotiations with the opposition on political reorganization of the country. Concluded in April 1939, the talks between Maček and a newly-elected Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, Dragiša Cvetković, resulted in the creation of Croatian autonomous region (*Banovina*).⁸⁶

Albeit ‘probably realistic and beneficial’, this solution of the Croatian question came too late (Irvine, 1993: 49). Within a year, the Yugoslav kingdom came to be encircled by the Tripartite Pact (Axis) forces. Put under an enormous political pressure, its government joined the Pact on 25 March 1941. Two days later, following massive, communist-organized protests in Belgrade, a group of high-ranking military

⁸⁴ In this regard, it should be mentioned that, by the electoral law adopted in 1933, 40 per cent of seats in the National Assembly were assigned to the government list in advance, whereas only the remaining 60 per cent were to be allocated in accordance with the vote.

⁸⁵ In an address to the National Assembly from July 1935, Stojadinović declared the following: ‘I believe that in the entire country we shall create such an atmosphere of mutual trust, in which it will be nonetheless easier to resolve the Croat question, which today looks so difficult’ (quoted in *Ramet*, Ibid: 101).

⁸⁶ In the territory consisting of today’s Croatia and Croat-dominated part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croat officials were granted policy-making authority in a number of areas, including justice, internal administration, health, agriculture, and industry. The Croatian Peasant Party thus finally assumed responsibilities of the governing party and engaged in state-building activities it had previously shunned (Irvine, 1993: 48).

officials organized a *coup d'état*. After a newly-elected government announced that it would not ratify the Pact accession treaty, Yugoslavia was attacked and swiftly occupied by its powers. Acting under the German-Italian patronage, *Ustaše* took power in Croatia and, on April 10, proclaimed a new Nazi puppet state under the name Independent State of Croatia (*Neovisna Država Hrvatska* - NDH). Judging from how they greeted the German army in Zagreb, Goldstein argues that most Croats seemed pleased at the defeat of Yugoslavia and the establishment of the NDH (1999: 134).

The enthusiasm, however, did not last long. Less than a month after the new state was officially proclaimed, its authorities passed first racial laws and set up a number of concentration camps. Subsequent mass executions of Serbs, Jews and Roma, carried out with the idea of creation of a pure living space for Croats, actually antagonized most of them.⁸⁷ The sense of popular disappointment with the NDH leadership was further heightened following its May decision to cede significant parts of Croat-populated territory to its allies, Italy and Hungary.⁸⁸ As a consequence, while initially advocating cooperation with the fascist state authorities, the leadership of Croatian Peasant Party soon switched to a passive resistance strategy. Although it may have seemed as a reasonable political choice, given the HSS's overwhelming political strength in Croatia and the lack of illegal work experience, 'sitting tight during

⁸⁷ The atrocities were so widespread and brutal that even German representatives in the NDH warned, in their early reports, that 'bestial behavior of the Ustasha authorities is causing unrest and rebellion', thus damaging German interests (Ibid: 147).

⁸⁸ Thus giving away shipbuilding industry and maritime economy to the former and most-developed agricultural areas to the latter, while at the same time paying for the occupying troops' maintenance, the NDH authorities soon faced a serious economic crisis, which additionally weakened their political position.

the war' tactics in fact proved detrimental to the Party's interests as most of its members subsequently joined Communists or Ustashas.⁸⁹

In contrast to the HSS, the Croatian Communist Party (*Komunistička partija Hrvatske* - KPH) soon organized armed resistance against *Ustaša* regime and foreign invaders. As stated in July 1941 proclamation of its Central Committee, the military campaign was to result in the 'liberation of the country from foreign rule and domination' and the 'establishment of a new democratic Yugoslavia of free and equal peoples', with 'a free Croatia built on the basis of self-determination' (Ibid: 142). At first mainly supported by Serbs in Croatia, who 'took up arms to defend their very lives from Ustasha genocidal terror' (Ibid: 140), the anti-fascist movement grew rapidly. At the moment of Italian capitulation in September 1943, Croatian Partisans – whose original number quadrupled by now – held under control more than a half of the NDH territory. By mid-1944, with the Germans in decline, the National Liberation Army's victory in the war loomed large on the horizon.⁹⁰ At the same time, as evident became major differences within the highest Communist ranks regarding political future of Yugoslavia and, in particular, Croatia's post-war status.

The Yugoslav Communists had, in fact, long been divided on the Croatian national question. While, throughout the inter-war period, those in Serbia advocated centralized political order in a future socialist Yugoslavia, thus downplaying importance of the Croat national aspirations, Croatian Communists strongly emphasized them, arguing for a federal state creation. For the reasons elaborated above, class and national struggle were, unlike Serbia, closely associated in Croatia.

⁸⁹ Maček's arrest in October 1941, followed by his five-month long imprisonment in the infamous Jasenovac concentration camp, and ensuing organizational paralysis of the Party, greatly contributed to its rapid membership loss.

⁹⁰ And, indeed, Belgrade was liberated on October 20. On 8 May 1945, Partisan troops entered Zagreb. The NDH thus caved in merely a day after the unconditional surrender of its main Nazi ally.

Hence, in the first-ever meeting of the Communist Party of Croatia, held on 1 August 1937, delegates pledged that ‘fighting for the national liberation of the Croat people’ was its most important task (Irvine, 1993: 78). Knowing that they had to respond to the people’s national sentiments so as to get sufficient popular support for their revolutionary struggle, the Croatian Communists adapted their tactics during the next couple of years to ‘the overwhelming political reality of the power of the Croat national movement and the Croatian Peasant Party’ (Ibid). Thus increasingly putting national before ideological, they started deviating from the official political course of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.⁹¹ For that reason, soon after he assumed the position of its head in 1937, Josip Broz Tito replaced a number of high officials of the KPH.

Regardless of the pressure from the Party central, Croatian Communists carried the idea of national interest over into the war. Based on it, the KPH would formulate a federalist state-building strategy that envisaged substantial political autonomy of the party and state organs in Croatia. The Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation (*Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske - ZAVNOH*), founded in June 1943 as the main institution of Partisan movement in Croatia was, accordingly, to dedicate itself to achieving the aims of the Croatian national movement. At its third, historic session, held in May 1944, the Croatian *Sabor* – abolished subsequent to the 1918 unification – was proclaimed the highest

⁹¹ Thus, for instance, notwithstanding the fact that the KPJ regarded the Croatian Peasant Party as an ideological opponent, the KPH endorsed its candidates at the 1938 Yugoslav parliament elections. Moreover, while the KPJ took a negative stance on the 1939 agreement establishing Croatian *Banovina*, especially after it became clear that the political status of Communists would not improve, the KPH was ‘noticeably less critical’ (Jelić, 1981: 223). Finally, concerned about Italian territorial pretensions to certain parts of Croatia, the KPH leadership replied positively to the Yugoslav government’s 1939 call for military mobilization. This, however, stood in sharp contrast to the KPJ’s Comintern-guided position of non-interference in the upcoming ‘imperialist war’.

political body in Croatia and the true expression of its sovereignty. On this occasion, Andrija Hebrang, the Croatian Communist leader, stated the following:

‘Croats alone, through their *Sabor* as the vessel of sovereignty, [are to] independently decide their fate. In other words, only the Croatian *Sabor* as an expression of the democratic will of Croats and Serbs in Croatia can make authoritative decisions about the internal order of Croatia and about her relations with other peoples and states’ (quoted in *Irvine*, 2008: 153).

These views on the independent authority of Croatian political institutions, Irvine notes, proved ‘increasingly out of step’ with the ideas Tito and most KPJ high officials held about the federal system (Irvine, 1993: 164). The Communist Party of Yugoslavia did use a combination of class (‘brotherhood and unity in the struggle against the invader’) and national appeals (‘a struggle against the old repressive order based on Serbian hegemony’) to garner popular support for the Partisan movement (Ibid). This was of particular importance in Croatia where, as mentioned above, Partisan units were almost entirely composed of local Serbs in the first months of the war.⁹² Still, while promising national justice for Yugoslav peoples, the KPJ did not intend to allow for decentralization of political power in a future state. Therefore, the local party units were throughout the war constantly reminded that the KPJ would, subsequent to its ending, follow the Bolshevik model of state organization. As in late 1943 political and military positions of the Partisan movement significantly improved, Tito embarked on the centralization of its political institutions. This process first and foremost included the establishment of full political control over

⁹² The challenge of recruiting Croats in the National Liberation Army was particularly emphasized in Tito’s official correspondence with the KPH leadership during this period. In the fall 1941, while pointing out that ‘the weakness of the Partisan movement in Croatia is that it includes the Serb population in Kordun and Lika etc., but a very small number of Croat peasants’, the leader of the Yugoslav Communists concluded that ‘the movement in Croatia will never succeed until Croats compose the majority in Partisan units’ (quoted in *Irvine*, 1993: 193).

the 'undisciplined' ZAVNOH. In the following period, the leading Croatian Communists were, as a result, removed from their posts. Hebrang, highly-respected Party veteran who symbolized its struggle for Croatian national interests, was replaced by a former Communist youth leader, Vladimir Bakarić, 'less susceptible to Zagreb "revisionist" tendencies' and 'less likely to pursue an independent course in Croatia' (Ibid: 205).

The ZAVNOH was thus politically subordinated. The Croatian Peasant Party, the Catholic Church and other strong voices demanding Croatia's political sovereignty to be guaranteed in the emerging socialist Yugoslavia were silenced prior to its official establishment in November 1945. At that moment, it seemed that 'Croat national demands no longer posed a threat to the political consolidation and centralization of the new party-state' (Ibid: 251). Yet, contrary to the general expectations, it would not be long before their political re-actualization.

3.1.3. Montenegro: Rebirth through the uprising

After the Second World War which Montenegro once again finished on 'the right side of history', the country was reestablished as a political entity. The victory of the communist-led Partisan movement, won on the platform of social and national equality, guaranteed the restoration of the attributes of its sovereignty lost after 1918. Denouncing the greater Serbian hegemony which they cited as the crucial factor in the failure of the first Yugoslavia, Yugoslav communists, who organized the popular resistance against Axis powers during the 1941-1945 National Liberation War (*Narodnooslobodilački rat*) endorsed a federation of six republics based on the principle of nationality under centralized party control (Morrison, 2009: 66). On equal terms with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia,

Montenegro thus entered the new, Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (*Federativna narodna republika Jugoslavija* - FNRJ).⁹³ In addition, the 1946 federal constitution listed Montenegrins as one of its constituent nations.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the next section of this chapter, Montenegro enjoyed the status of the socialist Yugoslavia's most-favored republic until its very end nearly five decades later. This, however, was not without a good reason. Namely, in their zeal for the new state and their sacrifice in the struggle for its creation, Montenegrins were unmatched by any other Yugoslav nation. On 13 July 1941, with the Communists' logistic support, they organized hitherto the largest popular uprising in Axis-occupied Europe.⁹⁴ Moreover, both during and after the Second World War, a higher percentage of population belonged to the Yugoslav communist party in Montenegro than in any other republic (Thompson, 1992: 162). At the end of the war, 17 per cent of the officers and as many as 36 per cent of the communist-led Partisan army generals were Montenegrin (Hobsbawm, 1995: 170). Containing merely two per cent of its population, Montenegro thus joined federal Yugoslavia with huge moral capital (Andrijašević and Rastoder, 2006: 227).

On the other hand, the price that Montenegro paid for being a part of the anti-fascist movement was extremely high. In the course of four years of the warfare, the country's towns and its physical infrastructure were almost entirely destroyed,⁹⁵ while up to 50,000 Montenegrins lost their lives (Bennett, 1995: 45).⁹⁶ Yet, a considerable

⁹³ In 1963, with the adoption of a new constitution, the state was renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistička federativna republika Jugoslavija* - SFRJ).

⁹⁴ More than 30,000 people stood up against the Italian occupiers. Albeit premature in a sense that it could not have possibly resulted in Montenegrins' lasting triumph over the militarily superior enemy, the rebellion was initially successful, leading to liberation of most of the country's territory.

⁹⁵ Pajović writes that more than 21,000 private homes and public buildings, 321 school buildings, 15 industrial sites as well as 80 per cent of bridges in Montenegro were demolished (2005: 36).

⁹⁶ The official death toll stands at 40,446. Another 95,346 Montenegrins were imprisoned, while 26,144 were permanently disabled (Marović, 1987: 28-30).

number of these casualties resulted from an internal conflict between the Montenegrin Partisans and the Serbian royalists (*Četnici* or *Chetnics*) whose extremely nationalist program envisaged the creation of ethnically homogenous nation-state under the Serbian crown.⁹⁷ Initially united in resistance to the invaders, the two camps were soon to be separated by the unbridgeable ideological differences that strongly echoed the old White-Green political division in Montenegro. Unlike the Partisans who, 'fighting for a society of equal peoples and a state that would be restructured on a federal basis' (Rastoder, 2003: 135), opted for indiscriminate attacks on the German and Italian forces, the royalists chose to conserve theirs until the time came for them to seize power. In the meantime, while collaborating with the occupation authorities, they focused on eliminating domestic adversaries and implementing the ideological program.⁹⁸ With the weakening of Germany's position in the Balkans and, in particular, the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, their chances for the final triumph were minimized. That the outcome of the war was decided, the royalists knew a year later and a month prior to the Partisans' victorious entry into Belgrade,⁹⁹ after the Serbian King Peter issued a public appeal to all Yugoslavs to join Tito's army so as to defeat the Axis forces.

The last occupying forces composed of *Četnik* and German soldiers withdrew from Montenegro in early 1945.¹⁰⁰ In the following period, proud of their war

⁹⁷ Except Serbia and Montenegro, such state - according to the document 'Homogenous Serbia' from June 1941, which served as the ideological program of the movement - would encompass Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, a significant portion of the Croatian territory, as well as parts of Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. For more on the topic, see: Marković and Pajović (1996).

⁹⁸ During 1942 and 1943, after the Partisan were forced out of Montenegro, the *Četnik* units carried out mass killings of Muslims in the northern part of the country, in line with the idea of creating ethnically homogenous state. See: Rastoder (2003).

⁹⁹ In view of 'the significant contribution of Montenegrin partisans to the war effort', Tito, the Partisan war commander, decided that the role of liberation of the future Yugoslav capital 'should fall to one of the Montenegrins, Peko Dapčević, who duly entered the city on a white horse' (Roberts, 2009: 387).

¹⁰⁰ When, a few months later, he visited his home country, Milovan Djilas, the highest-ranking Yugoslav communist official from Montenegro – later to become one of the most famous communist dissidents – wrote

achievements, Montenegrins continued to demonstrate zeal for the new Yugoslavia unrivaled by other republics. Thus, for instance, whereas each of them named a town after Josip Broz Tito, in honor of the chief architect of the Yugoslav federation, Montenegrin Communist leaders decided to rename Podgorica – the republic's new capital – Titograd, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the 1941 uprising. In addition, in the run-up agreement on the 1946 constitution, they strongly advocated that a common school curriculum 'in such critical areas as history and literature' should be offered in all the republics (Roberts, 2007: 401). Throughout the forty-six-year life of the second Yugoslavia, such enthusiasm would be carefully nurtured by its rulers who recognized that 'the ballast provided by the smaller nations played a vital part in balancing traditional Serb-Croat rivalries and thus in helping to keep the Yugoslav ship afloat' (Ibid: 392).

3.2. Brotherhood and unity of hopes and fears

The first Yugoslav state did not fulfill political aspirations of its constituent peoples. Instead of a political community which they would all enter on equal terms, the South Slav kingdom came to be politically dominated by a one nation. Consequently, political stability of the new state political was from its very inception continuously challenged. The political elite, however, proved unwilling to allow for necessary political reforms. Hence, the kingdom's collapse and, particularly, the subsequent triumph of the socialist revolution in Yugoslavia were enthusiastically welcomed throughout the country.

In addition to the new ideology, the end of the Second World War brought about national emancipation for all the Yugoslav peoples. Their cultural identities and

the following: 'It seemed to me as if all of Yugoslavia was synthesized in Montenegro, in the boundless confidence of the victors and the silence and shame of the vanquished' (1977: 445).

the political equality of the republics representing them were constitutionally defined. Yet, with changing political and economic circumstances in Yugoslavia in the following decades, the protection of national interests gradually moved into the focus of political debates. Consequently, the national question, officially considered to be solved by the aforementioned constitutional arrangement and its later reforms, was re-opened in most of the Yugoslav republics. Depending on how successfully it was answered during this period, the national question, as explained below, turned out being more or less salient in the processes of political mobilization leading toward the end of the 1980s to introduction of political pluralism and establishment of hybrid regimes in Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro.

3.2.1.Croatia: The war is over, the battle continues

3.2.1.1. Unresolved national question

On 29 November 1945, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was officially proclaimed. In the preceding election for its Constituent Assembly, all seats were won by candidates of the communist-controlled People's Front. While promising a better life for its citizens, the new authorities showed no mercy for those who had collaborated with the invaders. What began as a massive retaliation against thousands of *Ustaša* and *Četnik* members/followers who had fled liberated territories by mid-1945,¹⁰¹ they continued throughout the following years in the form of political

¹⁰¹ Goldstein writes the following about the destiny of those who, days before its final collapse, left the NDH: 'When Partisans reached the outskirts of Zagreb, the NDH leaders, Ustashas, smaller groups of Serbian Chetniks (joined by about 40,000 German soldiers) and many civilians, fearing retaliation, fled through Slovenia in the hope of reaching Austria and surrendering to the British, whom they expected to treat them better than the Partisans or the Soviets. At the request of the Yugoslav army, the British army in the Austrian border region (Bleiburg and Viktring) handed back the fleeing soldiers and civilians. Some of the more important prisoners were singled out, taken to prison and legally tried, but many of the anonymous refugees were killed on the spot. The others were taken on death marches, called the 'Way of the Cross', to various parts of Yugoslavia, and the guards were ordered to kill those who could not keep up or became exhausted. Some lucky survivors

trials. In Croatia, the highest NDH officials were sentenced to death, while the Archbishop of Zagreb and the senior Catholic prelate in the country, Alojzije Stepinac was sentenced to long-term imprisonment for pacting with them. A few decades later, along with many other taboo political subjects, the question of the NDH's historical role came to be publically re-discussed in Croatia.

In January 1946, a new Yugoslav constitution was promulgated, defining the FNRJ as 'a community of equal peoples who had freely expressed their wish to remain united in Yugoslavia' (quoted in *Goldstein*, 1999: 163). A year later, as one of the six constituent republics, Croatia got a new constitution confirming its statehood within the federation. In addition, as a result of the FNRJ government's treaty with Italy signed at the Paris Peace Conference, all the territories in Istria and Dalmatia previously occupied by the forces of Mussolini were returned to Croatia and, hence, Yugoslavia. As far as the Yugoslav leadership was concerned, the achievement of these two political goals meant a final resolution of the Croatian national question. At the same time, a number of related, politically sensitive issues, including the autonomy of Serbian population in Croatia, were regarded as 'unimportant' (Irvine, 1993: 251). The fallacy of such attitude became apparent when, in the course of intense political liberalization in Yugoslavia during the 1960s, the debate was opened over the distribution of political and economic power between the federal and republican authorities.

The road to the substantial change of political atmosphere in the country was paved with the adoption of its 1953 constitution. Politically breaking with the USSR in 1948, the Yugoslav authorities sought for a model of Socialist development

walked up to 1,000 km to the final goal. Up to 50,000 former Domobrans and Ustashas were killed around Bleiburg and on the Way of the Cross' (1999: 155).

alternative to the Soviet centralized state. As a part of the constitutional reform, they hence launched the concept of self-management which, in simple terms, implied transfer of economic decision-making authority to workers' and municipal organizations. Emphasizing an ensuing transformation of its social function from 'directing' to a 'guiding' force (Ibid: 254), the KPJ renamed itself the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije* - SKJ). For the moment, political power remained concentrated within its highly-centralized structures. However, significantly limiting the economic role of the central government, the 1953 constitution provided a theoretical underpinning for gradual reduction of its political authority and, consequently, 'articulation of pluralist interests, including national interests' (Ibid).

Throughout the following decade, Yugoslavia was put on the path of intense political and economic liberalization. The 1963 constitution, which considerably enhanced prerogatives of the six republics and even guaranteed their right to leave the federation, marked the major step in the direction of political decentralization (Ramet, 2006: 208). This was in line with a new national policy of the state leadership, founded on the belief that (re)-emergence of hegemonic and separatist ideas in Yugoslavia could be prevented only through self-governance and affirmation of national identities of its peoples.¹⁰² Accordingly, at the Eight Congress of the SKJ held in December 1964, the policy of progressive transformation of the nationalities of Yugoslavia into a one 'Yugoslav' nation was officially casted off as 'tantamount to

¹⁰² As pointed out by Edvard Kardelj, then chief Party ideologist and one of Tito's closest associates, 'for a free decision of a nation on the form of its cooperation with other nations, it is first necessary that this nation has control over itself, and only then can it make a free decision' (quoted in Jović, 2009: 64).

assimilation and bureaucratic centralism' (Cuvalo, 1990: 22).¹⁰³ At the same time, a series of economic reforms were put in motion, increasing the market orientation of enterprises and, essentially, transferring the economic administration to the republics. Those from the Yugoslav leadership who, still clinging to the concept of state centrism, could not catch up with its new, liberal course, were sent a powerful message with the 1966 removal from office of Aleksandar Ranković, Yugoslav Vice-President, powerful head of the state security service (UDBA),¹⁰⁴ and the highest ranking Serbian communist official.

In Croatia, where around that time liberal and nationally-oriented political forces took over control of the Party, the decision to sack one of his closest associates was taken as a sign of Tito's determination to carry on with the process of power decentralization. In view of that, following the steps of their comrades from the war period, Croatian Communists sought to protect the national interest and ensure the respect of Croatian statehood by maximizing decision-making authority within the federal political system. By the end of the decade, they managed to achieve a number of changes in the SKJ organization,¹⁰⁵ resulting in a 'fundamental shift in power and authority away from the central party leadership to the republican party organizations' (Irvine, 1993: 256). In addition, the 1968 amendments to the Yugoslav constitution curbed the powers of the federal government by making its decision-

¹⁰³ 'Our federation', Kardelj explained, 'is not a frame for making some new Yugoslav nation, or a frame for the kind of national integration [of] which various advocates of hegemonism or denationalizing terror have been daydreaming' (quoted in *Hondius*, 1968: 294).

¹⁰⁴ As witnessed by Dušan Bilandžić, prominent Croatian historian and politician, UDBA, up to then so powerful and politically uncontrolled that many had considered it a 'state within the state', found itself in dismay following Tito's move. Along Ranković, around 1,500 people were fired from the service, mainly in Belgrade and the rest of Serbia (*Danas*, 3 December 1991).

¹⁰⁵ The KPJ leading bodies were, consequently, increased in size and were to meet less frequently, proportional representation in its organizations was, in order to minimize Serb numerical preponderance, replaced by parity, whereas republics' party congresses assumed responsibility for drawing their party statutes and picking members of the KPJ Central Committee (*Ibid*).

making contingent upon consultations among republican representatives (Ibid). Two years later, the SKJ Presidium introduced the unanimity decision-making rule in all the federal political organizations.

At the same time, the liberalization of the Yugoslav political system allowed various issues concerning Croatia's position in the federation to be raised outside the official political circles. The public debate which unfolded in Croatia during this period was underlined by a general feeling that, in all spheres, the status quo actually worked in favor of the biggest Yugoslav nation, the Serbs. In this spirit, in March 1967, representatives of 18 leading Croatian academic and cultural institutions signed and published the document named 'The Declaration on the Status and the Name of the Croatian Literary Language' (*Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika*).¹⁰⁶ Arguing that the official use of Serbo-Croatian language actually masked the Serbian linguistic hegemony, they demanded equal status in all federal institutions of Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, and Macedonian language, as well as consistent use of the Croatian literary language in their republic. The reactions of the republican and, in particular, federal political institutions to this initiative were extremely negative. The Declaration was labeled 'tendentious and politically damaging', while those who had put it forward were removed from public life. At the same time, 'nationalistic elements' in the Croatian Literary Gazette, the Institute for the History of the Workers' Movement,¹⁰⁷ and a number of other public institutions were effectively neutralized (Ramet, 2006: 235).

¹⁰⁶ Available (in Croatian) at:

<http://www.matica.hr/kolo/314/Deklaracija%20o%20nazivu%20i%20polo%C5%BEaju%20hrvatskog%20knji%C5%BEevnog%20jezika/>.

¹⁰⁷ Franjo Tuđman, general of the Yugoslav army and the Institute chair at that time (later to become the first president of independent Croatia) was expelled and forced to retire.

Although having ‘an unsuccessful outcome for Croatian interests’, this initiative heralded what was about to take place throughout Croatia (Goldstein, 1999: 177). Half a century after the creation of the first Yugoslav state, the Croatian national question within this particular political framework was, as it soon turned out, yet to be given a satisfying answer. As nicely put by Srđan Dvornik, prominent Croatian philosopher and sociologist:

‘From the dream about a state of national unity in which each of the South Slav peoples would have its own space, Yugoslavia was, by the early 1920s, transformed in the eyes of Croats into a dungeon of nations dominated by Serbs. Their ensuing resentment was later only put away in the communist fridge and thus prevented from politically developing’ (Interview, October 2011).

3.2.1.2. The spring of national renaissance

As elaborated above, the Communist-organized resistance movement in Croatia during the Second World War was, adjacent to class, aimed at the national liberation of its people. In this regard, the KPH leaders argued that the protection of Croatian statehood in a future socialist Yugoslavia was to be achieved through decentralization of its political power to regional party authorities. Contrary to their political aspirations and notwithstanding the triumphal outcome of the National Liberation Struggle, its ‘national’ dimension was essentially negated in the post-war centralism period (Irvine, 1993: 259). Thus, albeit raised to the status of equal Yugoslav republic, Croatia, many believed, was not provided with ‘a real measure of autonomy’ within the federation (Ibid).

The wartime federalist strategy of the Croatian Communists was politically revived toward the end of the 1960s. During this period, marked by the process of

intense political liberalization in Yugoslavia, the KPH (renamed in 1952 the League of Communist of Croatia – *Savez komunista Hrvatske*, SKH) came to be dominated by pro-democratic and nationally-oriented political forces. In the years to come, they demanded a radical reform of the post-1945 state-building strategy and, in particular, a ‘fair’ solution for the Croatian national question. As explained by Miko Tripalo, one of its most notable figures, the new Croatian political elite called for the reaffirmation of those principles concerning national relations in Yugoslavia ‘which were established during the National Liberation Struggle and which were called into question during the period of administrative Socialism’ (1971: 26). Like Hebrang and his Partisan comrades, SKH leadership now insisted that the Yugoslav state must be organized so that the republic – political embodiment of the national principle – had the most power (Irvine: 1993: 259).

Croatia’s economic position in the federation served as a major argument for the necessity of power redistribution within its borders. Namely, the republic’s leading economic experts claimed that the early decade self-management reforms, contrary to their basic intention, actually led to further centralization of financial resources in Yugoslavia. As a result, they argued, Belgrade-based banks controlled in 1969 more than a half of the total credits and more than 80 per cent of foreign credits. Moreover, foreign trade companies from the Yugoslav capital had a virtual monopoly in this sector, garnering more than 3/4 of the country’s income. While, mainly through tourism and remittances, bringing in nearly a half of all foreign capital in Yugoslavia, Croatia thus controlled somewhat more than 15 per cent (quoted in *Ramet*, 2006: 228). In addition to more political power, SKH leaders therefore demanded greater control in the economic sphere, particularly over Croatia’s revenues.

Their political determination was manifested at the Tenth meeting of the SKH Central Committee, held in January 1970. While emphasizing Croatia's economic neglect and demanding redistribution of the federal financial resources, the Party head, Savka Dapčević-Kučar vociferously attacked political forces of 'unitarism' and 'bureaucratic centralism' in Yugoslavia. Their opposition to its further political and economic liberalization, she pointed out, masked nothing else but 'hegemonic tendencies of [its] largest and most responsible nation' (quoted in *Tripalo*, 1989: 112). Her position was supported by Vladimir Bakarić, the Party chief ideologist and one of Tito's closest associates, who warned against 'unitarists of the romantic Yugoslav variety among Croats' (*Ibid*). Widely perceived as the embodiment of this political idea within the SKH ranks, Miloš Žanko, its long-time high official, was excluded from the Party on this occasion. When, later that year, Tito announced the adoption of constitutional reforms which would increase the republics' competences to the extent that would allow them to 'become responsible for their own development' (Goldstein, 1999: 181), the political triumph of the Croatian leadership seemed complete. However, with the ensuing outbreak of nationalism in Croatia, much of its success was heavily compromised.

By the end of the year, inspired by the SKH's intense political activity on the protection of Croatian national interests, a mass popular movement (*Maspok*, abbreviated) emerged in Croatia demanding ever more radical revision of the post-WWII Bolshevik state-building concept. Even though the Party's official position on nationalism was as negative as on unitarism, the January Plenum 'signaled that the discussion of national issues and grievances would no longer be prohibited or even discouraged' (Irvine, 1993: 257). Spontaneously joined by a large number of 'nationally awakened' Croats of diverging political views, the movement reached

culmination in the first half of 1971. The key role in its ideological formulation during this period was played by Matrix Croatica (*Matica Hrvatska*), Croatia's oldest cultural institution. Launched in April, its publication named the Croatian Weekly (*Hrvatski Tjednik*) soon became the leading voice of Croatian nationalist-oriented intellectuals.¹⁰⁸ With the aim to contribute to the 'completion of the process of spiritual and territorial integration of the Croatian national being [...] within the socialist self-management system', they strongly endorsed the SKH's platform for redefinition of political relations in Yugoslavia (*Hrvatski Tjednik*, 16 April 1971). The core of their political outlook was presented in one of many articles written by Marko Veselica, an economist and a future dissident:

'The Croat nation, like the other nations in Yugoslavia, wanted to completely realize its national essence and to be completely sovereign within the framework of a federal Yugoslavia, without losing one part of its sovereignty and without recognizing any kind of outside advocate deciding what is and is not in its justifiable national interest' (*Ibid*, 3 August 1971).

And while principally supporting the Party's official national policy, *Matica*-based intellectuals soon ventured beyond its confines in their political argumentation for the Croatian statehood.¹⁰⁹ Thus, in an article published in *Hrvatski Tjednik* on 10 September, the Partisan struggle was – contrary to its official interpretation as the defining historical moment for the Croat national liberation – characterized as 'a moment of renewal (on a new, class basis) of the centuries-old Croatian legal

¹⁰⁸ The contributors to the very first issue of the weekly, published on April 16, 1971 thus analyzed the topics such as: the endangered status of the Croatian literary language, the establishment of a Croatian airline company, the 1918-1971 history of unitarism in Yugoslavia, the public activity of Croatian intellectuals of non-Croatian origin, and the economic exploitation of Croatia. For the full bibliography and the list of contributors to *Tjednik*, see: Brleković (2002).

¹⁰⁹ 'In fact, people from *Matica* did not want Yugoslavia anymore; the Croats had enough of it' – Antun Vrdoljak, then member of *Matica*'s Presidency and later one of the founders and the highest officials of the Croatian Democratic Union told me (Interview, October 2011).

continuity'.¹¹⁰ The diminution of the historical role of the Second World War, as a period during which the local communists, 'the most loyal Croatian sons' had simply been guarding and perpetuating the historical continuity of the Croat state, continued in *Tjednik's* four November issues. In the proposal of amendments to the Croatian Constitution, put forward by *Matica Hrvatska*, the National Liberation Struggle was, accordingly, mentioned only in the sixth – instead of the first – article of the first amendment (*Hrvatski Tjednik*, 24 September 1971).

The remainder of *Matica's* document appeared even more politically controversial. According to the SKH's earlier presented proposal of the constitutional reform, Croatia was to be defined as the 'sovereign national state of the Croat nation, the state of the Serb nation in Croatia, and the nationalities that live in it' (*Ibid*, 10 September 1971). For the intellectuals organized around *Matica*, such formulation was unacceptable as it implied a division of Croatian sovereignty. Considering it 'one, indivisible, and inalienable', they demanded the Socialist Republic of Croatia to be officially defined as 'unified, national state of the Croat nation' (*Ibid*, 24 September 1971). Thus constituted, Croatia would, according to their proposal, have not only complete control over its tax revenues but also a separate monetary policy and even its own independent defense forces. On top of all this, Croatian would be the sole official language in the republic (*Ibid*).

Ultimately, the draft amendments put forward by the SKH were passed in the Croatian *Sabor*. *Matica Hrvatska* had, to borrow from Ramet, 'lost this round' (2006: 240). As 1971 drew to a close, the entire Croatia was, nevertheless, caught up in the

¹¹⁰ Accordingly, on the occasion of his birth centenary, a large picture of Stjepan Radić, one of the symbols of the Croatian national struggle, was, under the capital letter-title 'Radić lives' previously published on a *Tjednik's* cover page (11 June 1971).

state of national exultation.¹¹¹ In such political atmosphere, with the question of their over-representation in the state and party organs being frequently raised, the sense of unease among the Serb minority grew rapidly.¹¹² Throughout this period, the leading cultural institution of the Serbs in Croatia, *Prosvjeta*, was consequently turned into the mouthpiece for their political dissatisfaction. Similar to its Croatian counterpart, *Matica*, this organization gradually radicalized political rhetoric to the point when Rade Bulat, one of its members, openly demanded the establishment of an entirely autonomous Serb region in Croatia (Tripalo, 1989: 168). Previously, as their cultural and political rights were 'increasingly endangered', the Serbs in Croatia were advised to look to Serbia 'to help them in their task of national preservation' (quoted in *Irvine*, 1993: 268).

Faced with the growing national tensions in Croatia, Tito finally decided to step in. Initially supportive of its reform policies, he now issued a sharp critique to the republic's political leadership for tolerating *Matica's* nationalist activities and their detrimental effect to the Croat-Serb relations. 'Do you want to see 1941 all over again?' the Yugoslav leader asked its members, thereby making a warning parallel with the tragic events from the recent political history (quoted in *Ramet*, 1992: 129).¹¹³ Soon afterwards, the Zagreb University students organized a mass strike in

¹¹¹ *Matica's* membership, which, in the given political situation, might be considered a reliable indicator of public opinion in Croatia, increased twentyfold in a year, from 2,323 in November 1970 to 41,000 in November 1971 (Ramet, 1992: 128).

¹¹² Stjepan Mesić, then mayor of a small town (Orahovica) in Slavonia, later to become the first Prime Minister and the second President of independent Croatia, told me that the number of Serbs in the state and local administration was indeed disproportionately high during this period. 'In Orahovica', he exemplified, 'where there were 80 per cent of Croats and somewhat less than 20 per cent of Serbs, we had 33 policemen, among which one Croat, one Muslim, and the rest of Serbs [...] It seemed like some kind of an occupation force' (Interview, January 2012).

¹¹³ Vrdoljak, then a council member of *Hrvatski Tjednik*, recalled a meeting with Miko Tripalo who around that time appealed to him to prevent publishing for the first time ever an article about the national structure of (Serb-dominated) police in Croatia. 'Common, help us out here', Tripalo said, '*Hrvatski Tjednik* will bring us

support of the Croatian leadership.¹¹⁴ Their political action turned out counter-productive as it only 'exacerbated the already tense situation in Croatia' (Goldstein, 1999: 182).¹¹⁵ Consequently, while Dapčević-Kučar was, in her own words, 'deeply convinced that the motives of the greatest portion of the students were positive and well-meaning and progressive' (quoted in *Ramet*, 2006: 256), Tito now seemed as deeply convinced that her party no longer had effective control over popular political forces in Croatia.

Although he had fully endorsed and, in part, even initiated the liberal reforms in Yugoslavia, its president thus came to believe that the resultant political processes had gone too far and must be stopped (Irvine, 1993: 271). As a consequence, the Croatian national question was once again to be swept under the Yugoslav political carpet.

3.2.2. Montenegro: Most favored Yugoslav republic

3.2.2.1. *Decades of emancipation*

Out of 819 mandates in the thirty-nine Yugoslav governments formed between the two world wars, only four belonged to Montenegrin ministers (Roberts, 2007: 342). In the post-1945 era, the political treatment of Montenegro's representatives at the federal level could not have been more different. On the account of the role they

down'. 'The editorial board', Vrdoljak continued, 'refused to follow his advice and, anticipating bad political consequences, I decided to leave the weekly' (Interview, October 2011).

¹¹⁴ For the full list of their demands, see: *Hrvatski Tjednik*, 26 November 1971.

¹¹⁵ Interestingly, Miko Tripalo later claimed that the Croatian leadership 'did not know whatsoever about the strike', i.e. that they did not take part in its organization. Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, then one of the leaders of Zagreb University students, and Marko Veselica, a prominent economist who joined their action, confirmed Tripalo's words, arguing that 'the strike was merely an excuse for the federal authorities to move against the Croatian political elite' (*Danas*, 3 December 1991). Mesić also supported the claim that the leadership did not control the students. 'Quite the contrary', he said, 'I once met with the student representatives on behalf of Savka and Miko, and demanded an immediate stop of the strike [:] Convinced they would eventually prevail, they refused to obey' (Interview, January 2012).

played in the National Liberation War, Montenegrins managed to ‘colonize the federal bureaucracy’ and, due to strong clientelistic networks, for decades remain heavily overrepresented in the institutions of the socialist Yugoslavia (Lampe, 1996: 303). Their presence in political and military structures of the federation was particularly noticeable. In 1963, almost twenty years after the end of the war, Montenegro thus had four representatives on the Executive Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists, one more than four-time-its-size Macedonia and Slovenia.¹¹⁶ Throughout this period, while participating with less than three percent in the population of Yugoslavia and with two percent in its GDP, Montenegro carried as much as one eighth of its political muscle (Thompson, 1992: 160).¹¹⁷

Owing to the strong influence of its political representatives at the federal level, Montenegro benefited immensely from the creation of the new Yugoslavia. Put simply, Montenegro in 1945 had nothing in common with pre-war Montenegro (Andrijašević and Rastoder, 2006: 231). Its territory, to begin with, was considerably enlarged with the acquisition of the Bay of Kotor and the adjacent Sutorina peninsula, and the return of a significant part of the northern Sandžak region, originally acquired after the First World War. Moreover, subsequent to the expulsion of German and other minority groups from Vojvodina and the ensuing expropriation of their assets, a great number of Montenegrin families without sufficient land to live on were resettled in the province, known as the most fertile agricultural region in Yugoslavia.

Still, the power of the Montenegrin political elite was most clearly reflected in the generous allocations to their Republic from the federal budget for industrial

¹¹⁶ At the same time, Montenegro had by far the highest ratio of Party membership per head (6.7 per cent) in Yugoslavia (Shoup, 1968: 269).

¹¹⁷ A joke inspired by the extraordinarily high ‘visibility’ of Montenegrins in Belgrade, the federal capital, says that when two of them would meet in the street during those years, they would greet each other with ‘where are you managing?’ rather than with ‘what are you doing?’ (Fleming, 2002: 156).

development. In the course of the first Five-Year Plan (1947-1952) designed to create conditions for accelerated socio-economic development of the federation,¹¹⁸ and, in particular, following the 1953 establishment of the 'General Investment Fund' that was to narrow the economic gap between the developed and less-developed Republics, Montenegro – the poorest one – received a disproportionate share of funds.¹¹⁹ Albeit failing to alter its 'unenviable status as the least developed of the Republics' (Shoup, 1968: 234),¹²⁰ such continuous efforts to tackle Montenegro's structural problems did bring about a substantial change of its socio-economic picture.¹²¹ With factories – often against any economic logic – mushrooming all over the Republic,¹²² the share of industrial sector in Montenegrin economy in the 1945-1990 period rose almost six times. Moreover, Montenegro's official annual growth during the four post-war decades had been an impressive 6.7 per cent (Miljković,

¹¹⁸ In accordance with the federal, each Yugoslav republic was supposed to create its own five-year plan. Since at the moment of its adoption there were merely 15 small technically-backward industries in the Republic, the Montenegrin plan envisaged the increase of industrial production share in Montenegro's GDP from 12 per cent in 1946 to 51 per cent in 1951 (Perović and Ilić, 1986: 489-490).

¹¹⁹ During the 1950s, the average annual expenditure per capita in thousands of Yugoslav dinars was 8.69 in Montenegro, compared to 4.56 in Serbia, 4.59 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 5.53 in Macedonia, 6.18 in Croatia, and 7.94 in Slovenia (Shoup, 1968: 231). By the end of the decade, the smallest Yugoslav republic thus received 230 dinars for every 100 invested in the federation (Lampe, 1996: 276).

¹²⁰ During this period, notwithstanding all the investments, as much as one half of Montenegro's budget revenues still came from the federal state-funded grants-in-aid, aimed at improving the provision of social services in the republics (Ibid: 230).

¹²¹ Only by the end of its first Five-Year Plan, Montenegro, among other things, got six thermal and hydro power plants, hundreds of kilometers of new roads, a railway connecting Titograd and Nikšić, future industrial center of the Republic, as well as a number of new industries (Jovanović, 1983: 104-106). With the finalization of the major projects such as the port of Bar, the steel mill in Nikšić, and the aluminum plant in Podgorica during the 1960s, the foundations for the Republic's economic development were largely put into place.

¹²² In line with the Republic's official economic policy, new industries were largely established in underdeveloped areas without basic conditions for their sustainable growth. Thus, for instance, with no raw materials in Nikšić, the aforementioned steel mill was entirely dependent on their import from elsewhere. For almost a decade after its opening, however, there was neither a railway to connect the mill with the Adriatic Sea, nor paved roads to connect it with anywhere.

1986: 189). Within Socialist Yugoslavia, in a word, 'Montenegro experienced the greatest economic regeneration in its entire history' (Rastoder, 2003: 137).¹²³

Adjacent to the rapid economic progress,¹²⁴ an intense socio-cultural emancipation marked the Montenegrin development in the decades following the end of the WWII. As a result of major investments in education, illiteracy rate in the Republic's population dropped from 56 per cent before the war to under six per cent by the end of 1980s (Ibid). Moreover, during this period Montenegro got the most important cultural and educational institutions such as the Historical Institute (1948), the State Archive (1951), the National Radio-Television (1963), the National Theatre (1969), and the Academy of Sciences and Arts (1973). The University of Montenegro was founded in 1974, decades and centuries after the establishment of higher education institutions in other Yugoslav republics.¹²⁵ Albeit 'long in coming', institutional prerequisites for the development of an articulate Montenegrin identity and culture were thus largely established by mid-1970s (Ramet, 1984: 67).

To sum up, Montenegro witnessed the social, economic, cultural and political renaissance in the socialist Yugoslavia. Within a few decades of its existence, from an unnamed province of a state into which it was illegally integrated, the country became a respected federal republic with all statehood attributes and, in many regards, privileged status compared to the others. Not surprisingly, then, the Yugoslavia years were for many the best in Montenegro's entire history (Roberts,

¹²³ As a result, with GDP per capita of \$2,300 in 1989, Montenegro reached the level of middle-income countries (*Praksa*, 1975: 9).

¹²⁴ Apart from the heavy-industry development, this came as a result of the steadily growing tourism industry (starting with 5,000 in the first years after the WWII, the number of tourists that visited Montenegro reached one million in 1979) and the construction of the merchant fleet, consisting of 28 large ships in mid-1980s (Rastoder, 2003: 137).

¹²⁵ The University of Zagreb, the oldest one in the socialist Yugoslavia, was founded in 1669. With the opening of the Sarajevo University in 1949, Bosnia and Herzegovina was, prior to Montenegro, the last republic to establish an institution of higher education.

2007: 393-4). Nonetheless, some of the most important questions concerning the Republic's future development were left substantially unanswered. Thus, despite all of the abovementioned investments in its infrastructure and economy, Montenegro remained the least developed Yugoslav republic and, the general impression was, unable to support itself without federal government subventions. At the same time, albeit successfully neutralized, the issues of Montenegrins' national identity and their country's national interest – as elaborated in the remainder of this chapter – remained highly controversial. In the period following Tito's 1980 death, these two facts would largely determine the content of political debate in the smallest of his country's republics.

3.2.2.2. *National question ambiguity*

Already in late 1960s and early 1970s, it became clear that the current state of political and economic affairs in Yugoslavia was at odds with the prevailing political mood in the biggest republics. First in Croatia and then in Serbia, the leading politicians openly demanded a greater level of economic liberalization and political decentralization of the federal state. In April 1971, primarily focused on their republics' national interests, they even came close to agreeing on a more confederal structure for Yugoslavia (quoted in Jović, 2009: 131). As elaborated in the following sections, Tito reacted by removing from office Mika Tripalo, the head of the Croatian communists and his closest associates in December that year. A few months later, the key figures of the Serbian political establishment were also forced to leave their positions. Due to similar political tendencies, the party cadre changes occurred throughout the federation. In fact, the only republic which did not witness political purges during this period was Montenegro.

In contrast to their compatriots from other republics, ‘increasingly resentful at the burdens imposed on their own economies by the subventions designated for the poorer regions’ (Roberts, 2007: 422), Montenegrins did not seem to perceive the political architecture of Yugoslavia as an obstacle to the realization of their national interests. Playing a significant role in its establishment, they felt that ‘it was their state, and favored being part of it’ (Morrison, 2009: 76). Their pro-Yugoslav sentiment was additionally strengthened by the fact that Montenegro, after being raised to the status of republic within the socialist federation, experienced a period of unprecedented socio-economic development. Moreover, following the adoption of the 1974 federal constitution which, through the decision-making power transfer from the federal to the Republics’ level, *de facto* transformed Yugoslav state into a ‘confederation of single-party regimes’ (Lampe, 1996: 127), it acquired ever more solid political and cultural infrastructure. At the same time, the local party officials, significantly overrepresented at the federal political level, acquired the reputation of ‘die-hards’ (Ibid: 420), bound to defend the political status quo whenever it was perceived as being jeopardized. For these reasons, until the end of the 1980s, Montenegro remained the most pro-Yugoslav of all the republics and, as such, ‘the outpost of the Titoist orthodoxy’ (Morrison, 2009: 72).

The Republic’s dynamic development was followed by the strengthening of the feeling of Montenegrin national separateness in Yugoslavia.¹²⁶ In this spirit, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1948 establishment of the Communist Party of Montenegro (renamed in 1952 the League of Communists of Montenegro - *Savez komunista Crne Gore*, SKCG), Blažo Jovanović, its long-time highest official and the Republic’s first post-war Prime Minister, pointed out that ‘it is of particular importance

¹²⁶ Thus, for instance, until the collapse of Yugoslavia, in every census organized in Montenegro there were at least 2/3 of its citizens who declared themselves as Montenegrins.

that the founding [Party] congress reaffirmed the statehood of Montenegro, the national individuality of Montenegrin people, and the Montenegrin nation which had existed, albeit being disputed for various reasons' (quoted in *Papović*, 2011).¹²⁷ Similarly, the Central Committee of the SKCG concluded in 1970 that the question of 'whether Montenegrin nation exists or not' was a 'false dilemma constructed by those who seek to present Montenegro as an artificial political creation' (quoted in *Radonjić*, 2006: 527). In line with the idea of Yugoslavia as, in words of Veljko Milatović (then president of the Montenegrin Presidency) 'an alliance of the free states which Montenegro joined voluntarily' (1975: 262), the Republic's highest officials had throughout this period been very critical of any initiative that could bring into question the national rights of Montenegrins.

At the same time, while determinedly defending Montenegro's statehood within the federation, they avoided tackling the problem of under-defined Montenegrin nationhood. Instead, they purposefully chose to cover it with 'the blanket of ideological uniformity' (Pavlović, 2003: 92). Through the strict adherence to the Yugoslav communist dogmas, the local party leaders effectively sought to neutralize the national identity issue. In practice, Andrijašević and Rastoder accordingly argue, they represented 'an ideal surrogate of the Yugoslav nationality':

'Throughout the post-war period, [they were] less nationally-oriented than any other ("Our nationality is communist – internationalist"), being the last to found a national party (1948); they were the most ardent protagonists of the class struggle ("class above nation"); they lagged behind the others in the setting up of national institutions [;] they cherished the

¹²⁷ Available at:

http://www.montenegrina.net/pages/pages1/istorija/cg_u_2_svi_ratu/politicka_misao_blaza_jovanovica_dragutin_papovic.html.

policy of inferiority and the extended hand [;] they operated by clichés and used a political vocabulary replete with phrases and slogans’ (2006: 259).

Such ‘neutral’ national policy was primarily aimed at bridging the deeply rooted Green-White political division in Montenegro. With strong memories of its bloody revival in the Second World War, the Republic’s leadership was determined to maintain an internal political balance between the two positions. Vojo Srzentić, long-time member of the Montenegrin and Yugoslav political leadership, serving as the head of the SKCG Central Committee from 1977 to 1982, confirmed this during our conversation:

‘We had inherited the problem of identity, dating back to 1918, and, because we were aware of how politically sensitive it was, decided to keep it under the party carpet’ (Interview, January 2012).

Marko Orlandić, the highest-ranking communist official from Montenegro during the second half of the 1980s, told me the same:¹²⁸

‘None of us [SKCG leadership members] ever questioned the [existence of the] Montenegrin nation but we greatly differed in terms of its understanding and definition. At the same time, we never had an open discussion about these matters’ (Interview, December 2012).

In view of Radovan Radonjić, Montenegrin University professor and another prominent representative of the Republic’s communist leadership from this period, such party position was primarily a result of the fact that ‘a critical intellectual and political mass that would put forward an unambiguous national program had never been created in Montenegro’ (Interview, December 2011). Held in April 1974, at the

¹²⁸ During this period, Orlandić served as the head of the SKCG (1984-1986), and a member of the Presidium of the SKJ Central Committee (1986-1989).

moment when the question of national rights loomed large on the Yugoslav political horizon, the SKCG Sixth Congress thus concluded that ‘all sorts of nationalism, regardless of the form and dimension, are equally dangerous’ (quoted in *Vrbica*, 1974: 179-180). This, as emphasized in the final document of the Congress, related to both the ‘Greater Serbian nationalism which, often from centralistic positions, denies Montenegrin nation and culture, challenges Montenegro’s political, economic, and cultural equality, while blaming the Montenegrin League of Communists’ policy of national equality for jeopardizing the unity of Yugoslavia’, and the ‘Separatist [Montenegrin] nationalism which aims at creating boundaries between the Republics, economic and cultural closing as well as stirring up disbelief and mistrust among our peoples’ (Ibid).¹²⁹ Through this ‘undefined dual politics without a national program’ (AS, 1989: 6), as characterized by Jevrem Brković, prominent Montenegrin novelist, the communist leaders of Montenegro had been able to keep under control potential tensions between its two political poles.

The socialist federalism seemed to ‘engulf this demarcation by absorbing Montenegro’s two tones into a larger palette’ (Thompson, 1992: 160). For decades after the WWII, politically and economically privileged Montenegrins appeared unified in the strong sense of belonging to the Yugoslav state. Even after Tito’s death, they ‘continued to revere to Old Man’s memory’ (Roberts, 2007: 426). On the other hand, the issues of Montenegrin national identity and the related Montenegrin national

¹²⁹ The latter primarily referred to the 1974 book ‘On the Origin and Development of the Montenegrin Nation’ (*O postanku i razvoju crnogorske nacije*), written by Savo Brković, a WWII national hero, one of the highest SKCG officials and, perhaps, the only one who at that time sought to systematically analyze the ethno genesis of Montenegrins. For refuting a widely-accepted thesis on their Serbian ethnic origin, Brković was marked as Montenegrin nationalist, politically marginalized and even expelled from the Party subsequent to the 1988 reprint of his book.

interest remained essentially unresolved.¹³⁰ Determined principally by Montenegro's political status within Yugoslavia, they were bound to be re-problematized as the foundations of the socialist federation started to shake. And while most of the Yugoslav peoples entered the period of political crisis with more or less defined and ambitious national programs, the best that Montenegrins could have hoped for was more of the same, i.e. 'the continuation of a system that they rightly believed had worked greatly to their advantage' (Ibid).

3.2.3. Serbia: The fear of (others') freedom

3.2.3.1. A lone voice against decentralization

Ahead of the 1974 adoption of a new Yugoslav constitution, serious signs of dissatisfaction concerning political position of Serbia in the socialist federation first appeared among the Serbian intellectual circles. Between 1967 and 1971, as previously mentioned, a set of constitutional amendments was passed in Yugoslavia, effectively transferring power from the federal center to the republics and provinces. This was a result of an intense political debate on the future of the Yugoslav federation, initiated in the early 1960s. Mainly based in Croatia and Slovenia, the advocates of political and economic decentralization demanded weakening of the central role of the federal state and party apparatus. In their view, the policy of Yugoslav centrism was, in theory, anti-Socialist and, in practice, served as a cover for Serbian hegemonic ambitions in the federation. As elaborated by Kardelj, the Socialist project in general was about replacing the state with a self-managing society. Viewed from that perspective, he underlined, any attempt to keep strong and

¹³⁰ 'Because of the communist elite's policies', Milorad Popović, a prominent Montenegrin writer and one of the first intellectuals who openly supported the idea of Montenegrin independence, told me, 'the work on the national emancipation of Montenegrins was essentially left unfinished' (Interview, September 2012).

centralized Yugoslav state in place would, in essence, be detrimental to the main purpose of Socialism:

‘The alternative here is not whether Yugoslavia will survive or not, but whether it will continue to develop as a Socialist, self-managing, and democratic community of equal peoples, or whether it will fall into the hands of hegemonic forces in any political or ideological guise’ (1981: 228).¹³¹

On the other hand, the majority of party members from Serbia, the largest and politically dominant Yugoslav republic, strongly opposed such developmental concept while strategically siding with the center of power and ‘Yugoslavism’ (Pešić, 1996: 12). At the political summit of the federation, their ideas were represented by Aleksandar Ranković. A symbol of the state apparatus, Ranković was seen by many as the leading opponent of political decentralization and economic liberalization of Yugoslavia, the process which, in his view, would eventually lead to its disintegration. For that reason, he believed that the federal institutions, in the first place the Party, the army, and the security forces, must stay independent of the republican leaders’ influence (Jović, 2009: 64).

The 1964 Congress of the League of Communist of Yugoslavia represented, as previously mentioned, a big triumph of the former political camp. Crucial in this regard was the endorsement of its ideas that came from Tito. In accordance with the Marxist concept of natural decline of the state, and with an aim of permanently resolving the national question in Yugoslavia on the basis of equality of its peoples, he came to acknowledge the necessity of the country’s political decentralization.¹³²

¹³¹ Jović notes that, by ‘hegemonic forces’ Kardelj meant ‘Soviet-type Communists or any other type of great-statist ideology that would “naturally” rely on the strongest nation’ (2009: 67).

¹³² Interestingly, before he finally made up his mind in this regard, Tito’s support had, on several occasions, switched back and forth between the two camps. However, as an experienced politician, now thinking of a long-lasting legacy of his rule (he was well in his 70s), while being aware that the national question could be

The Congress therefore rejected the notion of 'Yugoslav culture' as assimilatory, thereby labeling the idea about withering away of nations as 'bureaucratic' and 'unitarist' (quoted in *Pešić*, 1996: 12). Nations/republics were, accordingly, to become the real bearers of sovereignty in the country (*Ibid*). Moreover, following the next SKJ Congress, summoned in March 1969, which effectively transferred its power to the republican organs, the Yugoslav ruling party basically disappeared as a unified political organization (*Ibid*).¹³³

Appointed a year earlier, the new Serbian liberal political leadership, led by Latinka Perović and Marko Nikezić, strongly endorsed the policy of decentralization, arguing that Serbia as well as other republics could only benefit from more political and economic freedom. Their political program called 'A Modern Serbia' was based on the belief that, on the one hand, modernization – primarily in the sphere of economy – would eventually resolve the problems of Serbia and Yugoslavia, and, on the other, that their political mission should be focused entirely on their own republic. The liberals thus assumed that identifying Serbia with Yugoslavia 'exposed Serbia itself to the twin dangers of economic neglect (because Serbia's economic interests were wrongly assumed to be identical with the federation's) and political interference (because the federation assumed in Serbia, and especially in Belgrade, the right to intervene in affairs that in all other republics were considered internal' (Budding, 1997: 412). In this regard, Perović, at that time the Secretary to the Serbian League

easily manipulated, the Yugoslav leader decided to take the country down the path of political reform (Jović, *Ibid*: 65).

¹³³ The fact that the Yugoslav state was thus based on 'an anti-state ideological conception', i.e. that its stability from then on depended primarily on a political compromise of the republics' political elites, was, according to Jović, one of the main sources of its subsequent crisis. In his analysis of the Yugoslav collapse, the author argues that 'by treating Yugoslav constitutive nations as completed (as Kardelj formulated it in 1970) and their republics as sovereign states (as formulated in the 1974 Constitution), the ideological narrative of Yugoslav Communism in practice - and perhaps unintentionally - shielded and promoted nationalism in its constitutive nations' (2009: 20). Similarly, Ramet notes that 'the formula, which established a network of quasi-feudal national oligarchies and entrenched their power in the constituent republics of the SFRJ, created the institutional fissures along which Yugoslavia would break up' (2002: 6).

of Communists' (*Savez komunista Srbije* - SKS) Central Committee, later wrote that the constitutional changes were acceptable 'because they also strengthened the position of Serbia as an equal among equals, thus reducing further pressures on her and minimizing the chances for renewal of hegemonic tendencies in the political, economic, and cultural areas in Serbia itself' (1991: 268). The July 1966 deposition of Ranković who, as previously said, represented the embodiment of the Yugoslav state centrism opened the way for realization of these ideas. For the Serbian political officials, it was a unique chance for the emergence of modern, democratic Serbia, relieved from the permanent suspicion of being a 'guardian' to everyone else in Yugoslavia (Jović, 2009: 109).

At the same time, the Serbian leadership saw no reason for concern that the interests of their republic could be jeopardized as a result of political decentralization of the Yugoslav federation. Nikezić, the president of the SKS's Central Committee, thus stated the following in June 1968:

'At no other time and in no other place was the mistake of granting more rights and wider possibilities (than necessary) for the development of smaller nations and nationalities committed.¹³⁴ History has never recorded that such a "mistake" was committed toward them' (quoted in Jović, 2009: 95).

In a similar vein, Petar Stambolić, veteran of the Serbian politics, then Federal Prime Minister and an uncle of the future Serbian president, Ivan Stambolić, discarded the possibility of Serbia being endangered in any way in Yugoslavia:

'It is only the majority that can put pressure on minorities, and therefore the problem of the minority is not a problem for the minority, but for the majority' (quoted in *Ibid*: 123).

¹³⁴ The latter term used for national minorities, i.e. ethnic groups without their own republic in Yugoslavia.

In contrast to these arguments, a number of prominent representatives of the Serbian intelligentsia began expressing their fears during this period that the policy pursued by the federal authorities posed a threat to Serbia's territorial integrity (Thomas, 1999: 34). In effect, their political activism was a reaction to the fading of what Serbs considered a symbiosis between 'Serbianism' and 'Yugoslavism', mediated by the communist system (Pešić, 1996: 15). According to them, as a consequence of the gradual structural weakening of Yugoslavia, which made possible its confederalization and, even, dissolution, the fundamental Serbian goal – all Serbs living within borders of one state – was called into question.¹³⁵ With that in mind, at the 14th Plenum of the SKS's Central Committee held in May 1968, Dobrica Ćosić, a member of this body and one of the key figures of the upcoming political crisis in Serbia and Yugoslavia, voiced his opposition to the Party's disintegrative policy, thereby anticipating consequential revival of the Serbian nationalism:

'If in Yugoslavia traditional, i.e. nationalist-statist policies and particularistic orientations endure and conquer [...] then the Serbian people also might be inflamed by an old historic goal and national ideal - the unification of the Serbian people in a single state' (*Komunist*, 1968: 111).

Even more ardent and politically controversial attack on the aforementioned constitutional amendments came from Mihailo Djurić, one of the best-known Serbian philosophers and a professor at the Law Faculty of the Belgrade University, who called for protection of 'the endangered national interests of the Serbs in Yugoslavia':

'At the moment when it is led by the force of circumstances toward the establishment of its own national state, can the Serbian people remain indifferent to its many parts outside the current borders of the Socialist Republic of Serbia?' (*Anali*, 1971: 230-233).

¹³⁵ Interestingly, the same political process was perceived by Stambolić in a completely different manner: 'This is not disintegration; this is integration because integration can be successful only if it is voluntary' (quoted in Jović, 2009: 124).

One particular element of the Yugoslav decentralization plan, which the members of this group regarded as the most damaging for the national interests of Serbia, was the creation of politically autonomous entities within its borders. Namely, already in the late 1960s, as a result of the aforementioned constitutional amendments' adoption, two Serbian provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo) seized the main attributes of statehood, i.e. legislative, executive, and judicial powers, whereby laws that were not approved by their parliaments applied only to Serbia proper (Serbia without its autonomous provinces). The absence of similar constitutional arrangements in other Yugoslav republics was, in view of a considerable part of the Serbian intellectual elite, the best proof of inconsistency of the federal state politics. According to its representatives, national rights of all numerically significant minorities, including Serbs in Croatia, should have got territorial expression (Budding, 1997: 417). This way, they argued, proposed strengthening of 'bureaucratic' institutions in Kosovo and Vojvodina was supposed to functionally detach the provinces from the remainder of the Serbian political body, thus purposefully weakening the biggest republic of the Yugoslav federation.

Due to its immense symbolic importance in the Serbian mythology, the status of Kosovo represented the most sensitive issue of the political debate on the future constitutional arrangement for Serbia. The principles of provincial 'autonomy' had been in place since 1948 but had remained mainly decorative or symbolic features of the system (Cohen, 2001: 21). Only after the removal of Ranković, which, among other things, marked the end of a continuous heavy-handed repression of his secret police against the Albanian majority in the province, more noticeable promotion of Albanian cadres to the Kosovo's governing positions could take place. Full realization of its political autonomy was, nonetheless, yet to be achieved. As pointed out by

Mehmet Hoxha, a Kosovo Albanian communist official and a Yugoslav Partisan Movement veteran from the Second World War:

'Why 370,000 Montenegrins have their own republic while 1.2 million Albanians do not even have total autonomy?' (*Borba*, 5 March 1968).

3.2.3.2. *Wading in collective self-pity*

An answer to the Hoxha's and many other related questions came the adoption of the 1974 constitution which defined Yugoslavia as consisting of eight constituent units.¹³⁶ With their legal status being formed not merely on the Serbian but also on the federal law (Repishti, 1984: 202), Kosovo and Vojvodina, formally designated as autonomous provinces in Serbia *de facto* got similar political status as the six Yugoslav republics.¹³⁷ In that sense, the Constitution clearly emphasized their participation in the federal affairs as well as in conducting their own, whereas their 'role' in the affairs of Serbia was to be optional (Dimitrijević, 2002: 19). In practice, the provinces had the right of veto, equal representation in the collective Presidency of the SFRJ,¹³⁸ and the right to present their own interests without consultation with the republic (Pešić, 1996: 30). Furthermore, given that they got their own parliaments, presidencies, governments, and courts, Serbia had no effective jurisdiction over Kosovo and Vojvodina. At the same time, while being functionally independent from the Republic, provincial assemblies were represented – and, hence, their delegates could vote – in its parliament. In addition, until the end of the

¹³⁶ Žarko Puhovski, Zagreb University professor, liberal philosopher and one of the most prominent Croatian intellectuals, believes that Tito had an idea of Yugoslavia being organized so that Serbia was controlled by the federal institutions, while Croatia was controlled by the local Serbs. 'Such solution, unfortunately, provided ammunition for all their [Serbian and Croatian] ideologies that later emerged' (Interview, October 2011).

¹³⁷ In the article 3 of the Constitution, the provinces were, alongside the republics, enlisted as the constitutive parts of the Yugoslav federation.

¹³⁸ Created in 1971, this particular body served as collective head of state of the SFRJ. According to the 1974 constitution, it consisted of nine members, one from each republic and province, plus the SKJ Presidium chairman. Despite its existence, Tito remained the bearer of absolute political power in Yugoslavia until his death.

1980s when its provinces' autonomy was abolished, Serbia could not pass important laws in matters such as defense and education, as their adoption was contingent upon consensus of the three assemblies. In a word, according to the new Constitution, the biggest Yugoslav republic was formally a unitary state whose relations with its provinces were based on political compromises (Jović, 2009: 172). At the federal level, Serbia was therefore not a sovereign negotiating party like the other republics (Pešić, 1996: 15). It cannot be denied, Dimitrijević concludes in view of all this, that Serbia found itself in 'an abnormal constitutional situation' (2002: 27).¹³⁹

More to the point, being the only constitutionally recognized ethnic minority in the country, Kosovo Albanians were given broad cultural and linguistic rights. Their rapid political emancipation and ethnic affirmation, followed by frequent manifestations of Albanian nationalism, made non-Albanian – mainly Serb and Montenegrin – population in the province feeling deprived of previously held political rights. What was, essentially, jeopardized by the new socio-political developments in Kosovo was the long-lasting power hegemony of this minority group.¹⁴⁰ Hence, despite the fact that their political influence did not actually drop as sharply in the population and party membership, it was obvious that a significant change of political climate was taking place in the province (Cohen, 2001: 26). Coupled with spectacular

¹³⁹ In relation to such claims, Milan Jovanović, Belgrade University political science professor and a long-term highest official of the Socialist Party of Serbia, told me that the general awareness about this problem and the conviction that Serbia had to solve it eventually had already existed in this period. Throughout the following years, he noted, people grew increasingly frustrated with the lack of an adequate political reaction of the Republic's authorities (Interview, January 2012). 'The adoption of the 1974 Constitution resulted in the creation of a nationalistic atmosphere in which, while all the other republics supposedly profited, Serbia was regarded as the only loser' – Žarko Korać, Belgrade University psychology professor and one of the most notable figures of the anti-Milošević opposition mentioned during our talk (Interview, January 2012).

¹⁴⁰ The 1971 census, for instance, showed that Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo, who made up 21 per cent of its total population, still held 1/3 positions in the party and mass organizations, 45 per cent of the government and legislative functionaries, and more a half of the provincial managerial personnel. Academic elite and technical intelligentsia in Kosovo were also overwhelmingly non-Albanian (Cohen, 2001: 24)

demographic growth of the Albanian majority,¹⁴¹ this led to a sizeable exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo during the 1970s and 1980s.

The ensuing wide-spread belief that the new federal constitution had left the country politically crippled served as a basis for the construction of a nationalist political narrative in Serbia. Such impression was only enhanced by the massive demonstrations of Kosovo Albanians in March and April 1981, during which the transformation of the province into a separate Yugoslav republic was openly demanded. Throughout the country, 'stories began to circulate about the persecution of Kosovo Serbs, the destruction of their churches and graveyards and frequent acts of violence, including the rape of little Serbian girls' (Judah, 1997: 156). A year later, 21 younger-generation priests of the awakening Serbian Orthodox Church publicized an appeal in which, while calling for 'the protection of the spiritual and biological essence of the Serbian people in Kosovo', they criticized the political and religious authorities for the policies pursued toward the province. The 'wounded lion' psychology of the Serbian public came to be fully manifested at Ranković's funeral in August 1983. The presence of thousands was, in Jović's words, 'a demonstration of the discontent of many Serbs with his ousting from office in 1966, but also a sign of solidarity with those who (like Ćosić) criticized the post-Ranković Yugoslavia' (2009: 230). More importantly, it was a clear signal that 'whoever assumed his [Ranković's] mantle as a hard-nosed communist leader devoted to Serbian national interests, would likely enjoy the support of an important but still rather silent constituency in Serbian politics' (Cohen, 2001: 53).

¹⁴¹ During the 1970s, with 27 live births per 1,000 people, Kosovo officially had the highest birth rate in Europe. It was estimated that, as a result, its population of 1.6 million (in 1981) would grow to 2.6 million by the end of the century, and 3.5 million by 2021 (*Radio Free Europe Research*, 7 August 1987).

At the same time, a considerable part of the Serbian intellectual stratum shared and publically expressed the nationalist sentiment of the wider public. Ljubomir Tadić, Belgrade university professor and a well-known Marxist philosopher argued, for instance, that in the process of adoption of the 1974 Constitution, 'a weak Serbia – a strong Yugoslavia' was actual behind-the-scene strategy of the Yugoslav political leadership. Accordingly, he wrote, the Serbian Republic was placed in a position within the Yugoslav constitutional system which had no equal in any other country's constitutional history. It is because of this, Tadić concluded, that 'the Serbian population in one of the provinces of the Republic of Serbia (Kosovo) is exposed to drastic discrimination' (1986: 3). A strong support for such claims also came from Vojislav Koštunica, then lecturer at the Belgrade Law Faculty:

'One may rightly ask: if territorial and political autonomy was to be established for the Albanian minority, why has this been done only in the Serbian federal unit, and not, for instance, in parts of Macedonian and Montenegro that are also densely populated by the Albanian minority? In the course of peripheralising developments in Yugoslav federalism [...] the Serbs have been put in the paradoxical situation of being reduced to the state of a national minority in part of their own federal unit without at the same time enjoying genuine minority rights (1988: 78-92).¹⁴²

In addition to the academics, a number of 'national romantic' novelists gathered around the Serbian Writers' Association voiced their concerns about the political destiny of Serbia and, in particular, its southern province. Vuk Drašković, later to become the leader of the anti-Milošević opposition, thus lamented in April 1986:

¹⁴² In his 1985 work with Kosta Čavoški, another representative of the Serbian nationalist intelligentsia, Koštunica even called into question the entire historical legitimacy of the Yugoslav one party state and its ideological foundations, arguing that the Communists had come to power through intimidation and suppression of the opposition.

'Can we remove the knowledge that one whole nation, the Serbian nation in Kosovo and Metohija, are being subjected to a campaign of organized terror by their Albanian neighbors, and the government in that area, which is now only formally considered a part of Serbia? Can we remove the knowledge of the soothing words and the promises of consolation which have been offered to the Kosovo Serbs so that we can tolerate the most brutal and most primitive outpouring of hatred and fascism and allow their Golgotha to continue under the double headed eagle, the banner of a foreign state?' (1990: 17).

The critical moment in the process of political rapprochement between the Serbian populace and intelligentsia happened in January 1986. It was preceded by a petition signed by more than 2,000 Kosovo Serbs and sent to the Serbian and Yugoslav assemblies in October 1985, in which – because of 'the unbearable conditions of life in the province' – they demanded decisive political measures that would ensure protection of their constitutional rights and prevent their forced exodus from the ancient hearth. Following the condemnation of this initiative by the political authorities, more than 200 prominent representatives of the Belgrade intellectual scene signed their petition of support to the compatriots in Kosovo. In conjunction with strong criticism of those 'who have shown themselves to be deaf to their nation's desperate cry and its awoken consciousness' (Magaš, 1993: 49),¹⁴³ the following was stated in the document:

'Everyone in this country who is not indifferent has long ago realized that the genocide in Kosovo cannot be combated without deeper social [...] changes in the whole country. These changes are unimaginable without changes likewise in the relationship between the Autonomous Provinces and the Republic of Serbia [...] Genocide cannot be

¹⁴³ The author argues that 'quite apart from the absurdity of its charges of genocide, surrender of the Albanian-inhabited areas of Yugoslavia to neighboring Albania and so on, the Belgrade intellectuals' petition is remarkable for its failure to relate national tensions in Kosovo to any social and economic causes' (Ibid: 52).

prevented by the [...] gradual surrender of Kosovo and Metohija – to Albania: the unsigned capitulation which leads to a politics of national treason' (quoted in *Ibid*).

Later that year, sections of a draft 'Memorandum' of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (*Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti* – SANU) were published in the Serbian daily *Večernje Novosti*.¹⁴⁴ In words of Azem Vllasi, who served between 1986 and 1988 as the President of the League of Communists of Kosovo, the document contained an 'all-encompassing program for transformation of Yugoslavia into a Serbo-slavia' (Interview, October 2011). And indeed, the 16-member commission appointed by the Academy in June 1985 to prepare an analysis of the most important political and economic problems in the country came to a general conclusion that the Serbs were great victims of Titoist regime, its 'historically worn out ideology', and 'genocidal' policies of other peoples, in the first place Albanians and Croats (Rusinow, 1995: 403). Among other things, the Memorandum stated that even before the Second World War, following the directives of the Comintern, the Yugoslav communists adopted policies contrary to Serbian interests; that growing political and socio-economic difficulties of Serbia in Yugoslavia were a product of the long-lasting anti-Serbian coalition between Croatian and Slovenian communists; and that, with the exception of the Independent State of Croatia, the status of Serbian communities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) had never been worse. As a result of the 'ingratitude and machinations motivated by "chauvinism and Serbophobia" of people whom Serbia had done so much', Serbia was economically impoverished and, being divided into three parts, politically 'deprived of the kind of statehood enjoyed by all other republics' (quoted in *Ibid*). The official political approach to the 'national question' in Yugoslavia was, in a word, portrayed as an

¹⁴⁴ The text is available at:

http://www.trepca.net/english/2006/serbian_memorandum_1986/serbia_memorandum_1986.html.

elaborate deceit that had seriously harmed Serbia and Serbian interests (Cohen, 2001: 59). As summarized in the document:

‘A nation which after a long and bloody struggle regained its own state, which fought for and achieved a civil democracy, and which in the last two wars lost 2.5 million of its members, has lived to see the day when a Party committee of apparatchiks decrees that after four decades in the new Yugoslavia it alone is not to have its own state. A worst historical defeat in peacetime cannot be imagined’ (quoted in *Trifunovska*, 1999: 32).¹⁴⁵

After a long period of passivity, its authors therefore asserted that the time had come for the Serbs to ‘become a historical subject’, that is to ‘regain awareness of their historical and spiritual being’ and ‘define and declare their own national interests’ (Ibid). Wading in collective self-pity and basking in the certainty that the Serbs were uniquely victimized in the SFRJ, the Memorandum, as put by Ramet, was ‘nothing else than an ideological program for revenge and for establishing Serb hegemony over Yugoslavia’s non-Serbs’ (2002: 20). The inherently chauvinistic image of the nation as an innocent victim surrounded by coalition of enemies, i.e. by hostile nations was, in words of Nenad Dimitrijević, ‘presented as reality in order to produce a new reality’ (1998: 130). At the time of its publication, however, it seemed as if such ideas had no support among the country’s official political circles. Ivan Stambolić, President of the Presidency of Serbia thus strongly condemned the Memorandum in October 1986 as ‘chauvinist initiative’ intended for ‘inflaming conflicts and poisoning relations’ among the nations in Yugoslavia (Jović, 2009: 251).

¹⁴⁵ As a whole, Pešić argues, the Memorandum was built upon seven basic hypotheses: ‘Yugoslavia is a Serbian illusion’, since only the Serbs love it, were the only ones to fight for it and to abdicate their nationality in the name of its unity; There is ‘a conspiracy against the Serbs’ of the Comintern, the SKJ, and its leaders, Tito (Croat) and Kardelj (Slovenian), who implemented Yugoslavia’s anti-Serbian policy; ‘Serbia is exploited’ by Croatia and Slovenia, which results in its economic backwardness; ‘Serbs are the losers’ as, notwithstanding their war victories and enormous sacrifices, the only ones without a state proper; ‘Serbs are exposed to the hatred’ of each Yugoslav nation; ‘Serbs are exposed to genocide’ as a consequence of their enemies’ enduring and immutable anti-Serb policies; ‘A national states of all Serbs’ is an inevitable result, should the anti-Serb policies continue (1996: 19-20).

‘The Memorandum was an *in memoriam* for Yugoslavia’, Stambolić prophetically concluded. Similar attacks, including demands for resignation of the SANU leadership, came from a number of political leaders in Serbia and other republics.

The draft Memorandum did not create nationalism but simply ‘tapped sentiments that ran deep among Serbs’ (Silber and Little, 1995: 33).¹⁴⁶ Though absolutely apparent from the early 1980s, a gathering sense of dissatisfaction in Serbia with the political status quo, focused primarily on the national question, remained nonetheless politically confined for the moment. Despite the prevailing mood among ordinary people as well as highest intellectual and religious authorities in the country, the Serbs were still to wait for the ‘establishment of their full national and cultural integrity regardless of which republic and autonomous province they lived in’ (Trifunovska, 1999: 32). While notions of a national renaissance were already bubbling through various structures of the Serbian society,¹⁴⁷ what had still not occurred on the political scene was for a major communist political leader to publicly defend and advance a broad-ranging nationalist program (Cohen, 2001: 62). In that sense, political rise of Slobodan Milošević turned out to be of crucial

¹⁴⁶ Azem Vllasi made a similar point during our talk: ‘In the last decade of its existence, Yugoslavia desperately needed economic reforms. However, in Serbia, the biggest republic, they had always prioritized the matters of centralization and political domination in the federation. In particular, they could not accept the level of self-governance of their provinces, primarily Kosovo. At the same time, Serbia had never had a democratic solution for Kosovo [...] They wanted the territory of Kosovo, but would never allow Kosovo Albanians to live in a democratic society, like other [Yugoslav – I.V.] citizens. Moreover, they were always treated in a way that was bound to provoke dissatisfaction’ (Interview, October 2011).

¹⁴⁷ An interesting remark in this regard is made by Cohen. During the mid-1980s, he writes, ‘the growing political de-legitimation and poor economic performance of post-Tito Yugoslavia had stimulated an obsession in Serbia with the Serbs’ alleged historical uniqueness, their courage, and their martyrdom. Belgrade theaters featured performances such as “The Fall of the Serbian Empire”, “World War I Veterans Speak”, “The Battle of Kolubara”, “Prince Milos Has Been Killed”, etc. The same revival of traditional national themes and heroes was also found in newspapers, exhibitions, lectures, and novels’ (2001: 70-71).

importance for achieving the fusion between ‘opinion’ and ‘power’ in Serbia (Milosavljević, 2000).¹⁴⁸

3.3. Yugoslavia after Tito

Notwithstanding the constitutionally legitimized process of devolution of the federal state’s political authority, i.e. the expansion of power of the republican and provincial political elites, Josip Broz Tito continued playing the role of indisputable arbiter in the Yugoslav political matters until his death in May 1980. Tito’s political influence was further enhanced by the May 1974 decision of the federal Parliament, made in accordance with the newly adopted Constitution (article 333), to name him the SFRJ President for life. His departure left the country without the supreme political authority and one of the main unifying symbols. With no politically legitimate successor of the late president, and with the economy seriously deteriorating,¹⁴⁹ Yugoslavia had

¹⁴⁸ Talking about the nationalistic circles in Serbia, led by the SANU and the Church, Vllasi mentioned how badly they wanted to penetrate the official political institutions, in the first place the League of Communists. ‘Unfortunately’, he said, ‘in mid-1980, they succeeded in finding a political manager at the very top of the SKS’. More importantly, Vllasi underlined that the Serbian nationalists were looking forward to the emergence of a strong political individual so strongly that Milošević, contrary to many historical interpretations, did not necessarily have to be the one: ‘Had they not found Milošević, they would have kept searching. Being one of the party leaders at that time, I claim, without any uncertainty, that their first choice had, in fact, been Ivan Stambolić [.]. Nonetheless, Stambolić knew where the red line was and was not ready to cross it. Instead of pushing Kosovo Serbs into a conflict with the political institutions of the province, he believed their problems should be solved in cooperation with these institutions’ (Interview, October 2011). Dušan Pavlović, political science professor at Belgrade University whom I interviewed in June 2011, also argued that if Stambolić or any other high-ranking Serbian official had understood the power of [and decided to embrace] the nationalist discourse before Milošević did, he would have enjoyed the same kind of political support. In fact, Pavlović underlined, ‘until 1986 Milošević did not differ in any way from other communist apparatchiks around him’. During our talk in January 2012, Balša Špadijer, political science professor and one of Milošević’s closest associates, serving as the head of the Serbian Constitutional Court in the early 1990s, made a similar point: ‘A general feeling of dissatisfaction existed in Serbia because of the 1974 Constitution-imposed political status. Therefore, if Milošević did not show up, someone else certainly would’. Likewise, Milan Jovanović argued that Milošević was an apparatchik who simply managed to understand and promised to fulfill what people wanted at that time (Interview, January 2012).

¹⁴⁹ Nebojša Vladislavljević, for instance, reminds that ‘since 1975 Yugoslavia, or more precisely its republics and provinces, had borrowed around \$10 billion so that foreign debt reached \$18 billion by 1980. Both unemployment and inflation gradually increased; the aggregate figure for the latter exceeded 1,000 per cent, or 20 times the European average between 1979 and 1985. By the end of this period, registered unemployment rose to over 16.3 per cent [.]. Living standards fell by one-quarter between 1979 and 1985’ (2008: 46).

‘entered a period of “apocalyptic culture” where the core values of the socialist state were increasingly being brought into question by dissident opinion and with the authorities being uncertain as to how they should respond (Ramet, 1985: 3). Accordingly, Tito’s death not only created a vast functional vacuum in the country’s government but, as mentioned above, also dramatically expanded a space for political activism in its public scene.

The national question which, following the adoption of the new constitution, seemed to ‘had been laid to rest’ (Ibid: 6), was now emerging in some Yugoslav republics as a new formula for mobilization of political support. After a longer period in which ‘all non-socialist forms of ethnic participation were officially prohibited, while the extreme expressions of nationalism on the part of any ethnic group were strongly condemned and often harshly punished’, the use of nationalism came to be recognized as a valuable political resource both by politicians outside the League of Communists and by former Titoist stalwarts (Cohen, 2001: 52). In this regard, as later noted by a Serbian official, Slobodan Milošević was ‘the first Yugoslav politician to realize that Tito was dead’ (*The Milwaukee Journal*, 10 October 1988).

3.3.1.Serbia: The roar

3.3.1.1. Rise of the leader

On 24 April 1987, Milošević, recently appointed head of the Serbian League of Communists, visited a small, predominantly Serb municipality of Kosovo Polje. In the course of the meeting with political representatives of the Serb community, clashes broke out between local police and Serb demonstrators. Purportedly moved by the scenes of police violence, Milošević famously uttered: ‘No one should dare to beat you’ – a sentence that, in words of the Kosovo Serb leader Miroslav Šolević,

‘enthroned him as a [Serbian] Tsar’ (quoted in *Silber and Little*, 1995: 37).¹⁵⁰ ‘There will be no tyranny on this soil’, Milošević pledged before the mass, and continued in the same tone:

‘We will win this battle. Yugoslavia does not exist without Kosovo. Yugoslavia will disintegrate without Kosovo. Yugoslavia and Serbia will not give it away’ (quoted in *Djukić*, 2001: 17).

Subsequently, the meeting was resumed in the presence of several hundred representatives of the local Serbs who informed the guest from Belgrade on numerous cases of alleged political oppression and police brutality by provincial authorities. Following the end of the 13-hour assembly, Milošević gave a speech in which while calling for the preservation of the Titoist ideal of ‘brotherhood and unity’ of the Yugoslav peoples he promised political support to Kosovo Serbs, thereby reminding that ‘it has never been a characteristic of the spirit of the Serbian people to demobilize when they must fight, to become demoralized when the situation is difficult’ (quoted in *Jović*, 2009: 259).¹⁵¹

Many believe that the visit to Kosovo Polje was the moment of epiphany for Milošević, hitherto ‘cautious and reserved communist apparatchik offering the population vapid formulations from a lexicon of well-honed and officially condoned platitudes’ (Cohen, 2001: 64). Except to attack nationalism and praise Tito’s policies, he had generally expressed no particular interest in the national question in the earlier period (Judah, 1997: 162). Thus, Stambolić later recalled, Milošević had not

¹⁵⁰ ‘This was the key moment for Milošević; it turned him into the national hero and the absolute national leader overnight’ – Žarko Korać similarly noted (Interview, January 2012).

¹⁵¹ Vllasi told me that everything around Milošević’s visit was well-planned in Belgrade. Ahead of it, Kosovo Serbs organized a number of rallies in the Serbian capital in order to get public attention for their ‘problem’. By doing so, Vllasi argues, local Serbs followed the advice of the Serbian nationalist intellectuals. ‘We knew, for instance, that Dobrica Ćosić had been coming to Kosovo to give them instructions, suggesting that they would achieve what they want only if they came to Belgrade and rallied in front of the republican and federal institutions [...] A few months later, it was decided that Milošević should go and “see” what was going in Kosovo’ (Interview, October 2011).

shown political concerns regarding Kosovo prior to this event (1995: 165). Yet, the intensity of views presented by the demonstrators he met on this occasion obviously had a strong impact on his perception of the nationalist sentiment in the province. Upon his return to Belgrade, Milošević started lobbying among the party comrades with the aim of calling a session of the SKJ Central Committee in which the situation in Kosovo would be discussed. He demanded that specific targets be set for the party and state organs' performance in relation to this problem, as well as that a number of former party officials from Kosovo – including Fadil Hoxha, an old guard communist with an undisputed authority in the province – be held politically accountable for their alleged support from Albanian nationalism (Vladisavljević, 2008: 101). Even according to his closest associates from this period, it was apparent that Milošević came back from Kosovo as a different man (Djukić, 1992: 81).

More importantly, it soon became clear that, by taking as his own the cause of Kosovo Serbs, Milošević tapped into a broad vein of dissatisfaction among the Serbs about their role in postwar Yugoslavia (Sell, 2002: 41). After his reaction to the scenes of police brutality and people in tears was shown on Serbian television, he became a hero in the eyes of many of his countrymen. As later confirmed by Dušan Mitević, Milošević's close associate and then deputy director of the Radio Television Belgrade,¹⁵² media played a very important role in his promotion into a national leader:

'We were playing Milošević's promise [to Kosovo Serbs] on TV non-stop. This is what launched him' (quoted in *Silber and Little*, 1995: 31).

Milošević's patriotic words were widely perceived as a refreshingly honest courage of a politician speaking on a behalf of an oppressed minority (Djukić, 2001:

¹⁵² In 1992, it was merged with the Radio Television Novi Sad and Radio Television Priština to create the Radio Television of Serbia (RTS).

17). A poem about ‘a handsome young speaker’ (quoted in *Doder and Branson*, 1999: 44) published only a week after his visit to Kosovo in *Književne Novine*, the official magazine of the Serbian Writers’ Association, was an unambiguous sign that Milošević enjoyed sympathies among the Serbian nationalistic elite as well. ‘The elite, including myself, prepared, groomed and saddled the horse which Milošević then simply got on’, Vuk Drašković told me (Interview, January 2012).¹⁵³ One year after the Academy’s memorandum was leaked to the media and formally denounced by the Serbian party, the search for a mobilizer of Serb anger and resentment was finally rewarded (Rusinow, 1995: 404).¹⁵⁴ Supposedly just another insignificant political event, i.e. ‘a night-time meeting in an unimpressive hall located in a remote European province’, would – owing to the extent of political change brought about by the processes it had initiated – turn out to be ‘a major benchmark in contemporary Serbian and world history’ (Cohen, 2001: 156).

Fully aware of the political potential of the popular and media support he enjoyed at the moment, Milošević started gradually strengthening his positions. In order to make a public appearance of an authoritative political leader determined to make necessary changes, he introduced an iron discipline into the party organization he led. Entirely unlike the earlier practices of the collective leadership, he now issued

¹⁵³ In his autobiographical novel, Drašković nicely depicted the elite’s general sentiment from that period concerning Milošević: ‘I am attending debates in cabinets and cafe of the Academy of Science [SANU]. Milošević is deified by almost everyone. Under his virtues, as a rule, they enlist even what he does not speak, think, or want. A great master of political tactics and strategy – this is how they see him. A communist, and a convinced Serb. He speaks little, and intends a lot. He says only what can possibly be said, while working on what he does not speak about. A great actor. He works for Americans, whereas his wife works for Russians. Strategically divided roles. [He] hits at the right moment and he knows the measure. Cruel, but tolerant [;] and he looks nice’ (2010: 27).

¹⁵⁴ In words of Žarko Korać: ‘Milošević received a plebiscitarian support of the Church, the SANU, and the Writers’ Association. They saw this as a Serbian national revolution and decided to take part’ (Interview, January 2012). In this respect, Drašković was even more explicit: ‘Initially, most members of the Serbian intellectual elite did not understand when I spoke about historical processes, the approaching collapse of communism and the creation of a new European [political] reality. But once this change happened, and they finally became aware of it, they saw in it an opportunity for Serbia and its people to create, on the ruins of Yugoslavia, something that we had missed to create in 1918, to fortify our Western borders and establish a Greater Serbia’ (interview, January 2012).

orders without asking the inner party circle for advice (Jović, 2009: 262). In that sense, the decision of the communist leaders from other Yugoslav republics to support his unilateral initiative for calling the abovementioned party session on Kosovo – seen by them as ‘firmly remaining on the Titoist course’ (Vladislavljević, 2008: 68) – was a strong wind into his political sails. Ever more politically independent, Milošević nonetheless still had to count with an opinion of senior party officials, some of whom very skeptical about his political prospect. In their view, he had openly sided with one ethnic group in Kosovo and had aligned the Serbian Communist Party with the Serbian national cause and against the police, the symbol of the state itself (LeBor, 2002: 83). Albeit recognizing the need to challenge Albanian ‘separatists’ and ‘irredentists’ threatening the security of Serbs in Kosovo, they argued strongly against their political mobilization, in particular through rallies and demonstrations. Instead, as emphasized by Stambolić, then Serbian President and long-time Milošević’s political patron, the Serbs were politically obliged to fully support the moderate pro-regime Albanian communist leaders in the province:

‘Every Serb who denies confidence to Albanian communists should be told that he is a Serbian nationalist’ (*BBC*, 5 May 1987).

Milošević’s approach to this highly sensitive issue, he later recalled, was apparently different:

‘I saw we were totally opposed in our methods. We had two different policies on Kosovo. The distance between us began to grow’ (quoted in *Silber and Little*, 1995: 39).

Knowing that an open confrontation with Stambolić and his followers in the party would bear a considerable political risk at the given moment, Milošević chose to buy time. In the course of the next few months, he would ‘deploy all his powers of political seduction’ (LeBor, *Ibid*) with the purpose of garnering support within and outside of the SKS. His positive reputation of a devoted ‘Yugoslav’ and a communist

apparatchik unreservedly loyal to the Titoist legacy was supposed to be the key for winning the sympathies of the elder, more dogmatic, and still very influential generation of party cadres. As Nikola Ljubičić, widely regarded as the most favorite Tito's general and long-time key figure of his military apparatus, elaborated on the occasion of Milošević's 1986 election for the head of the Serbian communists:

'Slobodan engaged in a struggle against nationalism, against liberalism, and against all forms of counter-revolution in Belgrade.'¹⁵⁵ I think he has passed the test' (quoted in *Djukić*, 1994: 35).

An unexpected opportunity for Milošević to reaffirm his commitment to the main principles of the ruling ideology – which one could have called into question after his Kosovo adventure – occurred when the Belgrade University Youth paper, *Student* printed its May issue cover page with the title 'The Dance of the Vampires' (an allusion to the upcoming traditional mass celebration of Tito's birthday). What would under different political circumstances be taken as a humorous regime provocation was presented by Milošević as an open attack on the deceased president and his political legacy:

'We are confronted with an offensive of the opposition, and we must strike back forcefully. The opposition has already taken over many associations, and we are now waging a struggle for the press [...] These are not children's games. We are slipping into anarchy' (quoted in *Ibid*: 63).

On his initiative, the editorial board of the paper and two ministers of the Serbian government were forced to resign. Milošević's political triumph was even greater in view of a mild reaction to this 'scandal' by some of the members of the SKS leadership, including Dragiša Pavlović, the head of the Belgrade party organization and Stambolić's political protégé, who simply wanted to lower political

¹⁵⁵ Milošević had served as the head of the Belgrade communist organization from 1984.

tensions. As argued by Djukić, Milošević was now able to portray both of them as unreliable and unpatriotic (1997: 64). To additionally bolster his ideological credentials, Milošević fiercely attacked the SANU's Memorandum at a closed party meeting in early June:

'The appearance of the Memorandum of the SANU represents nothing else but the darkest nationalism. It means the liquidation of the current socialist system in our country, that is, the disintegration after which there is no survival to any nation or nationality [...] Any flirt with nationalism or yielding to it cannot contribute, but only halt, impede, slowdown and ruin successful political development which the League of Communists has taken to be the goal. Only Tito's brotherhood and unity can secure Yugoslavia's survival' (*Naše Aktuelnosti*, 1987: 171-2).

On the other hand, 'keenly aware of the nationalistic mood in the Serbian intelligentsia and the support for such perspectives among the elements of the SKS as well as in the general population' (Cohen, 2001: 73), Milošević remained publically distant from those in charge of 'the witch hunt' campaign against the Academy. Although there is still no evidence of any direct contact between Milošević and the authors of the Memorandum during this period, he apparently had enough political talent to recognize a mobilizing potential of their ideas. Only a short time after his speech, he was hence able to begin appropriating and encouraging viewpoints that he had just condemned (Ibid: 66).

In September, Milošević decided to move against the party rivals. In light of the series of ethnically motivated incidents in Kosovo during the summer, parts of the Serbian press – considered to be close to Milošević – adopted 'the ugly nationalistic tone' vis-à-vis the Albanians (Sell, 2002: 48). In the atmosphere heated by the constantly repeated message that 'they were not to be trusted, regardless of where they lived and how they acted' (Jović, 2009: 264), numerous shops and kiosks

owned by Albanians were smashed throughout Serbia. In an attempt to bring the nationalistic hysteria to an end, the aforementioned Pavlović summoned directors and chief editors of the Belgrade media with a clear message that ‘inflammatory words result in nothing but a conflagration’:

‘How many Albanian shop windows must be broken to convince us that anti-Albanian feeling does not exist only in the warnings issued by the highest [party] organs, but in our streets as well? [...] Serbian nationalism now feeds not only on the situation in Kosovo, but also on the various ill-considered statements concerning Kosovo that appear in some of our media, public speeches, and some of the institutions of our system [...] We must criticize Serbian nationalism today because, among other things, Serbian nationalists imagine themselves as saviors of the Serbian cause in Kosovo, without in fact being able to solve a single social problem, and especially without being able to improve inter-nationality relations’ (*Corriere della Sera*, 8 October 1987).

The political connotation of the Pavlović’s critique was particularly important. It was absolutely clear that the entire speech and, especially, his remark about ‘the situation in Kosovo which [...] cannot be improved by carelessly promised haste’ (*Ibid*) were aimed at Milošević. For him, on the other hand, this meant ‘a declaration of political war’ (LeBor, 2002: 87). At a meeting of the SKS Presidency held on 18 September, Milošević demanded Pavlović’s removal from its membership with an argument that he had ‘obstructed the implementation of the party’s policy by challenging decisions of higher party organs’ (quoted in *Vladisavljević*, 2008: 68). Concomitantly, Milošević accused Stambolić for the abuse of power since, as the participants were informed, he had sent two days earlier a letter of support for Pavlović to the Belgrade party committee. In the end, Milošević’s proposal was supported by a narrow majority of votes (11 out of 20) of the Presidium members. A week later, at the televised Eight Session of the SKS Central Committee, Milošević

launched final attack on Pavlović and, more importantly, Stambolić who, as it turned out, had committed political suicide by taking his side:

‘We expected trouble from the Kosovo separatists, but we didn’t expect it from party members here. Those who obstruct our reforms violate party discipline. They can’t deny it’ (*BBC’s The Death of Yugoslavia*, August 1995).

The accusations of nationalism against the SKS leadership Milošević rejected as ‘politically unacceptable’:

‘No one can label us Serbian nationalists because we want to and will do resolve the problem of Kosovo in the interests of all the people who live there’ (*NIN*, 4 October 1987).

Although Pavlović and Stambolić proved to be tough opponents, vociferously arguing that while always speaking about the unity of the party Milošević actually fostered dissent within its ranks, it was clear that the power balance had tipped toward him:

‘For [...] two days, in classic Communist fashion where words do not mean what they seem, ninety speakers trooped obediently to the podium to accuse Pavlović and Stambolić of almost everything except what they were really guilty of – trying to block Milošević’s use of Kosovo and Serb nationalism to gain supreme power in Serbia’ (Sell, 2002: 49).

The victory of ‘revolutionists’ over ‘institutionalists’ (Jović, 2009: 268) within the Serbian leadership was overwhelming and, more importantly, far-reaching. At the conclusion of the SKS presidency session, Pavlović was expelled from the party. Stambolić, now without control of the main levers of political power and under the complete media blockade, remained as Serbian President for a few more months. He later recalled the political atmosphere during this period:

‘For two months, in newspapers and on television, warrants were issued for people; they were persecuted, dishonored, and ousted. I was left for the end. The method was the same. It started with some vague charges. The basic qualification was, first, an opportunist,

and then a traitor of the Serbian people. An atmosphere of lynch was created. One was helpless, unable to do anything publically' (quoted in *Stambolić*, 2006: 89-90).

Stambolić was officially fired in mid-December and Milošević's political triumph was now complete. The following restoration of the Party's unity, i.e. removal of the remainder of Stambolić's followers from its ranks, marked the final stage in the process of consolidation of his power. At the same time, it was the first major step on the road to realization of the political program he had outlined a year ago.

3.3.1.2. Reunifying the Republic

Standing unchallenged in Serbia proper, Milošević now sought to establish political control over the country's autonomous provinces. The conclusions of the Belgrade Party Committee's meeting held toward the end of 1987 were, in terms of the future ambitions of the new political leadership, very indicative:

'The members think that we have reached a turning point with regards to our political life and behavior and that this is a chance for mobilization that should not be missed (*Politika*, 7 December 1987).

As pointed out by Slobodanka Gruden, the head of the Belgrade communists, this mobilization was not only to solve the economic and political crisis, eliminate the Kosovo problem, and democratize political life in Serbia, but also to change its legal status in the Yugoslav federation:

'Serbia should not be constitutionally undefined [...] It should be in the same position as other republics. Some individuals do not see this, or do not want to see it' (*Ibid*).

Accordingly, within the next half a year, Milošević prepared the ground for a new political battle. After the reunification of the Party, he was now to reunify Serbia. This time, however, he ignored the established party procedures and, instead, embarked on a mass nationalist mobilization of his supporters. In the situation where, he claimed, 'institutions were not working', Milošević gave way to 'street democracy',

thereby opening a new phase of political life in Serbia. In this spirit, he used the following SKJ conference to point out that the party leaderships were 'obliged to work in compliance with the wishes of the people they represent or should, otherwise, be replaced' (*Tanjug*, 30 May 1988). Subsequently, with the assistance of Kosovo Serb leaders who had already had considerable experience in organizing similar political campaigns, he orchestrated a series of protest meetings and demonstrations in order to eliminate the last pockets of political resistance in the country. From July 1988 to March 1989, more than 100 mass rallies of support to his politics and against provincial leaders accused for 'being insensitive to the plight of Serbs in Kosovo' and 'obstructing constitutional changes that would reassert Serb sovereignty' (Cohen, 2001: 75), were held throughout Serbia. Albeit cultivated by the official media and provided with organizational and material support by the state, the scale of the demonstrations and the number of people involved 'clearly showed the support from across a wide section of Serbian society and opinion' (Thomas, 1999: 46).

Ever more encouraged, Milošević was getting ready for another political attack. In view of the Serb majority in Vojvodina population (54.5 per cent in 1981), while still clearly remembering the criticism of its leadership during a party meeting in mid-1986 on the account of his allegedly nationalist activity, he first turned to the northern Serbian province. At the SKJ Presidency meeting held on 30 September, he made clear that Serbia must become a 'real republic', thereby clearly implying the necessity of alteration of its constitutional status. Milan Sogorov, Vojvodina's representative in this body, bluntly replied to the Serbian colleague, saying that the leadership of the province would never accept giving up its autonomy. Yet, less than a week later, Sogorov and his colleagues were swept away from the political scene. Coordinated from Belgrade, the wave of popular protests against the political

establishment of Vojvodina, which had been underway from June, culminated when tens of thousands of Milošević's supporters occupied its government building determined to stay until their resignation. On 6 October, after a failed attempt to initiate the military intervention – for which the approval of the republican presidency was needed – to disburse the crowd, the Vojvodina leaders agreed to step down. Their toppling was the first overthrow through the use of extra-institutional means of a legitimate government in Yugoslavia in the post-Second World War period. Moreover, from his cynical comment of the 'cadre change' in Vojvodina, it was obvious that Milošević did not think of it as the last:

'We could have done this in the civilized way, had we been lucky [...] Instead we had a war, if I may say, between the citizens and the communists on the one hand and certain leaders on the other hand. The war must be ended, of course, in the interests of the citizens [...] above all in the interests of those who are currently exposed to terror in Kosovo' (*BBC*, 11 October 1988).

Already during November 1988, in the course of the preparation for his next political move, a number of Kosovo high-ranking communist officials were purged. Feeling that a political storm was coming, the Albanian majority in the province reacted. Thousands of students and miners went out on the streets of Priština to peacefully protest against the forced political resignations. Compared with some earlier public manifestations of political discontent in Kosovo, this one was characterized by a considerably different iconography. As commented by a local political analyst, the November rallies were 'the last pro-Yugoslav demonstrations in the province':

'The Albanian flags were tied into a knot with the Yugoslav flag. The Albanian's carried Tito's pictures and cheered the constitution of 1974' (Maliqi, 1994: 241).

In Belgrade, on the other hand, the protest was portrayed as yet another separatist outburst. In response, at a massive rally held on November 18 in the Serbian capital, Milošević stated:

‘Every nation has a love which eternally warms its heart. For Serbia it is Kosovo. Because of that, Kosovo will remain in Serbia [...] Kosovo is Serbia’ (quoted in *Cohen*, 2001: 78).

Three months later, after he had supported the Kosovo miners’ strike against the ongoing political changes, Azem Vllasi was arrested. The possibility of any political dialogue between Belgrade and Priština was thus put an end. Subsequently, under an enormous political pressure from Serbia proper, the Parliament of Kosovo accepted the amendments to the Serbian constitution which effectively ended political and legislative autonomy of the province.¹⁵⁶ On March 29, the constitutional changes were formally proclaimed in the Republic’s Assembly. Serbia was again legally united and Milošević was its absolute political leader.

Beyond the all too familiar drives and cynical methods of power-seeking politicians, Milošević also intuitively understood and effectively expressed the nationalist yearning of large numbers of Serbs on both the elite and popular levels (*Ibid*: 80). In the eyes of the ‘patriotic’ intellectuals, he was the one who they had been waiting for since 1974. For them, he represented the first Serbian politician since Ranković who was ideologically committed to socialism, but would still take a strong stand on behalf on Serbian national interests (*Ibid*).

¹⁵⁶ With this regard, Stambolić later commented: ‘We were trying to untie the Kosovo knot together with Kosovo Albanians. Other cut it with a sword, thereby tying themselves and us into thousands of new knots...They were doing that on the wave of mass, force, and speed, hot-headed and overcome with crazed nationalist hatred’ (*BETA*, 30 August 2000).

Moreover, soon after he had assumed power, they received not only an official apology from the SKS for the earlier political campaign against them,¹⁵⁷ but an entirely different institutional treatment including the rights to publicly express their views, publish their books, and not have their opinions censored, particularly if those favored the new regime (Djukić, 1994: 30). A *New York Times* interview with Kosta Mihailović, an influential member of the SANU and future adviser to Milošević, nicely captures the essence of the new alliance:

‘Serbia had been politically and economically dominated in Yugoslavia. An anti-Serbian coalition existed for a long time. We occupied a vassal position in Yugoslavia for a long time. The Serbian intelligentsia was under terrible pressure [...] All this changed with the appearance of Slobodan Milošević’ (1989: 12).¹⁵⁸

At the same time, in the Serbian public, Milošević gained a reputation and authority which transcended all the normal considerations of party and politics (Thomas, 1999: 48). He was widely acknowledged as a strong and outspoken leader determined to ‘correct historical injustices’ made to his compatriots. In this regard, there was a general sense that, in his attacks on the autonomous provinces, Milošević was actually saying what had for long been considered unsayable under the prohibitions of the communist state (Ibid). In addition, his powerful appearance was to fill the psychological vacuum opened in the people’s minds with the death of Tito, the embodiment of political authority in Yugoslavia. As the decade drew to a close, population adulation of Milošević was already transformed into a ‘cult of

¹⁵⁷ In a SKS’s public statement published in *Politika* on 5 February 1988, it was stated that ‘If the Party wants to gather most creative intellectual forces, it ought to distance itself from quasi-fighters against nationalism’.

¹⁵⁸ Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/08/06/world/yugoslavs-astir-over-serbian-s-rise.html>. Puhovski argues that Milošević pragmatically sought to use nationalism in order to get popular support as a communist. ‘As a matter of fact’, he told me, ‘I believe Milošević’s wife was right when saying that her husband had never been a nationalist. He made a mistake, however, thinking that he could control that tiger [nationalism] which he got to ride. In the end, the tiger got to ride him’ (Interview, October 2011). In a similar tone, Žarko Korać commented: ‘Milošević was an apparatchik [...] I never knew what his true convictions were. If you’re asking me whether he was a nationalist, I honestly don’t know’ (Interview, January 2012).

personality', with his portrait being displayed at political rallies, business offices and private dwellings, and his name celebrated in songs and slogans.¹⁵⁹ The main role he played in the June 1989 spectacular celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Kosovo battle was to symbolically verify his new status of the leader of the Serbian nation.

3.3.2. Montenegro: The whisper

3.3.2.1. *The echo of Kosovo*

The adoption of the 1974 federal constitution was supposed to give an answer to the most serious political crisis since the establishment of the socialist Yugoslavia. At the same time, the country's structural economic problems were left unaddressed. Quadrupled between 1968 and 1976, the sum of its foreign debt rose even faster by the end of the decade (Lampe, 1996: 315). Malcom W. Browne, then *The New York Times* correspondent from Belgrade, thus commented that 'despite the potential gravity of Yugoslavia's political future' the real popular worries during this period centered on the economic hardship:

'Most Yugoslavs seem to take politics fairly casually [...] What does concern [them] is 32 per cent inflation rate, rising unemployment, and the prospect of much worse to come' (*The Ledger*, 16 February 1975).

And indeed, in the years following Tito's death in 1980, the pessimistic economic predictions of his fellow countrymen came true. Many believe that, until that moment, it had primarily been continued borrowing that kept the state afloat and even made possible an unearned rise in living standards (Roberts, 2007: 425). By

¹⁵⁹ 'The only appropriate way to describe this atmosphere is "nationalistic hysteria"', Korać told me (Interview, January 2012).

the time Tito passed away, the country's international debt, inflation rate and the living costs were spiraling out of control. Domestic liberal economists and the International Monetary Fund advisers believed that, in order to escape the trap of persistent trade deficits and debt, the Yugoslav economic system had to reorient to production of goods that were competitive in the Western markets and to start generating growth by improving efficiency at home (Woodward, 1995: 58). For that to happen, they argued that the federal government first had to put an end to 'the waste of funds' transferred to poorer republics and provinces as a result of politically influenced monetary decision-making (Ibid: 61).¹⁶⁰ Following the liberals' advice, the Yugoslav central authorities thus initiated an economic reform by introducing drastic austerity measures in 1982. This led the country into an extended period of economic depression during which 'all economic indicators were negative and worsening' (Ibid: 53). It became glaringly apparent that Yugoslav socialism, long time relying heavily on foreign aid, could no longer meet the population's existing and growing economic demands (Morrison, 2009: 76).¹⁶¹

Before most of its citizens even realized that the beloved Yugoslav leader was gone, Montenegro, 'the nation of donation',¹⁶² was hit hard by the economic crisis in the federation. Its impact on the smallest and – notwithstanding the decades of generous allocations from the federal level – still the least developed republic of the

¹⁶⁰ This way, the liberal economists maintained, potential resources for new investments had been lowered, which, consequently, diminished the incentives of the most productive workers and firms in the country. As the economic remedy, quite contrary, they proposed strengthening the income rights of enterprises and republics, cutting the public expenditures, and prioritizing export producers in federal allocations (Ibid).

¹⁶¹ 'After decades in which GDP growth was among the highest in Europe', Jović writes, 'Yugoslavia entered a period of stagnation that resulted in 0.6 per cent GDP growth from 1981 to 1989, compared to 5.6 per cent in 1976-1980 and 5.9 per cent in 1971-1975' (2009: 157). In this period, the standard of living fell nearly 40 per cent and in December 1989 inflation peaked at more than 2,000 per cent (Bennet, 1995: 69).

¹⁶² The term used by Montenegrin political science professor Veselin Pavićević during our September 2012 talk.

SFRJ was particularly negative.¹⁶³ The Montenegrin economy was primarily based upon capital-intensive basic industries which, as a result of the central economic planning, were 'mainly located in areas with nothing but labor to facilitate business practice or generate sustainable profits' (Ibid: 77). As such, they were substantially dependent on the federal government subventions. Faced with their significant reduction which came along the abovementioned austerity package, the Republic's authorities chose to lay off large numbers of workers in these unviable enterprises and, instead, support those that they believed had economic perspective.¹⁶⁴ Consequently, already in 1984, one in four Montenegrins were unemployed. Moreover, together with Macedonia and Kosovo, Montenegro officially declared bankruptcy three years later. By the end of 1988, it was estimated that more than 20 per cent of its population lived under the poverty line. The ambitious attempt of Montenegro's government to revitalize the economy thus suffered a big failure.

At the same time, the Republic's leadership was even less effective in coping with the social dimension of the economic crisis, i.e. 'assuaging the resentment of disgruntled workers who had been made redundant' (Ibid: 78). The great optimism with which the Montenegrins had welcomed the 1980s was gone well before the decade came to close. After the long period of living in the atmosphere of social peace and economic prosperity, a vast majority of them now shared the growing sense of economic disenfranchisement and social dislocation. With this in mind, Veselin Djuranović, Montenegrin high communist official who served as the president

¹⁶³ The losses of the Montenegrin economy in 1986 exceeded profits by 110 per cent and, compared to the Yugoslav average per employee, they were 2.6 times higher (Andrijašević and Rastoder, 2006: 258).

¹⁶⁴ In this regard, Srzentić admitted that the previous official strategy of Montenegro's economic development was unsustainable: 'We had been aware of the fact that there were way too many workers in state enterprises. On the other hand, we had to ensure the preservation of the social peace [...] and, in the face of the extremely high cost of labor and the low-level productivity had therefore chosen to over-employ people' (Interview, January 2012).

of the Presidency of Montenegro (1982-1983) and the Presidency of Yugoslavia (1984-1985), warned that 'the people are becoming impatient with the long, drawn-out economic crisis' (*Krug*, 22 September 1990). On the other hand, his comrades from the state leadership did not seem to know an answer to these problems. Having the monopoly of power and hence the absolute responsibility for the overall situation in the Republic, their legitimacy, as a consequence, soon came to be openly questioned. Toward the end of 1988, worsening social conditions, rising unemployment and increasing poverty in Montenegro were thus transformed into a toxic political bland. Yet, albeit emanating from the socio-economic hardship in the Republic, the resultant public protests against its leadership turned out having a somewhat different leitmotif.

The escalation of the economic crisis in Yugoslavia in the mid-1980s considerably undermined the legitimacy of its political system. Along with the economic problems, the suspicion was growing in most of the republics that the federation had somehow come to be used by the others and against their particular interests.¹⁶⁵ As the leaders of Yugoslav republics were picking apart the fundamental principles of the country's constitutional order in their bargaining over the necessary economic reform,¹⁶⁶ its legitimating principles were eroding at the popular level (Woodward, 1995: 74). Like in the early 1970s, the nationalist sentiment was on the rise throughout the federation. This time, however, there was no indisputable political

¹⁶⁵ As noted by Lampe, 'the modern and therefore sensation-hungry media of Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia exposed social problems and individual abuses of power, but stopped short of confronting their own republic's Communist leadership. They suggested instead that the disadvantages suffered by their republic came at the others' advantage' (1996: 326).

¹⁶⁶ Thus, for instance, the continuing quarrels over the federal budget financing resulted in the refusal of most of the republics to pay their obligatory share in the first half of 1986. Later that year, they reached a compromise according to which the federal state was to rely on federal revenues only, without any financial contribution of the republics. Their resultant fiscal sovereignty marked the 'break in the fundamental commitment to the common fate' and, in effect, put an end to 'the idea of a whole that was larger than its parts' (Woodward, 1995: 74).

authority that could neutralize the inter-republic resentment. Challenges to the myths of the Tito era were hence ever more freely expressed (Ibid). Without him to hold the country together, 'the way was open for opportunistic and unscrupulous politicians to bang the drum of nationalism' (Roberts, 2007:429).

And while initiatives for political reform were coming from different parts of the Yugoslav federation, the sense of dissatisfaction with its post-1974 constitutional structure was, as elaborated in the related chapters, exceptionally strong in the biggest republic. The political and intellectual circles as well as the general public in Serbia - legally deprived of effective control over the two autonomous provinces - seemed largely united in the opposition to the political status quo in Yugoslavia. The alleged systematic oppression of the non-Albanian minority in Kosovo served as the ultimate evidence of the necessity of instantaneous constitutional change in the country and the question on which the Serbian elite based its political narrative. Considering Milošević's publically declared determination to protect the interests of the Serbs in the southern province, the enthusiasm with which his plan to re-concentrate political power in Belgrade was welcomed throughout Serbia proper was therefore hardly surprising.

The Kosovo issue was thus the key to his rapid ascent to the summit of the Serbian politics. At the same time, it turned out being the main political motive behind the fall of the Montenegrin communist leadership. Namely, in addition to assuming political control of the two Serbian provinces, Milošević needed allies outside his Republic in order to ensure respectable political leverage at the Yugoslav level. That Montenegro was going to be his first choice in this respect was clear from a mere glimpse at the intensive political activity of the Serbian intellectual circles during this period, reviving and advancing the long latent argument about Montenegrins as a

branch of the wider Serbian nation (Ramet, 2002: 36).¹⁶⁷ With the support of the smallest republic in the eight-member Presidium of the SFRJ, in which each of the constitutive parts was represented with one delegate, the new Serbian leader would already have half of the country under political control.

On the other hand, the Montenegrin authorities were caught completely unprepared by the new political developments in Serbia and the rest of the Yugoslav federation. At the moment when throughout the country 'the political rhetoric of national interest and nationalism increasingly framed public debate and participation' (Woodward, 1995: 89),¹⁶⁸ the government in Titograd still clung firmly to the idea of brotherhood and unity of its peoples. In this spirit, the 1986 Congress of the Montenegrin League of Communists pledged full support for a 'continuous strengthening of the socialist self-management and the democratic and all-round development of the Yugoslav federation based on the constitutional principles of the national equality and workers-class interest' (quoted in *Radonjić*, 2006: 531). On the same occasion, the SKCG called for 'an uncompromising battle against the causes

¹⁶⁷ In this spirit, Dobrica Ćosić, a communist dissident and, in view of many, father of the Serbian nationalism, then argued that 'Montenegrinism is the most Serbian part of the Serbian nation, and when it was torn from its roots the whole Serbian Diaspora began to fragment and spiritually weaken' (*Književne Novine*, 1-15 July, 1989). The notion that Montenegrins were, in fact, ethnic Serbs was later systematized in the book titled 'The Serbian Question in the Balkans' (chapter: 'The Ethnic Structure of the Population of Montenegro'), published by the University of Belgrade. The author, Vujadin Rudić, there argues the following: 'Today the Serbian people in this area [Serbia and Montenegro – I.V.] is divided into three nations: the Serbs (living in Serbia and fewer in Montenegro), the Montenegrins (the Serbs who live in Montenegro and fewer in Serbia), and the Muslims (Islamized Serbs living in Serbia and in Montenegro) [...] It should be noted that there are differences between the Serbs in Montenegro and those in Serbia, but they are insufficient to determine them as separate peoples. The Montenegrins are the mainstay of the Serbian ethnic being and Montenegro as a state has been its guardian throughout the centuries' (1995: 82).

¹⁶⁸ In this regard, the author mentions the case of Slovenia where 'the policy of protecting and enhancing Slovene sovereignty by opposing all federal institutions that seemed to interfere with republican rights and were not founded on parliamentary and republic supremacy linked up with a campaign of radical young people and intellectuals against the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA)'. During 1987 and 1988, various youth organizations openly demanded that Slovenes be allowed to do military service in their Republic and to use the Slovene language 'in all military circumstances', whereas, in view of the Serb-dominated composition of the Yugoslav army's officer corps, a number of intellectuals called for the creation of 'nationally homogenous armies' in each republic (*Ibid*: 90).

and manifestations of the Montenegrin, Greater Serbian, Muslim, Albanian and Croatian nationalism' (Ibid). With political circumstances in Yugoslavia changing in exactly the opposite direction, the communist leadership of Montenegro soon found itself on a dead-end political course.

'Prone to repairing rather than replacing the inefficient system' (Andrijašević and Rastoder, 2006: 259), the Montenegrin elite clearly lacked a credible political answer to the historical challenges that the Republic was about to face. To make its position even more difficult, the socio-economic situation in Montenegro was, as outlined above, nearing catastrophe during this period. As a consequence, more and more Montenegrins were openly demonstrating anger toward their political representatives. The number of strikes in the Republic that, according to the official figures, saw none in 1980 thus amounted to 50 in 1987 (Fočo, 1989: 127). As progressively – and, as it soon turned out, more importantly – grew the suspicion among disgruntled people of Montenegro that its communist leaders' insistence on the political status quo in the country was actually motivated by personal political interests. Behind their strong declarative support for maintenance of the current political system, many in the Republic came to believe, laid nothing but the desire to preserve their privileged positions in it. At that point, Vladislavljević rightfully argues, the smallest Yugoslav republic was politically and economically 'ripe for a major outburst of popular discontent' (2008: 161). Milošević's populist, anti-bureaucratic movement which by mid-1988 began to 'flow out' of Serbia served as the trigger.

Owing to the decisiveness with which he approached the burning problems of his Republic and the Yugoslav federation as a whole, the new Serbian leader soon gained a great popularity in Montenegro as well. Milošević's reputation of a modernizer and, in particular, his outspoken political manner stood in sharp contrast

with the popular image of the Montenegrin state officials.¹⁶⁹ In the eyes of ordinary Montenegrins, as his future political ally-turned opponent, Milo Djukanović, later recalled, Milošević represented everything that their political leaders were not:

‘All, and especially the younger generation, anxiously awaited a credible attempt, an impressive effort on the political stage of the former Yugoslavia that would move things away from a dead end. Then Milošević turned up, who differed from other of Yugoslavia’s politicians in that he introduced a new rhetoric, with a crystal clear position about the inevitability of change and commitment to implement it’ (*Radio Free Europe*, 19 October 1999).¹⁷⁰

For this reason, in the atmosphere of grave socio-economic crisis, Milošević’s call for ‘bringing the power back to the people’ resonated strongly in Montenegro. The strength of his political appeal became evident on 18 August 1988 when, under the scenario already seen in Serbia, thousands gathered in Titograd to show solidarity with the Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo.¹⁷¹ Although there were less than two per cent of Montenegrins in the province at that moment,¹⁷² political messages about the forced migration of non-Albanians seemed to find a genuinely receptive audience among greatly disenfranchised population of Montenegro. In addition to those chanted in support of Milošević, the slogans like ‘Let’s go to Kosovo’

¹⁶⁹ The fact that Milošević’s family was originally from Montenegro should, given the strength of traditional socio-cultural values upheld by its people, be taken into account as another reason behind his political popularity among them.

¹⁷⁰ Similarly, in the course of our abovementioned talk, Veselin Pavićević pointed out Milošević’s ‘simple political language’ as one of main reasons behind his rapid political ascent (Interview, September 2012).

¹⁷¹ The meeting was initiated by the political leaders of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo, who, logistically supported from Belgrade, had already organized a number of similar gatherings in Serbia. In words of Svetozar Arsić Basara, one of their representatives and the keynote speaker at the Titograd rally, they decided to come to Montenegro ‘not to call for rebellion’ but ‘to inform [Montenegrins], directly and in a solidarity manner, that the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo were endangered and close to extinction’. ‘They did not suffer pressure’, Arsić concluded, but ‘prosecution and genocide’ (*Radio Television of Montenegro - RTCG*, 3 February 2012).

¹⁷² It is also worth mentioning that, after 1948, their number in the province had never exceeded four per cent of the overall population.

and ‘we want arms’ were frequently heard during the rally. At the same time, in light of their negative characterization of the meeting as a ‘direct breakthrough of Serbian nationalism’, the Montenegrin authorities were publically accused for showing no empathy with the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins.¹⁷³

The popular dissatisfaction with their political position vis-à-vis the Kosovo issue as well as with the economic results of their governance culminated in a series of protests subsequently organized throughout the Republic. The Montenegrin leadership took a hostile stance regarding the rallies, making sure that they received negative coverage on state media. Behind the radical – and, needless to say, unrealistic – economic demands of the protesters (such as an immediate 100 per cent pay rise for industrial workers), Montenegrin state officials saw a clear political motive. ‘For an extended period of time before the protests’, Vladimir Keković, the 1982-1989 National Security executive, recently recalled, ‘Belgrade-sponsored agitators had been active on Montenegro’s territory, establishing close connections with Serb nationalists in the larger enterprises and, in effect, preparing ground for an expected fall of its government’ (*Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 26 August 2012). Such predictions came true on October 7, merely a day after the toppling of Vojvodina leadership, when tens of thousands gathered in front of the Montenegrin Parliament building to demand better living standard, political support for the constitutional reform-related activities of the Serbian leadership and, finally, the resignation of the republican government. The next morning, after it became obvious that the crowd would not disperse peacefully, the Montenegrin state leadership declared a state of

¹⁷³ The protest was, as expected, strongly supported by the Belgrade nationalist intelligentsia. Matija Bečković, a well-known Serbian poet of Montenegrin descent, thus publically characterized it as ‘the rehabilitation of Montenegro [...] and a return to its authentic roots and origins’ (*NIN*, 9 July 1989).

emergency in the capital and ordered police to break up the 15 hour-long demonstrations.

Albeit supported by the Yugoslav and most of the republican presidencies (all but Serbian and Macedonian), such drastic measures could only postpone the inevitable. Because of the decision to use the force against ‘ordinary people’, even those who had been politically indifferent turned their backs on the leadership of Montenegro. Albeit lawful, the sanction of violence against the protesters thus turned out being detrimental to its cause as ‘the chasm between legality and legitimacy was widening’ (Morrison, 2009: 85). Demoralized and politically disoriented, the Montenegrin authorities were simply too ill-equipped to survive the following social and political mobilization. In words of Marko Orlandić:

‘The same faces had been circulating within the party for the longest time. People were tired of us personally. They demanded refreshment and, honestly, I also thought we desperately needed it’ (Interview, December 2012).¹⁷⁴

3.3.2.2. *E Pluribus Unum*

On 10 January 1989, Montenegro witnessed another popular uprising against its political elite. Just like three months earlier, tens of thousands gathered before the Parliament building to ask for the resignation of the Republic’s communist leadership. This time, however, no other demand was heard from the crowd and, more importantly, those who were asked to leave could not do anything but to act in accordance. On the next morning, the letter confirming the resignation of the members of the Presidency of Montenegro and its representatives in the Yugoslav

¹⁷⁴ From the point of view of Ilija Vujošević, University of Montenegro professor who entered the Republic’s government in the mid-1980s, ‘Montenegrin state institutions seemed ossified and their officials, most of whom had – often due to nepotism – held various political positions for over 20 years, appeared very tired’ (Interview, July 2013).

Presidency was read to the ecstatic mass. 'People have won because they had to win', Momir Bulatović, a protest leader and future president of Montenegro joyfully declared (*RTCG, 3 February 2012*).

Under the impression of certain elements of the protest scenery and in view of logistic support which the organizers had been receiving from Belgrade, many characterized this event as a victory of Serbian nationalism in Montenegro. What happened in Titograd in January 1989 was, in their view, essentially the same as what happened in Novi Sad in October 1988. Srđan Darmanović, political science professor at the University of Montenegro, thus argues that the overthrow of the Montenegrin officials was 'at base a Serbian-engineered coup with strong nationalistic overtones' and that 'numerous posters of Milošević, deliberation over the Kosovo problem, attacks against the Yugoslav communist officials who were Milošević's opponents [...] spoke clearly in favor of [its] dominant character' (2003: 147). Similarly, Radovan Radonjić comments that, while playing the role of 'popular representatives', the revolutionaries actually 'fulfilled political goal of their Belgrade patrons to topple the old elite and bring Montenegro under the jurisdiction of Serbia' (2006: 537). In fact, over the last two decades, such interpretation of the 1989 revolution has become a matter of conventional political wisdom among Montenegrins.

This thesis holds that it is too simplified and hence largely incorrect. Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that, during this period, a considerable number of people in Montenegro were politically motivated by the ideas of Serbian nationalist propaganda. Moreover, it would be too naive to assume that the culmination of popular dissatisfaction with the Montenegrin leadership just happened to coincide with the successful political coup in Vojvodina, i.e. that the Belgrade authorities had

nothing to do with it. However, to reduce the analysis of the process of political mobilization and change in Montenegro solely to this one – however important – aspect while ignoring its other elements would be as erroneous. Instead, considering the diverging motives and ambitions of its main protagonists, the thesis maintains that the Montenegrin anti-bureaucratic revolution is ought to be understood as a 'complex political phenomenon' (Sćekić, 2011: 324).

In this regard, one must bear in mind that, albeit supported from abroad, the incentive for political change came from within Montenegro. Whereas the anti-bureaucratic revolts in Vojvodina and Kosovo had purely political character and were entirely designed in and orchestrated from Belgrade, the one in Montenegro resulted from the prolonged socio-economic crisis in the Republic. As noted by Vladisavljević, while the effect of the protests in Serbia on the situation in Montenegro was apparent, 'the demonstrations in Titograd and other parts of the small Republic originated largely from the local sources' (2008: 162). In that sense, alongside the pro-Serbian stratum of the Montenegrin society, many demanded departure of the old political elite because of its inability to improve the overall situation in the Republic and, equally important, due to the fact that its privileged members did not share the hardship of the ordinary people.¹⁷⁵

In this spirit, Vlastimir Golubović, one of the key speakers of the January protest, stated that 'the incompetent, irresponsible, and cowardly leadership must leave the political scene' and thus allow 're-establishment of the long broken links between government and people' (*RTCG*, 3 February 2012). Hence, contrary to the

¹⁷⁵ With a short break in the wake of the January coup, the social protests in Montenegro continued all through 1989. On 20 August, more than 50,000 people gathered in Nikšić to demand better jobs and higher living standards. Six months later, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the 1989 January demonstrations, thousands protested in front of the Montenegrin Parliament building due to the same reasons.

self-interested and detached from the popular base-leadership, a significant number of Montenegrins embraced Milošević not as a nationalist but as an allegedly honest, straightforward, and capable politician who was to bring the power back to them. As emphasized by Drago Vučinić, politically influential union leader of the national railway company, in his address to the crowd demonstrating outside the Montenegrin Parliament building:

'Montenegrin people did not choose Milošević because he is a Serb. We do not like him because he wants to transform Montenegrins into Serbs. He won't do it. We will remain the Montenegrin nation. We admire him because of simple things, for saying what he thinks, for his wisdom and courage that no one before had shown' (*Pobjeda*, 10 January 1989).

In this regard, as it was often heard during the January protest, many workers, students and young communists understood it as a political action undertaken 'in the name of democracy' (*Radio Free Europe*, 22 November 1991). And while for a vast majority of them (who, as a rule, neither had practical experience nor any theoretical knowledge related to the notion) this was merely a symbolic message, a certain number of people who took part in the demonstrations were actually and primarily led by the ideas of political liberalization and democratization. This current of opinion, non-existing among the anti-bureaucratic revolutionaries in Serbia, found its inspiration in the progressive youth movements of Slovenia that were 'pushing for a clear break with Yugoslavia's Communist path' (Roberts, 2007: 434). In the wake of the January revolution, Ljubiša Stanković who, alongside Momir Bulatović, was its key figure thus argued that 'not a single socio-political organization, including the SKCG, must be allowed to have the monopoly on the market of ideas and [decide] on our future and social order' (*NIN*, January 1989, Special edition). In a similar vein, Milica Pejanović-Djurišić, a University professor and one of the Montenegrin

Communist Youth leaders, pointed out during the January 12 meeting with representatives of the outgoing leadership that '[their] forced resignations do not represent the end of the world but the beginning of creation of the conditions for a long and challenging process of democratization at all the society levels' (RTCG, 3 February 2012).

Finally, adjacent to its composition, the *mise-en-scène* of the January demonstration also casts a somewhat different light on its symbolic character. Contrary to the aforesaid Darmanović's observation, the protest was dominated by the Yugoslav iconography. Unlike their comrades in Novi Sad who brought the provincial government down under Serbian banners, the portraits of Serbian medieval heroes, and the symbols of the *Četnik* movement, a vast majority of the protesters in Titograd came before the Parliament building chanting the Yugoslav anthem and revolutionary partisan songs, carrying the Yugoslav and the flags of socialist Montenegro, as well as numerous pictures of Tito. And while those of Milošević, present at the Novi Sad rally, celebrated the new leader of the Serbs, those mentioned by Darmanović, one could accordingly argue, portrayed a devoted Yugoslav who – as he often pointed out – sought to protect the Federation against the Kosovo Albanian 'nationalism and separatism'. Hence, as expressed through one of the most popular slogans of the January protest 'Montenegro kept asking when Milošević would take Tito's place' (Ibid).

In a word, opposite of the situation in Vojvodina and – a few months later – Kosovo, where the political changes were carried out solely in the name of Serbian national interests, the anti-bureaucratic protest in Montenegro brought together at least three different popular constituencies. In line with the process of political mobilization in Serbia, many stood up against the indifferent political stance of the

Montenegrin leadership as regards the fate of non-Albanians in Kosovo. At the same time, a vast number of Montenegrins were politically motivated by the inability of the ruling elite, whose privileged members did not share their destiny, to ameliorate the socio-economic hardship in the Republic. Finally, mainly recruited from the University and the party youth organizations, a progressive minority of those who wanted genuine political and economic reforms in Montenegro saw an opportunity for making systemic discontinuity with the existing regime.

Whatever their different agendas may have been, the demonstrators came together around the idea of the necessity of change of the Montenegrin political leadership. 'All our demands have been fulfilled', Momir Bulatović famously declared from the Parliament building staircase upon receiving a written confirmation of its collective resignation. Thus, although from its very beginning it was clear what the protest was aimed against, it was yet to be seen what it was actually aimed for. The heterogeneity of the new Montenegrin leadership – whose political development is discussed in the following chapter – was perhaps the most convincing evidence of its initial lack of a clear political agenda.

3.3.3.Croatia: The deafening silence

3.3.3.1. *Maspok is over*

In a famous speech at the extraordinary SKJ Central Committee meeting convened on 1 December 1971,¹⁷⁶ Tito officially put an end to the Croatian *Maspok*. He

¹⁷⁶ For the following observation of a great symbolism of this date, Rusinow unquestionably deserves some credit: 'On December 1, 1918, the Serbian Prince-Regent Aleksandar Karadjordjević received a delegation from the National Council in Zagreb, a de facto Government of the Croats, Croatian Serbs, and Slovenes of the vanishing Habsburg Monarchy, and responded to their urgent request for immediate union by proclaiming in their presence the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later renamed Yugoslavia. At dawn on December 1, 1971, the fifty-third anniversary of this proclamation, the Croatian Communist successor of the Serbian kings of Yugoslavia was meeting with another de facto Zagreb Government [...] to tell them that

denounced the movement as nationalistic and chauvinistic, thereby rejecting the attempt of the Croatian League of Communists to legitimize it by appealing to the Partisan struggle. While accepting most of their economic argumentation, Tito blamed Croatian leadership for the prolonged neglect of the 'dictates of democratic centralism', i.e. for acting 'as if it was responsible to no higher authority than itself' (Irvine, 1993: 271). Contrary to the Croatian position that no one had the right to interfere in the affairs of the republican parties, he made it clear that 'SKJ was the one organization that had the right to intervene anywhere in the country and that the organization of the federation must continue to be based on this principle' (quoted in *Ibid*).¹⁷⁷ In this context, Tito referred to the SKH leaders' insistence on the struggle against 'unitarism':

'If it is the unitarism of Versailles [First] Yugoslavia, I too, it goes without saying, am resolutely opposed to it. But if it is a matter of the unity of our country, of Yugoslavia as an indivisible whole, than I am in favor of such "unitarism" and of such a united Yugoslavia' (*Hrvatska Revija*, December 1971).

At the same time, although the Zagreb students concluded it by expressing 'confidence in the leadership of the SKH and of SFRJ headed by Dapčević-Kučar and Tito', the Yugoslav president condemned their protest as a 'carefully prepared counter-revolutionary activity' (quoted in *Goldstein*, 1999: 183). Tito's strongest words were reserved for *Matica Hrvatska* which he openly accused of seeking to restore the NDH. Even though the meeting was closed without a formal dismissal of its political symbols, it was obvious that the Croatian Spring was over.

their policies and activities were endangering that union and that they must bear the consequences' (1977: 308).

¹⁷⁷ Tripalo, in contrast, characterizes the Tito's move as a 'Stalinist reaction against the process which had been underway in Croatia for more than a decade [...] Under the excuse of an alleged danger coming from internal and external enemy, a well-known political trick, the process of democratization in our republic was stopped' (*Danas*, 3 December 1991).

Throughout the weeks and months that followed, the SKH leaders along with a few hundred of its officials were forced to resign and prohibited from public activity.¹⁷⁸ Their political positions were taken by party members less responsive to the nationalist sentiments and aspirations of the populace' (Irvine, 1993: 14). A number of student leaders and nationalist-oriented intellectuals were put on trial, to be subsequently sentenced to prison.¹⁷⁹ *Matica* and its 14 periodical publications (including *Hrvatski Tjednik*) were shut down. From top to bottom, the judiciary, local government, and media in Croatia were purged of *Maspok* sympathizers. Albeit expected, the political action against the movement thus turned out to be 'much more savage than anyone had expected' (Tanner, 1997: 200). Massive popular protests, spontaneously organized throughout the Republic, were swiftly broken up by police. Many people fled Croatia which descended into political apathy from which it would not emerge for almost two decades (Irvine: *Ibid*). The end of 1971 thus marked the beginning of 'Croatian Silence'.

Even without the disobedient Croatian leadership in the picture, the problems in the organization of the Yugoslav federation and the resultant widespread popular dissatisfaction remained. In fact, although 'stripped of arguments betraying national and regional prejudices', the new governing elite of Croatia continued to support their predecessors' political and economic views (Rusinow, 1977: 313). Albeit politically determined, SFRJ authorities could hence not afford to be oblivious of the necessity of further reforms. And indeed, through a series of measures adopted in the following

¹⁷⁸ By May 1972, 'political measures' were taken against more than 1,600 SKH members, 892 were expelled from the party, while another 280 resigned (Tanner, 1997: 202).

¹⁷⁹ Altogether, Ramet writes, some 200-300 persons were imprisoned for political reasons in Croatia in the wake of the fall of Tripalo and Dabčević-Kučar, with thousands more being held without formal charges for two to three months (2006: 259).

period the federal government considerably improved Croatia's economic status in Yugoslavia.¹⁸⁰

By the end of the decade, as a result of these measures and of heavy federal investment in Croatia,¹⁸¹ the standard of living in the Republic was at its all-time high. In addition, while preserving the absolute political authority of the SKJ, the Yugoslav leadership continued with the process of the devolution of decision-making power to the republics. With the adoption of the new constitution of SFRJ in February 1974, its political system was essentially transformed into an institutional amalgam of various elements of federalism and confederalism. The competences of the federal government were basically reduced to defense and foreign policy. At the same time, the six republics were given a veto right 'in practically all affairs of any importance' (Meier, 1999: 6). Thus, in many respects, 'the republics had become states' (Goldstein, 1999: 185). Ironically, most of the reforms demanded by the previous Croatian leadership were therefore put in place less than three years after its removal.

Still, further political liberalization which the new constitution brought about did not seem to have any effect on the situation in Croatia. Within its political realm, one could say, Tito's words from December 1971 still echoed strongly enough. As depicted by Tanner:

¹⁸⁰ As explained by Alvin Rubinstein: 'Export firms were allowed to retain 20 per cent of foreign exchange earnings instead of earlier seven to 12 per cent, and tourist enterprises were permitted to retain 45 per cent of their earnings instead of 12 per cent. The total foreign exchange quota for each of the six republics now ranged from 20 to 45 per cent, depending on the total amount of tourist revenue. (As the republic with the most tourists, Croatia stood to benefit the most.) The dinar was devalued by 18.7 per cent, thus boosting the dinar value of Croatian foreign exchange earnings' (1972: 109).

¹⁸¹ During the 1970s, adjacent to major investments in its shipbuilding, metal, pharmaceutical, and chemical industries, Croatia got the first highway along with a road network connecting Dalmatia with the mainland, the oil pipeline that would supply much of Yugoslavia, and a significant number of large high-class hotels along the coast.

‘The leaders of the Croatian Spring were dispersed. Holjevac had died in 1970. Tuđman was jailed, as were many others. Tripalo and Dabčević-Kučar retreated into silence – the price for not being sent to jail. The authorities in the mid-1970s remained vigilant against the faintest hint of criticism’ (1997: 203).

For an entire decade, a sense of general apathy would dominate Croatian politics. Systematically repressed by the new authorities during this period, the nationalistic forces were ‘driven underground’ (Ramet, 2006: 307). At the same time, most of the Croats had good reasons to be satisfied with the effects of the aforementioned political and economic reforms in Yugoslavia. Even in the mid-1980s, Dennison Rusinow was therefore in a position to comment that ‘the Croatian front of the national question has been unusually (and perhaps deceptively) quiet for the past 13 years, which is why the Croatian factor is conspicuous by its absence from the discussion of current national-question issues’ (1985: 141).

However, beneath this seemingly calm surface, potentially troubling political processes unfolded in Croatia. The post-*Maspok* ‘exodus of Croats from the Party’ in which Serbs had already been heavily over-represented made the organization ‘ever more lop-sided in its ethnic composition’ (Tanner, 1997: 202).¹⁸² Adversely affected by the events of 1971, the relationship between the two ethnic groups was additionally worsened by frequent attempts of the new Croatian leadership to justify their political promotion by appealing to the alleged ‘threat of genocide and extermination previously hanging over the Serbian community’ (Ibid). In view of that, many of those Croats who had recently suffered the consequences for their political

¹⁸² As noted by the author, Croatia’s share of the total SKJ membership had, by the end of the 1970s, shrunk from 20 to 16 per cent. The disengagement from Yugoslav Communism was even greater than suggested by these figures, as a high proportion of the Party members were Croatian Serbs. Thus, while participating in the Yugoslav population by 20 per cent, ethnic Croats made up only 14 per cent of the Party membership in 1981 (Ibid: 204).

orientation came to blame them on Serbs. As a consequence, particularly in the rural regions of Croatia, anti-Serb feelings became more intense than ever (Ramet, 2006: 308).

As long as Tito was around, similar political tensions and nationalist pressures in Croatia and the rest of Yugoslavia remained ultimately controllable. The years that followed his death in May 1980 proved, however, that this could be the case only as long as he was around.

3.3.3.2. *Fading apathy*

In the aftermath of the departure of its life-long president, the absence of supreme political authority in Yugoslavia was felt strongly. Without 'the enforcer of party discipline and ultimate arbiter of national conflicts' in place, the country's largely decentralized institutional system began to unravel (Irvine, 1993: 272). The ensuing release of centrifugal political forces was additionally facilitated by the death of Tito's closest associates, Kardelj (1979) and Bakarić (1983). The humdrum figures who stepped into their political shoes did not have the authority of the 'grand old men of the revolution' (Tanner, 1997: 206). Consequently, as the 1980s wore on, it became clear that the fragmentation of power engineered by Tito's quasi-confederal but one-party framework was producing institutional weakness and political chaos (Ramet, 2006: 329).

Shortly after the 1981 escalation of political tensions in Kosovo, Yugoslavia entered a period of unprecedented economic crisis. The price for *la dolce vita* of its

people during the late 1970s was now to be paid.¹⁸³ Unable to further finance enormous foreign loans, the federal government – as thoroughly elaborated in the preceding sections about Montenegro – introduced a series of drastic austerity measures. Croatian companies, most of which export-oriented, were hit particularly hard by its decision to appropriate 76 per cent of the hard currency of exporting firms aimed at financing the foreign debt (Tanner, 1997: 207). The entire economy of Croatia, due to its specific nature, suffered serious consequences of the crisis.¹⁸⁴

As a result of the deepening socio-economic crisis, a growing popular discontent was becoming apparent in all parts of Yugoslavia. At the same time, political tensions in the country were on the rise as the media, seeking to explain how the crisis came about and how to deal with it 'started playing on divisions between the republics' (Tanner, 1997: 208). Nevertheless, Croatia's conservative political elite made no contribution to this process. Unlike their predecessors who, in a similar atmosphere toward the end of the 1960s embraced the majoritarian nationalist viewpoint, the Croatian political leaders were now unreservedly determined to defy it. What is more, they were principally committed to the struggle against the ideological

¹⁸³ The terminal phase of Tito's rule was, as Tanner notes, symbolized by an enormous rise in the number of private cars, washing machines, televisions and other prestige goods, foreign holidays, shopping expeditions to Rome and Trieste and a very sharp rise in consumption of imports (1997: 2007).

¹⁸⁴ In words of Goldstein: 'Construction, one of its main branches, was the first to be hit by the slump and money shortage. Major new contracts that had been planned failed to materialize [...] The metal and machine construction industries lost their previously assured markets in the Soviet Union and other East European countries [...] The Croatian shipbuilding industry, at one time third in volume in the world, began to decline' (1999: 189). The following statement made in October 1982 by Jure Bilić, then Croatia's highest political official, illustrates, perhaps most convincingly, the complexity of the economic situation in the republic: 'If Croatia is not helped by other republics, it will not get out of its present economic crisis. [If not helped] Croatia would be compelled to take new foreign credits, or would be threatened by a complete halt of its whole economy' (*Radio Free Europe*, 12 October 1982).

opposition to the Yugoslav political regime, regardless of where and in which form it originated.¹⁸⁵

With this idea, in the course of 1983 and 1984, the leadership of the SKH organized a series of advisory seminars with its prominent members to debate the issue of public critique of the regime. The final outcome of these meetings was a publication, later named the White Book (*Bijela knjiga*),¹⁸⁶ in which the references to 'politically unacceptable' works published in the years after Tito's death along with the names of their authors were listed.¹⁸⁷ As stated in the document, those were 'freethinkers who denounce and insult not only individuals they do not like but the League of Communists, the leadership, politicians, the order, the regime, all the time moaning that they are persecuted, have no freedom to think, talk, act, etc.' (quoted in *Bilandžić*, 1986: 204). By issuing this 'index of politically unsuitable people', the Croatian Communists 'took over the banner of ideological dogmatism in Yugoslavia' (Goldstein, 1999: 196).

Moreover, they caused a fierce reaction in Serbia, as most of the people mentioned in their document belonged to the intellectual circles of the neighboring republic. Considering this initiative a dogmatic and even nationalistic attack from Croatia, more than 100 of them signed and submitted a petition to the SKJ Presidency, demanding political protection from 'the emerging Stalinism' (Jović,

¹⁸⁵ In this context, Žarko Puhovski told me that in the first half of the 1980s 'Belgrade was the center of Yugoslav liberalization'. 'In 1984 only', he recalled, 'I travelled 30 times to Belgrade. There, discussion forums were regularly organized and I was able to say whatever I wanted. In Zagreb, I could only speak within the University. With the arrival of Milošević, liberalization moved to Slovenia. At the same time, the Croatian party leadership remained pretty dogmatic' (Interview, October 2011).

¹⁸⁶ The official, rather detailed title of the document was 'On some ideological and political tendencies in art creativity, literary, theater, and film criticism, and on public speeches by several creative artists in which politically unacceptable messages have been expressed' (*O nekim idejnim i političkim tendencijama u umjetničkom stvaralaštvu, književnoj, kazališnoj i filmskoj kritici, te o javnim istupima jednog broja kulturnih stvaralaca u kojima su sadržane politički neprihvatljive poruke*).

¹⁸⁷ As noted by Jović, 'the document warned about growing opposition to the regime and sought to prompt reaction by Communists in cultural institutions and in the media' (2009: 235).

2009: 235).¹⁸⁸ Similarly, Serbian political leaders took a very negative stance on the White Book. Behind its publication, they saw an intention of their Croatian comrades to interfere in Serbia's internal affairs and accuse its leadership of tolerating nationalistic activity. Yet, along with the outrage of the Serbian political and intellectual elite over the Croatian initiative, the evidence supporting its findings grew. Thus, already in the autumn of 1984, the first ever open attack on the Tito's cult came from Antonije Isaković, then a vice-president of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, who called for re-evaluation of the historical role of the late Yugoslav leader. In the years to come – as thoroughly explained in the sections about Serbia – similar demands would multiply and intensify until, ultimately, they got endowed with political legitimacy.

Throughout the second half of the 1980s, as the process of de-Titoization unfolded the leading political figures and intellectuals in Croatia became increasingly concerned over its political future. They were perfectly aware that, as a part of more and more frequent attacks on the political legacy of the post-WWII era, Croatia's position in the Yugoslav federation and the status of Serb minority in its territory might easily come to be re-problematized. Thus, in one of the official documents from 1985, the SKH warned that 'the entire ethical basis of Yugoslav society was called into question' as a result of continual demands for 'demystification of the revolution and recent history' (*Danas*, 11 June 1985). In a similar tone, arguing against Serbian calls for recentralization of the Yugoslav federation,¹⁸⁹ Dušan Bilandžić, then close with the Croatian political leadership, stated that 'those who

¹⁸⁸ Accordingly, *Književne Novine*, the Serbian writers' association journal, characterized the document as 'the Black Book of Yugoslav dogmatism' (quoted in *Ibid*).

¹⁸⁹ Already in October 1984, Ramet notes, the party leadership of Serbia issued a draft reform program calling for the strengthening of the federal government and, in particular, the curtailment of jurisdiction of the two autonomous provinces within the republic (2006: 333).

accused Tito of making a huge blunder with the promulgation of the 1974 constitution simply did not understand the Partisan or Tito's legacy' (*Danas*, 30 April 1985). In Belgrade, on the other hand, the political elite believed that, for this legacy to be preserved, constitutional reform strengthening the federal institutions was necessary.

Having these political differences in mind, one should not be surprised by the failure of the 13th Congress of the SKJ, held in June 1986. Although announced as a 'congress of the strengthening of socialist self-management, the unity of the country and of the party', the SKJ structures proved essentially incapable of bringing the federal units together (Ramet, 2006: 335). As a consequence, the processes of decision-making within the state and party apparatus were practically brought to a halt.¹⁹⁰ In addition to a severe economic crisis, Yugoslavia was now facing a complete political paralysis. In such atmosphere, the competencies of political elites in the republics were called into question. As the decade drew to an end, the authority of each of them, unable to tackle the aforementioned economic and political problems, was soon challenged either from within or outside of their respective party organizations.

In Croatia, the erosion of power of the party structures was evident. As they were 'no longer sufficiently strong or respected to impose themselves', their dogmatic ideological position was not to hold for too long (Goldstein, 1999: 196). The fact that not a single person from the 'White Book' list was passed a sentence against was the first reliable indicator of the party's growing weakness. Perhaps its best confirmation was the making and, notwithstanding SKH's open attacks, public showing of a number of 'politically controversial' films during 1987 and 1988. Along with the

¹⁹⁰ Within the next two years, most of the 322 acts and resolution of the Yugoslav presidency were therefore never carried out (*Ibid*).

political influence of those who perpetuated it for two decades, the national apathy in Croatia seemed to be fading away. The growing influence of the Catholic Church, as 'the only guardian of the Croatian spirit' in the post-*Maspok* period, was certainly of particular importance for this process (Ibid: 195).¹⁹¹

Thus, as the period of monocratic political system was coming to end, the national question was re-emerging in Croatia. Its post-1971 effective neutralization no longer seemed to satisfy political aspirations of the Croatian people.¹⁹² The emerging political threat from Serbia only made this more obvious.

In brief, the experiences of political development within the two Yugoslav states created in the course of the 20th century were very different for Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro. The contrast in this regard was most strongly manifested in the way intellectual and political elites as well as general population of the three states perceived the level of protection of their national interests throughout the observed period. The accompanying sense of (dis)satisfaction with the political status quo grew steadily among the Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins, and – as previously discussed and further elaborated in the subsequent chapter – determined the salience of the national question in the processes of their political mobilization ahead of the hybrid regimes' establishment.

¹⁹¹ Vrdoljak thus claims that, measured by the level of influence on the ordinary people, i.e. the power to bring them together and organize them into a respectable social force, 'the Catholic Church in Croatia was much stronger than the Party, than *Matica*, than *Maspok*, stronger than anything else' (Interview, October 2011).

¹⁹² A few years later, Tripalo recalled that 'while silence still dominated Croatian politics as a result of our cowardly leadership's determination to avoid any confrontation, even in the face of Milošević's emergence at the Eight Session, people were already inflamed' (*Danas*, 3 December 1991). Throughout those grave years of silence, Vlado Gotovac, a prominent Croatian poet and once the editor-in-chief of *Hrvatski Tjednik*, commented, 'we managed to endure and overcome the repression only because we had become aware of ourselves in 1971, because we had a memory of it and feeling that we could be something else, i.e. that the identity, power, and the future of Croatian people were not lost' (*Ibid*).

4. PARTY OUTCOMES IN SERBIA, CROATIA, AND MONTENEGRO

The research model outlined above suggests that it is (the lack of) institutionalization of hybrid regime dominant parties that determines whether they lose office or stay in power as the regime collapses. At the same time, it holds their (lack of) institutionalization to be contingent upon the salience of the national question in the process of political mobilization leading to hybrid regime establishment. The empirical validity of the model is strongly corroborated by the three cases in question.

As previously elaborated, Milošević's rise to power came as a result of the all-encompassing socio-political movement led by the idea of Serbian national renewal. Perceived by the general public as its embodiment, he became toward the end of the 1980s the absolute master of the Serbian politics. Milošević's status of the omnipotent party leader, unchallenged throughout the following decade, was just another manifestation of his political power. At the same time, albeit less intense, the process of political mobilization in Croatia during this period was also nationally-oriented. With the support of ideologically very different social and political groups, Franjo Tuđman was, ahead of the first multiparty elections, promoted into a new political symbol of the long-lasting struggle for the Croatian national cause. From that moment, until the end of the 1990s, he remained the dominant figure of political life in Croatia and, just like Milošević, politically much greater than his party organization.

Hence, both in terms of the power structure and public perception, the ruling parties in the Serbian and Croatian hybrid regimes were essentially dependent on their leaders. In effect, the course of their political development was determined by the strength of the personal political appeal of Milošević and Tuđman respectively.

Throughout the 1990s, the two political organizations thus remained at a low level of institutionalization. For that reason, albeit with abundant power resources at disposal, they had serious difficulties in ensuring the continuity of political rule during this period. More importantly, following their leaders' descent from power, the SPS and the HDZ suffered heavy losses in the elections that put an end to the existence of the two hybrid regimes.

In comparison, the ideational pretext for the establishment of hybrid regime in Montenegro was substantially different. For the reasons thoroughly elaborated above, the national question could not serve during this period as a politically mobilizing force in the smallest Yugoslav republic. We therefore did not witness emergence at the Montenegrin political scene of an individual nearly as authoritative as the aforementioned two. Instead, subsequent to the 1989 coup, political power in Montenegro was distributed within the new leadership of its ruling party.

Such internal power structure, as argued in the following sections, determined the party's organizational development and political fate relative to the regime's. Throughout the following years, it represented a highly institutionalized political organization. With the entire power capacity of the Montenegrin hybrid regime vested in the incumbent party, the stability of its political governance was almost unchallenged. In addition, in sharp contrast to its Serbian and Croatian counterparts, it enjoyed during this period somewhat greater popular support than its head. Most importantly, the party managed to survive in power the regime collapse, i.e. the loss of the hyper-privileged political status.

4.1. Serbia: One-man show

4.1.1. Old face of the new regime

In November 1989, after a landslide victory in the electoral competition with two relatively unknown - 'handpicked' - party officials, Milošević formally became a new president of the Presidency of Serbia. The transfer of political power within the structures of the country's communist establishment was thus brought to an end. The process of its political liberalization, on the other hand, was still not to begin. Strongly resisting democratic tendencies that were well underway in some of the federal units of SFRJ, Milošević embraced the idea of nonparty pluralism where political competition would take place within the existing socio-political organizations in Serbia. 'Appeals for political pluralism and applause for the (Kosovo Albanian) movement whose motto is blood, come from the same rostrum', the new president stated two months after the election (*BBC*, February 7 1990). The one-party communist oligarchy in the biggest Yugoslav republic was, for the moment, effectively transformed into a one-party populist dictatorship.

Nonetheless, faced with an increasing pressure for introduction of political pluralism in the country as well as with the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, Milošević soon came to change his view.¹⁹³ In July 1990, even though a certain number of them had already been established,¹⁹⁴ the Serbian parliament hence formally allowed the formation of new political parties. However, in a referendum organized only a few weeks earlier, Milošević successfully pushed

¹⁹³ With this regard, one could rightfully assume that Milošević also had in mind the fact that first democratic elections had already been organized in Slovenia and Croatia.

¹⁹⁴ The two main parties of the future anti-Milošević opposition, the Democratic Party (*Demokratska stranka* - DS) and the Serbian Renewal Movement (*Srpski pokret obnove* - SPO), were thus founded in February and March 1990 respectively.

through a new Constitution that gave strong powers to the President,¹⁹⁵ an office that he had expected to be soon voted into. While ignoring the opposition leaders who vociferously argued that a multiparty election should precede it,¹⁹⁶ he claimed that its adoption would 'confirm the political changes on 1987-9, i.e. prioritize national interest and a unified Serbia', while, at the same time, precluding 'the political instability which characterized classical parliamentary systems' (quoted in *Thomas*, 1999: 71). Yet, it was obvious that the Constitution was, in the first place, to enable the continuity of Milošević's political dominance, that is 'to safeguard his position against control by the parliament which might, possibly, be opposition dominated' (*Ibid*). Serbian authoritarian regime, based on a system of personal rule, was thus given democratic legitimization (Cohen, 2001: 119).

The new Constitution was formally adopted on September 28, the same day when the first multiparty elections in the Serbian history were called. Two months earlier, as a result of the merger of the Serbian League of Communists with the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Serbia (*Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Srbije*) - the largest and the most powerful mass socio-political organization in the country - the Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije* – SPS) was created as its new paramount political structure. In the speech he gave on that occasion,

¹⁹⁵ The President was to be directly elected (Article 86); his acts did not have to be ratified in the Parliament, could not be challenged by the Constitutional Court (quoted in *Nikolić*, 1994: 327), and did not have to be counter-signed by the Government (quoted in *Jovičić*, 1992: 37). In addition, he was given wide powers to introduce a state of emergency in which his decisions would have legal force (Article 83), whereby, contrary to other East European countries in which the cases when the president could exercise this power were strictly defined, he had great freedom to decide for himself the reasons for such a decision (*Kutlešić*, 1994: 358). The text of the Constitution is available at: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/untc/unpan019071.pdf>.

¹⁹⁶ As emphasized by Vladimir Goati, prominent Serbian political scientist, such course of action of the Serbian leader during the transition period was 'in stark contrast to what happened in most other post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, where the constitutions and key political laws...were adopted by consensus reached between the ruling and opposition parties in "round table" discussions' (1995: 12).

Milošević promised a decisive break with the 'bureaucratic deformations' of the *ancien regime*:

'A party which from its birth is not ready to hear and take into consideration the opinions of those people who are well intentioned, well educated, and have material means, has no future [...] It is necessary for us to liberate ourselves from some of our former political habits, such as a certain narrow mindedness and vengefulness, which was often present amongst the leadership of the communist and socialist movement, shown toward any opinion which is different from that held by the political establishment and its leaders' (*NIN*, 20 July 1990).

On the other hand, as reflected by its Main Board composition and emphasized in its program,¹⁹⁷ the SPS was to ensure ideological continuity with the period of the SKS's rule:

'SPS will keep and develop the freedom loving traditions of the Struggle for National Liberation and the socialist revolution [...] and carry on all the progressive spiritual and social achievements of the workers movement, the development of socialism in the world, and the struggle of the poor and exploited classes and nations for freedom and justice, for a more prosperous and human world' (quoted in *Vukomanović*, 1995: 85-6).¹⁹⁸

More importantly, the party inherited its predecessors' developed organizational structure, including a wide network of local branches and 'workplace organizations' in all major factories, as well as the \$160 million worth material and financial assets (Andrejević, 1990). In combination with an almost absolute media control in the country, due to which the Serbian opposition seriously considered boycotting the first parliamentary election held on December 9, the SPS's triumph

¹⁹⁷ As many as 111 out of 135 members of this body were former SKS officials.

¹⁹⁸ The maintenance of the existing level of state-ownership in the economy was one of the indicators of this ideological continuity and, considering a number of people employed by the state, an important mechanism of the party's political power in the years to come.

could have hardly been called into question. And indeed, running under the slogan 'With Us There is No Uncertainty',¹⁹⁹ the SPS won three times more votes than the Serbian Renewal Movement that placed second.²⁰⁰ Yet, the result of the concomitantly organized presidential election clearly demonstrated that the popularity of its leader was considerably greater. The discrepancy in the number of votes garnered by Milošević and the SPS was as many as 965,212 in favor of the party leader (see *Table 7*).

Table 7. The winning results (vote % and absolute numbers in million votes) in the 1990 Serbian general elections

Milošević	65.3	3,285
SPS	46.1*	2,320

Source: Goati (2001a); Due to majoritarian electoral system, the party got as much as 77.6 per cent (194/250) of seats

That he was, in political sense, more than just his party's head, was also clear from the statement of his main electoral rival, Drašković, who was, prior to the polling, willing to admit that Milošević would probably win the presidency,²⁰¹ while at the same time hoping that the SPO would secure a greater proportion of vote than the

¹⁹⁹ Electoral choice, says Jovanka Matić, 'was formatted by state television simply as either a victory for the SPS or as a weak Serbia. The ruling party was portrayed as the bearer of unity, independence, freedom, peace, cooperation, and equality on one hand, and prosperity, work, revival, development, and progress, on the other. The opposition was [...] portrayed as the bearer of values diametrically opposite to those guaranteed by the incumbent party [...] Its pronounced anti-communism was portrayed as total negation of all certainties and positive achievements of socialist society' (1998: 115).

²⁰⁰ Not without some irony, the SPO's strong national program based on the idea of 'Greater Serbia' according to which - as stated in the early 1990 by the party's charismatic leader Vuk Drašković - the country's new borders should be 'were the Serbian concentration camps were, the places of most executions, and the burned-down Serbian churches and villages' (quoted in *Vukomanović*, 1995:70), was the focal point of the anti-opposition electoral campaign of the SPS. Thus, in state controlled-media presentations of its pre-election activities, the SPO was characterized as a party that advocated backwardness and a return to the past as well as the ensuing war and conflict, bloodshed and violence, chaos and destruction (Matić, *Ibid*).

²⁰¹ His estimate could have hardly been more accurate given that Milošević won almost four times more votes than him.

SPS (Thomas, 1999: 74).²⁰² Likewise, even by those intellectuals who openly supported the Serbian opposition before the first election, Milošević was still perceived as a supra-political figure. As pointed out by Veselin Djuretić - historian and one of the most prominent representatives of Serbian nationalism among the SANU members - at the SPO's Congress in October 1990:

'The SPO is the embodiment of that energy which was released in Kosovo in 1987 and the initiator of that energy is one man – Slobodan Milošević' (*Tanjug*, 29 October 1990).²⁰³

4.1.2. Political pluralism – more than just a democratic façade

On the one hand, the 1990 elections in Serbia merely confirmed the complete dominance of Milošević and, to lesser extent but still enough for a one-party rule, his respective political organization. On the other hand, they marked the starting point in the development of the Serbian hybrid regime in which, despite the existence of formally democratic institutions, the incumbents would rule for a decade in an increasingly authoritarian manner. In light of the SPO-organized mass protest for the media liberalization held in Belgrade less than three months after the elections, however, one would probably not expect its relative longevity. Following the escalation of the clashes between demonstrators and police in the center of the

²⁰² Contrary to this expectation, Drašković told me that the SPO's result (15.8 per cent of the vote) 'came as a pleasant surprise, given the conditions under which the elections took place'. At the same time, he reiterated that 'Milošević had been much stronger than his party' and that 'the SPS would have lost in 1990 had Milošević not appeared on every party poster, hugging its candidates for the Parliament. In Serbia, with 80 per cent of illiterate or semiliterate population, this could have been understood as if Milošević himself was a candidate [...] In the end, despite all the manipulation, the SPS still failed to win 50 per cent' (Interview, January 2012).

²⁰³ Dušan Pavlović recalled those times during our conversation: 'The entire Serbian nation was infatuated with Milošević. It was like a collective madness. He was perceived as a political leader who would not only bring changes, like other leaders throughout Eastern Europe did, but also correct historical injustices and give Serbia back the place in history or in Yugoslavia, taken away by the others [...] As such, he transcended the party differences' (Interview, June 2011).

Serbian capital, the Yugoslav army tanks were deployed on its streets,²⁰⁴ whereas Drašković and a number of the party officials were arrested. Three days later, on March 12, after the Belgrade students had taken part in the protest and the number of people protesting gone up to a several hundreds of thousands, the SPO leadership was released and a several important regime figures, including the Interior Minister Radmilo Bogdanović and the TV Belgrade director Dušan Mitević, were fired.²⁰⁵ It was a political victory of the SPO-led Serbian opposition and the first major challenge of the Milošević regime.

As a part of the next one, which took place less than a year later, his political position was for the first time since 1987 openly called into question. For the reasons mentioned above, opposition leaders held him the most responsible for the dramatic collapse of Yugoslavia and the ensuing defeat of the Serbian national politics. Therefore, a few weeks after the international recognition of independence of Slovenia and Croatia, the Democratic Party launched the 'Proclamation to the Serbian Public' in which it demanded Milošević to leave the office.²⁰⁶ Within a few

²⁰⁴ In Milošević's words, this was 'to ensure that chaos and violence are not permitted to spread in Serbia' (quoted in *Thomas*, 1999: 82).

²⁰⁵ A day before, a mass counter-meeting of Milošević's supporters was organized in the other part of Belgrade. In addition to a strong condemnation of the ongoing opposition protests, the special political status of the Serbian leader was once again emphasized, this time in a speech by Mihailo Marković, the SPS's chief ideologist and another well-known dissident intellectual from the *ancien regime* period: 'There are leaders who in December announced that they, because they were not victorious in the elections, would come to power within three months by way of the streets. Those 90 days which Vuk Drašković gave himself have now expired. On the other hand, there are unfortunately, participating in this treacherous attempt to break up Serbia a number of young people, who perhaps naively, believe that this current destructive action will bring more freedom and democracy. For the first time in 70 years, all the parts of the Serbian nation have been untied. We are fortunate to have at our head the most capable, honorable and courageous man since the time of King Peter the First' (*Duga*, 16 March 1991).

²⁰⁶ The document stated the following: 'Today there can be no doubt that politically Serbia has suffered a crushing defeat – on the national, economic and social levels. The political leadership of Serbia must carry full responsibility for the fact that the Serbian nation and the citizens of Serbia have been left as the greatest losers in the break-up of Yugoslavia [...] Those who have the greatest power must carry the greatest responsibility, and the Democratic Party demands that the President of the Republic, Slobodan Milošević, submits his resignation [...] The Democratic Party considers it necessary that elections are held without delay for a constitution forming assembly, which will put in place Serbia's future state order, and its national and state interests' (quoted in *Thomas*, 1999: 111).

days, as many as 823,648 people (according to the party leadership) supported DS's initiative with their signatures. However, apart from the nationalistic faction grouped around Vojislav Koštunica – soon to be transformed into a separate Democratic Party of Serbia (*Demokratska stranka Srbije* - DSS) – the party would, due to political and ideological differences with its members, refuse to join the opposition coalition (*Demokratski pokret Srbije* - DEPOS) formed in June, in anticipation of an early election.

On the other side of the Serbian political spectrum, Milošević was trying to consolidate his position. In the situation when, after Croatia, the war had also broken out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he sought to score some positive political points through the creation of a state federation with Montenegro, called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna republika Jugoslavija* - SRJ). Nonetheless, as a result of the Serbian government's involvement in the Bosnian conflict, the UN Security Council introduced severe economic sanctions against the new state merely a month after its establishment. Hoping that he would improve the country's image within the international community, Milošević invited Milan Panić, an American businessman of Serbian origin, to take on the post of the Federal Prime Minister. The manner in which Milošević made this choice, depicted in the following statement of Borisav Jović, then the president of the SPS,²⁰⁷ stands as another proof of his absolute political dominance within the party:

'About who was going to be elected for the Federal Prime Minister, people from the Party organs, including myself as its president, knew absolutely nothing. I had tried, on several occasions, to discuss it with Milošević, but he would always suggest me to leave it for later. When he called me one day and told me the name of the candidate, I felt handicapped,

²⁰⁷ His presidency was merely formal since, according to the Serbian Constitution, the President of the Republic (at that time Milošević) was not allowed to be politically active within a party.

because I simply could not believe that, being an incumbent party president and for so long its highest official, I had not heard, let alone known the man who was, supposedly, so well-known to the others that he was accepted as our party's candidate for the Federal Prime Minister [...] At the Executive Board session, everyone was struck dumb when they heard an unfamiliar name [...] although the proposal was not objected' (2009: 95).²⁰⁸

Milošević soon came to realize that he had made a wrong choice of the Federal Premier as Panić - supposedly being easy to politically control - sought to impose himself as the country's supreme political authority in his efforts to restore its international reputation. Without consulting with anyone from the party,²⁰⁹ just as he had nominated him for the position, Milošević now decided to purge Panić.²¹⁰ In the meantime, owing to his fierce criticism of Milošević's politics, Panić became a rallying point and, eventually, a presidential candidate of the chronically fragmented Serbian opposition. Although Milošević, pressured by the serious political and socio-economic crisis in the country,²¹¹ decided to accept their request and call early elections for 20 December 1992, political change they hoped to see did not come about. In fact, the opposition suffered a crushing electoral defeat, with the DEPOS winning less than 17 per cent of the vote.²¹² On the other hand, the SPS lost a considerable part of its electorate to the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska radikalna stranka* -

²⁰⁸ The same applies to the way Dobrica Ćosić, an earlier mentioned nationalist dissident in the communist time, was elected - and only a year later removed from the office of - the first president of the new Federation.

²⁰⁹ Milošević's personalistic model of rule was later described in practical terms by his adviser Zvonimir Trajković: 'Milošević relied too much on his intellect and neglected the analytical approach [...] He practically does not need advisers [...] for in the end everything ends up as what he orders. For example, he makes a hundred telephone calls a day, instead of allowing his assistants in the office to do it. If a government needs to be formed, he forms it instead of appointing a person who would do it and then be responsible for the government's work' (*Vreme*, 11 September 1999).

²¹⁰ A no-confidence motion against his government was passed in the Federal Parliament on December 29.

²¹¹ Cohen reminds that, compared with their 1989 level, Serbian GDP slid by 60 per cent, and net wages lost almost 2/3 of their value by the end of 1992, while several hundred thousand people – mainly young and educated – left the country in this period (2001: 161).

²¹² The second best within the opposition, the Democratic Party, won 4.1 per cent.

SRS) that garnered an exceptionally high 22.5 per cent.²¹³ As a result, the Socialists had to form a minority government dependent on the support of the SRS whose leader, Vojislav Šešelj,²¹⁴ explained the reasons of his party's refusal to partake in the executive power:

'We will support the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, as long as he acts as a true nationalist and a patriot. We will not, however, become part of the Socialist government into which the corrupt and the criminal have been brought' (quoted in *Thomas*, 1999: 137).

At the same time, challenged by Panić, Milošević had no problem ensuring the second presidential term.²¹⁵ Compared to his party's list, he won 1,155,961 votes more (see *Table 8*).

Table 8. The winning results (vote % and absolute numbers in million votes) in the 1992 Serbian general elections

Milošević	53.2	2,515
SPS	28.7	1,359

Source: Goati (2001a)

Although Milošević had thus reconfirmed the personal dominance at the Serbian political scene, the SPS's informal coalition with the Radicals would, nonetheless, force him to politically compromise throughout the upcoming year. Already in January 1993, the Serbian president faced SRS's political obstruction as the party leadership condemned his support to the Vance-Owen Peace Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina which, in Šešelj's understanding, was 'a time bomb planted under Serbdom' (Ibid: 154). In the following months, as a result of the SRS's

²¹³ Surprising for many, the SRS's electoral success could have perhaps been anticipated given the party's extraordinary result (29.15 per cent of the vote) in the first Yugoslav general election, held in May 1992.

²¹⁴ According to Drašković, his former ally and the godfather of his son, Šešelj was 'politically created by Milošević's secret police with the idea to make an impression of someone crazier than Milošević' and thus to make the Serbian leader look 'moderate and more acceptable political option' (Interview, January 2012).

²¹⁵ Panić won 32.1 per cent, i.e. one million votes less than Milošević.

initiative, more than 1,500 people from the Radio Television of Serbia, the bastion of Milošević's power, were, due to their 'support to the opposition parties' or a 'lack of discipline', placed on compulsory leave. Moreover, on 1 July, the Radicals announced that their support to the Serbian government's budget proposal would be conditioned by the abolition of its three ministries – for Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Foreign Economic Relations – whose functions, according to them, overlapped with those of the SRS-controlled federal ministries. In addition, they successfully pressured Milošević to remove the Yugoslav Army Chief of the General Staff, Života Panić, together with a number of senior military officers.

In contrast to the relation with his party, the SRS's political allegiance to the Serbian president remained strong during this period. As stated by Šešelj:

'We are his [Milošević's] political opponents and we have always claimed this. But we have also stressed that we admire Milošević as a Serbian patriot and a man who is doing everything in his power to contribute to the well-being of his people and solve their problems' (*Serbian Radio*, 14 June 1993).

Nonetheless, mainly because of Milošević's reconciliatory tone as regards the Bosnian conflict, the SRS proposed – in spite of all political concessions – a vote of no confidence against the Serbian government on 20 September. In return, the SPS launched an aggressive campaign against the Radicals, accusing them of an 'extremely primitive chauvinism' (*Serbian Radio*, 28 September 1993). Measured by the result of the subsequent parliamentary election held on 19 December, this proved to be politically extremely beneficial for the Socialists. Notwithstanding the catastrophic economic situation in the country,²¹⁶ the SPS won 36.7 per cent of the

²¹⁶ Unable to borrow money internationally because of the United Nations economic sanctions, Milošević chose to print it so as to ensure the continuity of financing of the Serbian state structures as well as of the Serb side in the Bosnian war and the great number of refugees that fled to the country. As a result, by the end of 1993, hyper-inflation in Serbia reached the level of 286 billion per cent (50 million dinar bill was issued in November), thus exceeding the Weimer Germany's inflation rate from the 1920s.

vote, significantly more than a year ago, whereas the public support for the Radicals went down to 13.8 per cent.²¹⁷ Once again falling short of an absolute majority,²¹⁸ the SPS formed a coalition government with a small and then opposition party, the New Democracy (*Nova demokratija*).²¹⁹

4.1.3. *Le partie, c'est moi!*

In the following period, Milošević invested all his efforts in an attempt to bring down the wall of devastating economic sanctions against the SRJ. Accustomed to regularly taking over the authority of the Serbian parliament and government (Goati, 2001a: 84), he thereby acted as the representative of the Yugoslav interests in the international affairs. By playing an ironically constructive political role in ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly through a continuous pressure on the belligerent and increasingly disobedient Bosnian Serb leadership, Milošević sought - and not without success - to recast himself as 'an icon of peace and reconciliation' in the Balkans (Cohen, 2001: 202).²²⁰ Interestingly, his decisions to accept a new peace plan for BiH in July 1994,²²¹ then to impose a trade blockade to the Republic of Srpska (*Republika Srpska*),²²² whose leaders initially refused to lay down the weapons, and, finally, not to react when the Croatian army launched a massive

²¹⁷ The two main opposition political forces, DEPOS and DS, won 16.6 and 11.6 per cent respectively.

²¹⁸ The SPS won 49.2 per cent of seats.

²¹⁹ Its leader, Dušan Mihailović, justified the political partnership with the Socialists with an argument that the situation in Serbia could be 'more effectively changed from the inside rather than from the outside by participating and dealing with responsibilities instead of criticizing and watching from the safe distance' (quoted in Thomas, 1999: 190).

²²⁰ Even his fiercest opposition critique, Vuk Drašković, came to acknowledge what seemed as a substantial change of Milošević's political outlook: 'If you compare Milošević before May 1993 and Milošević of today, you will see two different men' (*Vreme*, 21 August 1995).

²²¹ The plan was created by the international Contact Group (composed of the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Russia) with an idea to organize BiH as federation of the two ethnically-based political entities – one, that was supposed to encompass 51 per cent of its territory, under jurisdiction of Bosniaks and Croats, and the other to be governed by Serbs. The leadership of Republika Srpska rejected the proposal as its army, at that moment, controlled 70 per cent of the Bosnian territory.

²²² Serb-controlled part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, later to become one of its two federal units.

military campaign against the Serb rebels in the country, were vociferously attacked by most of the Serbian opposition parties, including those supposedly democratic.²²³

More importantly, some of the prominent members of the incumbent SPS voiced their disagreement with the new course of the official Serbian politics. The aforementioned Mihailo Marković, the party's main ideologist and one of its vice-presidents, thus stated that 'for those who desire peace at any price, capitulation is something which can be easily accepted' (*Telegraf*, 13 September 1995). Another major reason for discontent within the SPS ranks was related to the political rise of the Yugoslav United Left (*Jugoslovenska levica* - JUL). Led by Milošević's wife, Mirjana Marković, this otherwise marginal party, founded on 24/5 March 1995, soon gained a considerable political prominence as its members started filling important position within the structures of power. While Milošević argued that the JUL was intended to be an alternative source of reliable socialist cadres who, unlike their SPS counterparts, would not be politically compromised, many of the high-ranking Socialists had a feeling that the new party was actually to supersede theirs.²²⁴ Borisav Jović, another vice-president of the SPS, thus argued:

'It has now come so far that JUL receives more space on radio and television than our party does. I am also opposed to JUL because that left-wing party is headed by the wife of the Republic's President, and that is a fact which is difficult for our people to understand or to bear [...] Our people find it difficult to accept that two members of the same family should

²²³ The DS's president, Zoran Djindić, rejected the Contact Group peace plan, arguing that, because of 'the aim of the Muslim side was to create a unified Bosnia', 'the war would not end until the international community clearly said that BiH would be divided into two confederative parts' (*Serbian Radio*, 17 October 1994). Moreover, in the wake of NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serb army toward the end of 1994, he visited its headquarters intended to 'provide good services for the leadership of Republika Srpska, so that its people can retain their fate in their own hands' (*SRNA*, 12 December 1994). As a response to the next NATO campaign against the Bosnian Serb military targets in August 1995, Djindić went as far as to organize anti-NATO demonstrations in front of the American Cultural Centre in Belgrade.

²²⁴ Dijana Vukomanović, who joined the SPS in the mid-1990s and currently serves as one of the party's vice-presidents, recalled these times during our talk. 'People in the SPS were extremely frustrated by the fact that Milošević allowed his wife to effectively run their party and to use it to eventually create a new, satellite party of her own' (Interview, January 2012).

head two parties. And not only two parties – because of their personal power and ambitions we have here the makings of a dynasty' (*Vreme*, 29 July 1995).

Already in the Second SPS Congress held in October 1992, which had been preceded by some inner-party critique of his 'adventure' with Panić, Milošević moved to cement his political supremacy. While purging a number of high party officials – among whom the former president of the Central Committee of the SKS, the SPS's Secretary General, and the head of its Belgrade organization – he officially returned to the position of the party leader thus 'establishing domination over the Party and becoming the absolute master of all decisions to be made' (Jović, 2009: 140). However, as some dissonant political tones were still coming from the SPS's highest ranks, Milošević, encouraged by the foreign policy successes,²²⁵ decided to bring the process of personalization of political power in Serbia to an end. Following the August removal of Vladislav Jovanović, Yugoslav Foreign Minister who had expressed his disagreement with Milošević's passive stance toward the Croatian military offensive against the Serb rebels, a number of media directors – including those of the state television, the most influential daily (*Politika*), and the news agency (*Tanjug*), were replaced.

The culmination of this process took place on the SPS's Main Board meeting held on November 28, on the occasion of which Mihailo Marković, Borisav Jović, Slobodan Jovanović (the head of the party organization in Belgrade), Radovan Pankov (the head of the party organization in Vojvodina), and several other members

²²⁵ As Robert Thomas explains, 'as 1995 drew to a close, Milošević had every reason to be pleased with the course politics had taken. The international community had accepted him, albeit reluctantly as a guarantor of peace in the Balkans and a pillar of the Dayton agreement. Milošević could now present himself to the Serbian people as a man who had brought Serbia peace, relief from the sanctions regime, and acceptance back into the international community' (1999: 251).

of its leadership were purged. The manner in which Milošević discarded the party colleagues exposed, as fully as possible, the structure of power in the SPS:

‘Milošević came to the Main Board meeting over which he was to preside, simply read out the list of those to be removed and appointed to duty; and, without asking whether anyone present had anything to say, and after only 12 minutes in session, closed the meeting. Meanwhile, not one member of the Main Board, the only body that has the right to appoint or replace functionaries by party statute, dared utter a single word, let alone ask for a vote’ (*Naša Borba*, 1 December 1995).²²⁶

In an open letter addressed to the Board members following the meeting, Marković accused them of a complete lack of political credibility:

‘You silently pushed through something that is completely counter to any democracy. How do you want to work from now on? Will you ever manage to stand up and tell the president that you are the highest party body between Congresses, which defines policy and takes the most important decisions, and that he has to listen to you, not the other way around?’ (*Vreme*, 24 March 1996).

The following months provided a clear and, in view of the political dynamics in the SPS, easily predictable answer to these questions. In the Third Congress, held on 2 March 1996, Milošević once again reconstructed the party cadre in accordance with his own current political preferences.²²⁷ Merely 51 out of 153 members of the Main Board and six out of 26 members of the Executive Board were reelected. By altering 2/3 of its leadership, Milošević, in effect, showed how politically insignificant his party was. It turned out, as one Serbian journalist commented, ‘that the only task

²²⁶ This, in words of Dušan Pavlović, stands as ‘an anecdotal evidence of Milošević’s power within the party which none of its members could jeopardize until the end of the decade’ (Interview, June 2011). Milan Jovanović, who attended the meeting, remembered Milošević, infuriated by the aforementioned critique, saying the following to his party colleagues: ‘Make sure this is the last time someone had dared to tell me what to say and when. Only I can decide on that’ (Interview, January 2012).

²²⁷ ‘Milošević personal will was the ultimate principle of decision-making in these matters’, Balša Špadijer confirmed (Interview, January 2012).

of the well trained Socialists, who at his whistle came running to the Third SPS Congress, was to proclaim him the great leader almost by acclamation' (*Naša Borba*, 4 March 1996). At the same time, by nominating for the party positions people close to JUL, Milošević sought to strengthen its 'already firmly entrenched position in relation with the SPS' (Thomas, 1999: 263).

However, his party management would soon politically backfire as strongly as never before. After a decade in power, during which he had failed to unify the Serbs into an enlarged state, turned Serbia into an internationally isolated pariah entity, lowered the living standard to the level from decades earlier, bolstered corruption, and created mafia-like gangs (Cohen, 2001: 201), Milošević's personal political prestige could simply do not trick any more. In the local elections held in November 1996, the coalition of the three major opposition parties - DS, SPO, and the Civic Alliance of Serbia (*Građanski savez Srbije*) – won control over 41 out of 188 municipalities and, more importantly, over Belgrade and most of the other big cities in the country. Like in a dream, in a fairytale, Drašković later wrote, Milošević suffered a knock-down, for the first time and convincing (2010: 231).²²⁸

Milošević finally recognized the results only after three-month long protests of the Serbian students and opposition parties. Now with a considerably lesser amount of political power at the local level and with a significant part of the Montenegrin leadership openly against him,²²⁹ he decided to strengthen the grip on Serbian media

²²⁸ Some of the SPS officials in the provinces openly blamed the electoral defeat on the 'forced alliance' with JUL. Radovan Radović, party representative from a small town of Trstenik, thus pointed out that 'the SPS would have fared better if it had not been allied with JUL' (quoted in Thomas, 1999: 265). Dobrivoje Budimirović, the SPS's leader from Svilajnac, went even further in his critique of the party politics: 'When the SPS disowned some people because of their dubious morals and other qualities they found their way magically into the ranks of JUL and in this election the greatest hostility toward the SPS came from those former members of the SPS who are now in JUL' (*Ibid*). In this respect, Milan Jovanović indeed mentioned during out talk that, on many occasions, Milošević literally forced the SPS local leaders to give up on the party's election candidates and, instead, throw support behind whomever JUL would put forward (Interview, January 2012) .

²²⁹ Led by its vice-president Milo Djukanović, a faction of the incumbent Democratic Party of Socialists - long-time political partner of Milošević's SPS - gradually distanced itself from the Serbian president. After his initial

in anticipation of the upcoming parliamentary election. From December 1996 to July 1997, allegedly because of technical infringements on the broadcasting regulations, as many as 55 local TV and radio stations were shut down. Under such conditions, most of the Serbian opposition – including the Democratic Party – decided to boycott the September 1997 parliamentary election.²³⁰ However, running in a coalition with two smaller parties, the SPS managed to win merely 34.2 per cent of the vote, thus again showing its political weakness and, resultantly, being forced - notwithstanding the earlier accusations – to pact with the Radicals.²³¹ At the same time, as his second term as the Serbian president ended, Milošević moved to the office of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As another consequence of the personalization of power within the SPS, his successor to the Serbian presidency, Milan Milutinović, was elected only after four rounds of voting.²³² What is more, according to the official data, Milutinović secured the triumph by ‘winning’ more than 200,000 Kosovo Albanian votes (*Vreme*, 10 January 2002), which speaks clearly about the character of the election.

refusal to accept the 1996 electoral results, Djukanović and his followers openly sided with the Serbian opposition. In an interview he gave following the end of the abovementioned protests, Djukanović even urged Milošević to leave the office: ‘It would be completely wrong politically for Slobodan Milošević to remain in any place in the political life of Yugoslavia [...] Milošević is a man of obsolete political ideas lacking the ability to form a strategic vision of the problems this country is facing, surrounded by unsuitable individuals who are following the time-tested method of many authoritarian regimes and for the sake of their own petty privileges’ (*Vreme*, 22 February 1997). As the party president Momir Bulatović remained loyal to the Belgrade ally, political conflict within the leadership of the ruling Montenegrin party was inevitable. For more on the topic, see the last section of this chapter.

²³⁰ Drašković, whose SPO took part in the election (winning a solid 20.6 per cent of the vote), told me that ‘the boycott was the biggest political mistake of Djindjić and his party’ and that ‘a united opposition would have undoubtedly defeated Milošević’ (Interview, January 2012). As an act of retaliation, Drašković subsequently helped the SPS to remove Djindjić from the office of the Belgrade mayor which he had held since the aforementioned local elections. ‘This was my biggest political mistake’, he admitted (Interview, January 2012).

²³¹ The SRS came second, with support of 28.1 per cent.

²³² Milutinović became President after winning the second round of the December election. Previously, in the election held on 21 September (1st round) and 5 October (2nd round), turnout was officially lower than 50 per cent needed to make the result legally binding. Interestingly, the October round of election, with the turnout of 48.97 per cent, was won by the SRS leader Vojislav Šešelj.

Although his new function was, at least according to the SRJ Constitution,²³³ supposed to be mainly ceremonial, Milošević continued playing the most important political role in the country. Yet, compared with his early years in power, political circumstances in Serbia and, hence, the character of its regime changed drastically. Running out of financial means necessary for its maintenance, with the room for political maneuver critically narrowed - especially after the 1998/9 war in Kosovo and the ensuing NATO intervention against the SRJ - Milošević moved toward ever more repressive mode of governance. In the following period, the Serbian public hence witnessed the continuation of media freedom suppression,²³⁴ a large-scale purge of judiciary,²³⁵ and, toward the end of his rule, a number of high profile political assassinations.²³⁶ As argued by Popov, from the 'power of authority' stage, during which manipulative authorities employed a panoply of techniques for domination, the Serbian regime gradually advanced into the 'authority of power' phase, in which an isolated elite acquired harsher features, willing to employ all measures - including violence - to forestall its replacement (quoted in *Cohen*, 2001: 345).

In such atmosphere, on 17 February 2000, the SPS held the Fourth Congress. In accordance with the party tradition of purges, all four vice-presidents were 'moved' to the Executive Board, whereas only one new vice-president was elected. In addition, only 10 out of 26 members of this body were reelected. At the same time, celebrating the 10th birthday, the party once again stood unanimously behind its president. As the only candidate for the position of its head, Milošević got the support

²³³ Available at: http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Yugoslav_Const_1992.htm.

²³⁴ Within a year from the October 1998 adoption of the notorious Public Information Act (*Zakon o informisanju*), which empowered courts to act against media that 'damaged the reputation of the SRJ', more than 250 TV and radio stations in Serbia were closed down.

²³⁵ Allegedly for 'engaging in opposition activities', 900 out of 2000 judges in Serbia were forced to leave the office in the period from 1998 to 2000.

²³⁶ The victims list, among others, include Radovan Stojičić, Serbian police chief, Pavle Bulatović, Federal Defense Minister, Slavko Ćuruvija, one of the most influential independent Serbian journalist, Željko Ražnatović Arkan, Serbian paramilitary leader in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia.

of 2,308 out of 2,309 delegates, with the one invalid vote being his own (*Politika*, 18 February 2000).²³⁷ In a stark contrast to this image, hundreds of thousands of Serbian citizens went out into the streets of Belgrade on October 5, demanding from Milošević to step down after he had tried to rig the results of the early election for SRJ President.²³⁸ On the next day, he officially recognized the defeat to the opposition candidate, Vojislav Koštunica. Despite the fact that the SPS and its coalition partners still held more than 3/4 of seats in the parliament of the Republic, the Serbian hybrid regime thus effectively ceased to exist. Without its leader in power, the Socialists won merely 13.2 per cent of the vote – almost three times less than in 1997 – in the early Serbian parliamentary election held on December 23.²³⁹

Table 9. SPS's electoral performance after the regime change in Serbia

Election year	2003	2007	2008	2012	2014
Vote %	7.6	5.6	7.6	14.5	13.5

Sources: Nohlen and Stover (2010) and Serbian Electoral Commission (reports available at: http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/index_e.htm)

²³⁷ In the 2000 ICG report on Serbia, the following is stated about its key political figure: 'Slobodan Milošević [...] has not changed his style of ruling the country since he took power in Serbia more than a decade ago. He steers all important activities and sets the rules, but he does not commit himself in any direct or concrete way on many policy issues. As a result, he does not suffer the consequences of continuous failure of his strategies, or at least is able to minimize the damage by blaming and then replacing high-ranking officials. Milošević uses people and discards them when they have served his purpose [...] He has never had close associates or for that matter anyone he trusted' (available at: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=3ae6a6eb4>) (2000: 5).

²³⁸ His associates from this period claim that presidential election was called a year earlier only because Milošević, largely to due to his wife's influence, was absolutely convinced that he would win. 'Some of us [SPS highest members] were against his decision but to tell Milošević not to run, well, you simply don't do that', Balša Špadijer commented (Interview, January 2012). One who actually tried to make Milošević change his mind was Milan Jovanović. He told me the following: 'I met with Milošević a few weeks before the election, presented him results of the opinion poll survey I had previously conducted, showing that he would lose, and, in view of the fact that the opposition was against going to the ballot box, suggested him to cancel the call. "Hey, it's going to be OK", he replied. "Now go, and stop scaring me"' (Interview, January 2012).

²³⁹ As noted by Dušan Pavlović, 'it was clear that, in terms of autonomous political influence, the Socialist Party of Serbia did not mean much, if anything. It mattered simply because it had Milošević within its ranks. The SPS's result in the December 2000 election clearly shows this' (Interview, June 2011). Nebojša Vladislavljević, another Belgrade University political science professor whom I had a chance to interview, was even more explicit in this regard: 'The party [SPS] did not mean a thing' (Interview, June 2011).

Throughout the years that followed, largely due to its well-developed party infrastructure, the SPS managed to politically survive. Moreover, after entering the Serbian government subsequent to the 2008 parliamentary election, it succeeded in regaining some of the political influence lost with the collapse of hybrid regime (see *Table 9*). However, measured by the vote percentage, even the party's best post-2000 electoral performance (carried out in a coalition with two smaller parties) was only a half of the worst result it had made during the decade in power.

4.2. Croatia: The state, the leader and the party

4.2.1. National reconciliation

In the course of 1989, Croatia's political landscape changed substantially as a result of the emergence of a number of opposition political organizations. Interestingly, the first one established was the left-wing Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (*Udruženje za jugoslavensku demokratsku inicijativu* - UJDI) whose members, while calling for its democratic transformation, believed – contrary to the political *zeitgeist* – in the necessity of preservation of the socialist federation. On the other hand, all the other newly founded parties put their political emphasis on the protection of Croatian national interest. More than symbolically, Croatia witnessed the revival of the *Maspok* spirit as all the emerging political leaders had previously been notable members of the national movement. In this respect, Nenad Zakošek, political science professor at Zagreb University, made an interesting comparison:

'In Slovenia, we witnessed around this time an emergence of entirely new democratic organizations [...] In Croatia, unfortunately, no one and nothing new appeared [...] The country remained trapped, ideationally, intellectually, and politically, in the imagination of the Croatian Spring' (Interview, October 2011).

Thus, Franjo Tuđman established the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska stranka* - HDZ), Vlado Gotovac and Dražen Budiša entered the leadership of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka* - HSLS),²⁴⁰ Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, another 1971 student leader, became the first vice-president (and in 1990 president) of the re-created Croatian Peasant Party (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka* - HSS), while Marko Veselica, prominent economist and regular contributor to *Hrvatski Tjednik*, got to lead the Croatian Democratic Party (*Hrvatska demokratska stranka* – HDS). ‘Happy New 1971’, one of the articles in *Danas* was appropriately titled (12 December 1989).²⁴¹

Among these, the two biggest political organizations were HDZ and HSLS. And, while both being nationally oriented, the former was focused solely on the national question,²⁴² while the latter treated it in the context of development of a liberal democratic society in Croatia and Yugoslavia.²⁴³ The difference in the two parties’ approach to this particular matter became evident in October 1989 when the HSLS put forward an initiative for the return of the statue of *Ban* Josip Jelačić to Zagreb’s main square.²⁴⁴ The Liberals’ declaration stated the following:

²⁴⁰ Budiša, one of the leaders of the 1971 student strike, became the HSLS president in 1990 and was succeeded by Gotovac in 1996.

²⁴¹ ‘The atmosphere in 1990-1991 was the same as in 1970-1971’, Dvornik similarly noted (Interview, October 2011).

²⁴² Hence, at the HDZ founding session in June 1989, it was declared that Croatia had ‘the sovereign right to choose its economic, social, and cultural system in harmony with the will of the people and without any kind of interference, pressure, or threat from outside’ (quoted in: *Djurić et al.*, 1990: 63-69). The tone of the next party document, published in November, was even stronger. While pointing to the dangers of ‘Greater Serbian expansionism’ and calling on Croats to ‘finally wake up’, it demanded the ‘territorial integrity of the Croatian people within its historical and natural borders’ (*Ibid*, 70).

²⁴³ As written in the party’s program declaration from May 1989, ‘the HSLS starts from the principle that only a community in which every individual is free and socially secure can be free [...] and that the national question in Yugoslavia can be solved only by federalism based on consensus with the right of nations to self-determination and secession’ (quoted in *Goldstein*, 1999: 205).

²⁴⁴ The statue, one of the symbols of the old Zagreb, was removed for ideological reasons right after the WWII. Interestingly, the first public call for its return was published in *Hrvatski Tjednik*, on 4 June 1971.

'We, the undersigned citizens, consider that the statue of Josip Jelačić should be returned to Republic Square and placed where it used to stand' (*Danas*, 17 October 1989).

By comparison, the tone of the HDZ's subsequent proclamation supporting the initiative was significantly different:

'The fate of the unhappy *ban*'s statue has become the symbol of how Croatian national feelings were trampled on in social Croatia, a symbol of a policy of heartless hatred for one's own nation, its history, culture, heritage' (*Ibid*).

On the next morning, nearly 70,000 people signed the HSLS's petition. More importantly, the number of HDZ's branches and members multiplied incomparably faster in the months to follow (Goldstein, 1999: 206).²⁴⁵ As a result, the party which, at the moment of the publication of its first official document in February 1989, was dismissed by the Croatian authorities as a marginal right-wing organization became, by the end of the year, the dominant political voice of nationally oriented Croats. Unexpectedly for many, 'the Serb national program thus got a Croat twin brother' (*Danas*, 6 March 1990). The main reason behind the HDZ's rapid political ascent was its openness for diverging political ideas. All Croats, regardless of their political-ideological affiliation, were welcome in the party as long as they believed in the need for national revival.²⁴⁶ In words of Goran Čular, Zagreb University political science

²⁴⁵ According to an estimation of the HDZ leadership, the number of party members at the end of 1989 was 50,000 and, by the time the first multiparty elections in Croatia were organized in April 1990, it reached 250,000 (Irvine, 1993: 278).

²⁴⁶ The following words of Antun Vrdoljak about his first visit to the HDZ's headquarters, initiated by Tuđman in late 1989, nicely capture the ideological heterogeneity of the party's founding members as well as its intended political purpose: 'There, I see Joža Manolić [Josip Manolić, a long time highest ranking official within the Yugoslav state security apparatus, in the 1960s serving as the head of the Federal Secretariat/Ministry of the Interior, later to become one of the founders of the HDZ and the second Prime Minister of Croatia]. You know, seeing the head of Joža Manolić doesn't bring any good. It's one dangerous head, a bandit one [...] I then saw a guy named Milivoj Kujundžić, also from UDBA [the Yugoslav secret police]. I knew him since, back in 1962, he had tried to force me into becoming their agent [...] Feeling very inconvenient, I turned to Tuđman and asked why the hell those people there were. With nuns, Tuđman replied, we can't make a state' (Interview, October 2011).

professor: 'Franjo Tuđman [elected the party chairman in February 1989] was an integralist. He took in Ustashas, Partisans, and even Serbs as long as they were for Croatia' (Interview, October 2011). 'It was a catch-all concept', Dejan Jović, another Zagreb political science professor, similarly remarked. And precisely because Tuđman wanted to emphasize that this political platform was broad enough for everyone, he chose to label his political organization 'union' and not 'party' (Interview, October 2011). In this regard, Stjepan Mesić, one of the founders of the HDZ and, like most of them, a former Communist who had been expelled from the SKH following the *Maspok* defeat, writes the following in his political memoir:

'With our foundations deeply steeped in Croatia's positives tradition, we were – in establishing the orientation of our movement – open to different worldviews, ideals, and political and religious beliefs. Croatia's vision of humanity, along with its tolerance and strong roots in democracy, had never been given enough space. All of this we had to absorb, along with an urge to fight without compromise, and a readiness to make sacrifices so that the Croatian people had the right to define themselves and be free [...] These were the starting points in creating our movement. They were the basic fundamentals of the Croatian Democratic Union' (2004: 3-4).

With the Croatian national interest as the smallest common denominator of its political platform, the HDZ, similar to the Croatian Peasant Party in the pre-WWII period, came to be supported by 'a wide spectrum of the population with diverse political views' (Irvine, 1993: 278).²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ These views were reflected in the ideological richness of the political tradition which the HDZ claimed to continue. As noted by Fisher, the party's emphasis on the need to build 'a contemporary democratic Croatian national consciousness' was based on Ante Starčević's conception of the Croatian historical state right, Stjepan Radić's democratic republicanism, and the Croatian leftist tradition, which provided for the self-determination of nations (2006:32).

As indicated above, the central political figure and – to quote Zakošek – ‘an emblem’ (Interview, October 2011) of the HDZ-led emerging national movement was Tuđman. His personal history, in many ways, reflected the 20th century evolution of the national idea in Croatia.²⁴⁸ More importantly, his considerable personal sacrifice for the Croatian cause as well as a major success in securing funds for the establishment of the HDZ made Tuđman a supreme political authority within the party and, soon afterwards, Croatia’s undisputed national leader.²⁴⁹ Thus he was given a chance to, as he often stated, ‘fulfill his mission’ and politically bring all ethnic Croats together. Considering himself ‘the most Croatian politician by the way how he expresses Croatian emotionality, inspiration and pride’, Tuđman had no dilemma that he was the right man for the job (*Danas*, 27 March 1990).

On 5 February 1990, opposition political parties in Croatia were officially legalized. Ten days later, constitutional amendments formally establishing a multiparty political system in the republic were passed by its Parliament. In anticipation of the first ‘real’ elections, called on this occasion for 22 April and 6 May

²⁴⁸ As Irvine nicely elaborates, ‘this son of a Croat Peasant Party official was already active in the Communist movement as a teenager before the war. During the Second World War, he became a general in the Partisan army and was strongly committed to the resolution of the Croat question within the framework of a Yugoslav state. After the war, he became a historian, and was appointed director of the prestigious Institute for the History of the Workers’ Movement in Croatia. Under his leadership, Institute publications began to explore sensitive national themes in the post-1918 historiography of Yugoslavia, especially pertaining to the Croat question. These activities earned Tuđman the censure of Communist Party officials, and in 1967 he was removed from his post as director of the Institute and expelled from the party. Tuđman’s activism increased, however, as he became a regular contributor to *Matica Hrvatska*’s publication *Hrvatski Tjednik*. His articles focusing on the Croat national movement and its struggles for Croatian statehood earned him the title of “historian of the Croat Spring”. They also earned him a prison sentence after Tito cracked down on the *Maspok* in Croatia. At this point, like many other participants in the events of 1971, he appears to have abandoned his Communist convictions, although he was not quick to embrace western liberal democracy. Both systems, he believed, had deprived the small nations of Europe of their ostensible right to national self-determination. Thereafter, the focus of his writings and political activities became the fulfillment of self-determination for Croatia’ (1993: 279).

²⁴⁹ In 1986, following the closure of a long court case against him, Tuđman was given back his passport. The fact that he became one of a very few Yugoslav dissidents allowed to travel, ‘proved essential for his future political career’ (Fisher, 2006: 31). Namely, on several occasions during the next two years, Tuđman visited North America, where he made contacts with Croat émigré communities. Their financial support turned out to be of crucial importance for the establishment of his future party (*Ibid*).

(two rounds),²⁵⁰ the ruling League of Communists sought to improve the political image seriously damaged by its role during the 'Croatian Silence' period and by the lack of 'adequate' response to the growing pressure from Serbia. Elected in December 1989, the new party leadership, led by a younger-generation liberal reformist Ivica Račan, thus pledged for resistance to Milošević and support for the introduction of political pluralism and parliamentary democracy (Goldstein, 1999: 211). In addition, with the aim of distancing itself from the increasingly unpopular communist symbolism, the party modified the name by adding 'Party of Democratic Change' (SDP) to the existing SKH. In November 1990, this unfortunate combination would be replaced with the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP). Despite all the efforts, however, it soon turned out that the SKH started its reform transformation too late (Djurić et al., 1990: 273).²⁵¹

The Communists were not the only ones not to react on time to the new political dynamics in Croatia. The *Maspok* veterans, organized in the broad Coalition of People's Accord (*Koalicija narodnog sporazuma* - KNS),²⁵² launched their political campaign just before the elections. Ivan Supek, one of the KNS founders and a prominent scholar politically active during 'Croatian Spring', later recalled:

'We were too late by April. In the previous three months Tuđman had won the support of the people and the Church. That was decisive' (quoted in *Tanner*, 1997: 222).²⁵³

²⁵⁰ As explained by Cular, the SKH leadership decided to call the first multiparty elections in view of the weakly organized domestic party scene that was supposed to guarantee its victory (2000: 32).

²⁵¹ Most importantly, Jović pointed out, Croatian communists remained very conservative when it comes to the loyalty to the Yugoslav idea. 'Unlike party leaderships in Serbia and Slovenia, they did not offer any critique or alternative to the existing system. This is where the reasons of Tuđman's political triumph should be looked for' (Interview, October 2011).

²⁵² Initiated by Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Miko Tripalo, the coalition was composed of a number of ideologically diverging, mainly moderately nationalist and liberal political organizations, including HSLS, HDS, and one faction of HSS.

²⁵³ Remembering an early 1990 meeting with Supek, Ivo Banac suggested that 'they [KNS leaders] were afraid of arrest while Tuđman was clearly not' (Interview, September 2011).

Such a 'laid back' political attitude of the KNS leading members was, in large part, due to their over-reliance on the personal charisma of Savka Dabčević-Kučar, the head of the coalition and the political icon of the *Maspok* era. Many, including herself, were convinced that, 'on a tide of nostalgia', she would be swept back into power (Ibid). Yet, although majority of Croats indeed still felt strongly about her, Kučar, compared to Tuđman, appeared less ready for a sacrifice for the Croatian thing. As Tanner points out:

'She had not gone to jail. Tuđman, of the other hand, had gone twice. [Besides,] Dabčević-Kučar was too much a child of the Communist revolution to reach out to the Croatian émigré community in Canada and the US, some of whom were descendants of exiled Ustashe. She was frightened to meet them. Tuđman was not' (Ibid).²⁵⁴

Establishing links with the 'émigré' Croats, was, in fact, merely the beginning of realization of Tuđman's idea of Croatian national reconciliation.²⁵⁵ Shortly before the first HDZ congress in February 1990, he invited them to return to the country, regardless of their political past.²⁵⁶ At the assembly, attended by a significant number of Croat exiles, Tuđman went on to downplay the negative historical role of the Independent State of Croatia by saying that 'it was not only a quisling organization and a Fascist crime, but was also an expression of the Croatian nation's historic desire for an independent homeland' (*Danas*, 6 March 1990). His preoccupation with

²⁵⁴ Vrdoljak, similarly, notes: 'Don't forget, only Tuđman was, during the 1980s, ready to speak to the foreign press. And then he would go back to jail. Quite the contrary, Miko [Tripalo] and Savka [Dabčević-Kučar] refused to communicate with the media. Moreover, prior to the resignation, Tripalo wrote a letter to Tito to ensure him that he was still his loyalist. At the same time, Tuđman was in prison' (Interview, October 2011).

²⁵⁵ According to Mesić, Dabčević-Kučar was appalled by Tuđman's nationalistic language and therefore rejected the idea of political unification of all the 'patriotic' forces in Croatia ahead of the 1990 elections. In his words: 'When I suggested to Savka that we should all go [to the elections] together, she told me that she would not even get on a same tram with Tuđman' (Interview, January 2012).

²⁵⁶ Later referring to this as his 'most crucial political decision' (Silber and Little, 1996: 84), Tuđman believed that their return to Croatia would, adjacent to symbolic, also have a practical dimension, i.e. that it would 'bring new capital and resolve the demographic problems' (Djurić et al, 1990: 63).

the concept of national unity and with the national question in general was evident in a series of documents adopted on this occasion.²⁵⁷

Launched by Serbian media toward the end of 1989, the public campaign against the Croatian Democratic Union, on the basis of its alleged revival of the Ustasha movement and recreation of the NDH, intensified in the aftermath of the congress. Considering their origin, similar accusations came as nothing but a wind in the party's sails. The rallies organized in the course of its following 'crusade-like' electoral campaign attracted crowds numbering thousands (Grdešić et al., 1991: 95). The entire country seemed to be caught in a sort of patriotic trance. During our talk, Banac remembered 'the atmosphere of unprecedented euphoria' and 'the general feeling among up-to-then politically inhibited people that their time had finally come' (Interview, September 2011). Fisher writes that, after two decades of silence and the systemic passiveness of feeling for Croatia - during which time each picture, symbol and thought of one's own home, native country and history was pronounced somehow conservative and nationalistic - the HDZ gave Croats real freedom of expression (2006: 33-4). The party's official campaign slogan 'It's known' (*Zna se*) was there to remind them that, in case of HDZ's electoral triumph, they were likely to be given much more.²⁵⁸

At the same time, Tuđman was constantly singled out as the only political figure in Croatia that can guarantee the fulfillment of national desires of its people. As once put by Ante Baković, a high HDZ official and, interestingly, a priest, 'like the

²⁵⁷ As recalled by Mesić, these documents, among others, focused on the following topics: Croatian Diaspora joining the HDZ; erecting monuments to those who, throughout history, sacrificed their lives on the altar of the homeland and fought for its freedom and independence; the need to establish a Croatian news agency in Zagreb and the Croatian anthem (2004: 5).

²⁵⁸ Puhovski characterized the HDZ's 1990 electoral slogan as 'the most brilliant he had ever heard of'. 'It seemed that no one knew anything', he told me, 'whereas, in fact, everyone knew that it was clearly about the [independent] state' (Interview, October 2011).

messiah, Tuđman also offers national salvation, calls for sovereignty, and promises peace' (quoted in *Vrcan et al.*, 1995: 247). One of the most frequent messages on HDZ's campaign posters, 'We will decide the fate of Croatia by ourselves', was, accordingly, accompanied with an image of the party leader's face (*Start*, 28 April 1990).

On the other hand, while the HDZ insisted on the resolution of the national question as Croatia's absolute political priority,²⁵⁹ its political competitors, as one journalist noted, considered this 'a secondary problem' (*Ibid*). Puhovski similarly notes that 'they all had Croatia and something else in their programs, whereas the HDZ had Croatia only' (Interview, October 2011).²⁶⁰ In the campaign of the ruling SKH-SPD, the idea of democratization and economic transformation of the Yugoslav federation had a central place. Insisting that Croats should 'preserve what they had already achieved', the party leader Račan often warned that 'the destabilization of Yugoslavia would also mean the destabilization of Croatia' (quoted in *Djurić et al.*, 1990: 299). In this regard, as he famously stated in the course of the campaign, Račan considered the HDZ a 'party of dangerous intentions'.²⁶¹ By comparison, the KNS's rhetoric was somewhat more nationally-colored, but still far from the HDZ's strong nuance. Miko Tripalo, another *Maspok* veteran within the coalition, thus argued:

²⁵⁹ In this regard, Puhovski accurately notes, the HDZ's political message ('the others are this and that but we are the Croatian party') was, actually, very 'basic' (*Ibid*). For Čular, 'HDZ's unambiguous formulation of the historical national question was the key element of its political success' (Interview, October 2011).

²⁶⁰ This was in a way also reflected in the fact that, according to a big opinion poll ran right before the 1990 election, only HDZ's voters were predominantly (54 per cent) in favor of Croatian independence. See the poll results in: *Danas*, 10 April 1990.

²⁶¹ A year later, Račan reiterated: 'Even though the Yugoslav option is compromised, we believe there is still a need and interest for Yugoslav integration, but on new basis' (*Danas*, 16 April 1991). Moreover, when the HDZ-controlled Croatian Parliament adopted the Declaration on Independence in June 1991, SDP members left the session protesting because the document did not envisage a possibility of any kind of future political integration. In the years to come, with everything that followed, their political opponents often referred to this moment to call into question SDP's loyalty to Croatia. Their success in political defamation of the SDP is best demonstrated by the party's poor electoral performances in 1992 (5.5 per cent) and 1995 (8.95 per cent).

'We are not against Yugoslavia at any price, nor are we at any price for Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia is not our fate' (quoted in *Goldstein*, 1999: 210).

On another occasion, Tripalo added that if the future of Yugoslavia was to be based on 'democracy, pluralism, a market [economy], and full equal rights', then Croats would like to be its part (*Ibid*). And even though the protection of Croatian national interest could be read between the lines of their statements, the KNS leaders ultimately failed to 'define the option for a sovereign Croatia as clearly as the HDZ had done' (*Ibid*).²⁶²

It turned out that such a 'mild' political tone was not what most Croats wanted to hear at that time. In fact, even when the first free elections in the history of Croatia were just announced, it was likely that whoever managed to offer voters the most forceful defense of its endangered statehood would win (*Ibid*). 'The elections were all about the choice between Croatia and Yugoslavia', Čular pointed out (Interview, October 2011). From the aforementioned, it stems clearly that the favorite in this political competition was neither the SKH-SDP nor the KNS.

4.2.2. Independence, but no democracy

In the April-May 1990 parliamentary election, the Croatian Democratic Union won a landslide victory. The HDZ got 41.9 per cent of the vote and, as a consequence of the majority electoral system, as much as 57.5 per cent (55/80) of seats in the Social-Political Council i.e. lower chamber of the Parliament. On the other hand, winning 35 per cent of the vote, the SKH-SDP secured merely 20 (1/4) seats. Previously introducing first-past-the-post voting method aimed to provide strong and stable

²⁶² Thus, even a few months after the proclamation of Croatia's independence which led to the outbreak of war in this country, Tripalo called on several occasions for the creation of a confederation of the Yugoslav republics as 'the most ideal' solution of the Yugoslav crisis (*Danas*, 10 September 1991; *Danas*, 29 October 1991).

government, the former Communists thus fell victim to their own political miscalculation. The electoral rules did even bigger harm to the Coalition for People's Accord. The overall support of 15.3 per cent of the vote for the KNS was, therefore, transferred to only three parliamentary mandates. More importantly, as a result of the election, the resolution of the Croatian national question was, for the first time since the Second World War, in the hands of non-Communist political actors (Irvine, 1993: 277).

Right before the election, one commentator argued that, due to its character of 'a mass party, created on the basis of national sentiment', the HDZ 'did not need to put forward many strong and popular names' in order to win (*Danas*, 3 April 1990). And, indeed, the abovementioned results strongly corroborated this claim. In words of another commentator, many citizens voted for HDZ candidates 'without consideration of who they are and what they are, deeply believing that only the HDZ can fulfill the great and above all ominous historical mission: the dream of a free Croatia' (*Start*, 28 April 1990). As a result, even in Zagreb where they ran against a number of prominent SKH-SDP and KNS candidates, relatively unknown HDZ members pulled off a series of wins. Jović writes that, in choosing the HDZ, Croatian voters expressed 'their desire for a counter-balance to Milošević, the need for a change of government, and the wish for a revival of Croatia' (*Danas*, 24 April 1990). In that regard, the Croatian Democratic Union 'best felt the pulse of the masses' (*Danas*, 15 May 1990).

The party's electoral triumph thus came as a result of its success in transforming the long-term frustrations of Croatian people into a massive national-oriented political movement. In one of his first interviews after the election, Tuđman accordingly pointed out the following:

'The Croatian Democratic Union was the only party that authentically interpreted popular desires expressed in 1971. That tradition was preserved by and rehabilitated through the HDZ' (*Danas*, 1 May 1990).

The year of 1990 was, as stated on the cover page of the first issue of *Danas* in the following year, indeed 'the year of Croatian restoration' (*Ibid*, 1 January 1991). The key role in this process, which unfolded in line with the basic principles of the HDZ program, was, as indicated above, played by its leader.²⁶³ The slogan 'God in heaven and Tuđman in the homeland', displayed at most of the HDZ campaign rallies, spoke clearly about his position within the party ranks. An alleged unsuccessful assassination attempt on Tuđman by a local Serb during one of those rallies was used 'to underscore the link between the HDZ leader and the Croatian nation by showing both as endangered' (Fisher, 2006: 43). And while it 'led many previously passive voters to the HDZ' (*Danas*, 3 April 1990), such electoral strategy was likely to antagonize Serbs in Croatia. The growing sense of political alienation within this national group was additionally stirred up by Tuđman's nationalist rhetoric, aimed at winning hearts and minds of his Croat compatriots. To that end, the HDZ leader often reiterated in the course of the campaign that 'all people are equal in Croatia, but it must be clear who is the host and who the guest' (quoted in *Goldstein*, 1990: 210). Thus, as Puhovski noted, 'while Milošević used communism to smuggle nationalism, Tuđman used democracy to smuggle nationalism' (Interview, October 2011).

²⁶³ Quite appropriately, Tuđman was nominated by *Danas* as the person of the year (1990). As noted by its editor, in the article titled 'Croatia's Sun King', 'Tuđman could now triumphally exclaim "I am the state!" for at least two reasons: an objective fact that he revived and returned at least a part of political identity to the melancholic and benumbed Croatian [political] scene; his own belief that he's the one who, through his and his party's electoral victories, returned to the Croatian man that part of political self-awareness that had been missing for Croatia to transform from a powerless protagonist of the Yugoslav collapse into a [political] subject and creator of its own destiny'. Moreover, he concludes that 'alongside Starčević, Radić, and the leftist idea, Tuđman appears as a potential fourth link in the process of realization of Croatian political and national idea' (*Danas*, 1 January 1991).

His nationalist discourse inevitably led to political mobilization of Serbs in Croatia, many of whom still remembered the horrors of the NDH period. In February 1990, they established a new political organization, the Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska demokratska stranka* - SDS), which in the years to follow served as the 'vehicle for articulating their cause' (*Ibid*). At a mass rally held in March, the party representatives, supported by the Belgrade political elite, demanded a new administrative organization of Croatia, with a high level of autonomy for the Serb community. Yet, their political ambitions grew considerably as the HDZ's rhetoric radicalized following the electoral triumph.²⁶⁴ Throughout the republic, just like two decades earlier, the tensions between Croats and Serbs were on the rise. This time, however, there was no one (willing) to prevent their escalation.

On 25 May, the same day when the Croatian Parliament passed a series of constitutional amendments, erasing 'Socialist' from the state's name, adopting its traditional symbols and - instead of Presidency - introducing the office of the President, the Serb National Council thus promulgated the 'Declaration on the Sovereignty and Autonomy of Serbs in Croatia' (*Deklaracija o suverenitetu i autonomiji Srba u Hrvatskoj*). Subsequently, the SDS representatives left the Croatian *Sabor* while their supporters, concentrated mainly in central Croatia, organized a series of attacks on police stations in order to get armed. With the use of the stolen weapons, they blocked the main roads and railways connecting the

²⁶⁴ As declared by Jovan Rašković, the first president of the SDS, 'for every step that Tuđman's government takes to separate itself from Yugoslavia, we [Serbs] will take a step to separate ourselves from Croatia' (*Ibid*: 217).

Republic's northern and southern parts. On 1 August, in the territory they controlled, the Serb rebels proclaimed the Autonomous Region of Krajina.²⁶⁵

Shortly after the Croatian Parliament proclaimed on 25 June 1991 the independence of the Republic of Croatia, continuous armed incidents between its regular forces and Serb paramilitaries grew into a large-scale conflict. Before the end of August, with an 'assistance' of the Yugoslav People's Army which took the latter's side, a 'real war was raging in Croatia' (Ibid). Although its independence was recognized in January 1992 by the UN and the European Economic Community, the fighting, more or less intense, continued for more than three years. By the time most of Croatian territory was liberated in August 1995, the country's political regime was already firmly in place. A mere glimpse of its structure, however, was enough for one to realize that the process of Croatia's political development had gone in an opposite direction from that promised by Tuđman at the beginning of the decade.

Namely, the HDZ's triumph in the 1990 parliamentary election marked the beginning of the transformation of Croatia into a text-book example of hybrid regime. Zakošek thereby underlines that, even though the following outbreak of the war on independence certainly helped its solidification, the establishment of the new system of power in Croatia had well-preceded this moment (Interview, October 2011). Taking

²⁶⁵ Subsequently, in response to the 22 December adoption of a new Croatian constitution which gave people the right to decide on plebiscite on the secession from the Yugoslav federation, Krajina's leadership decided to stop paying taxes to the republican authorities. Following the February 1991 decision of Croatian Parliament to suspend every federal law and regulation that 'diminished Croatia's sovereignty', Serbs proclaimed that they would henceforth abide only Krajina and Yugoslav laws (Ibid). A month later, the Serb National Council declared Krajina's independence from Croatia. Finally, a week before a vast majority of Croats voted for independence on the 19 May referendum, Serbs organized their plebiscite on which allegedly 99.9 per cent of them voted for Krajina to become a constitutive part of Serbia. Mesić, then serving as Croatian Prime Minister, made an interesting remark in relation to these events: 'Even though all the actions of Serbs in Croatia were coordinated by Milošević, he actually did not care about them. When I once warned him that, in the case of war, Croatian Serbs would lose everything, he replied that they were our citizens and that we could do whatever we wanted with them [...] Milošević underlined that he had no ambitions whatsoever concerning Croatia. What he claimed he really wanted was 63 per cent of Bosnia and Herzegovina which, in his opinion, had belonged, belonged, and would always belong to Serbs [...] For Milošević, put differently, the conflict in Croatia was merely an introduction into "the real thing"' (Interview, January 2012).

advantage of a surge of nationalist support and the weakness of its opponents, the Tuđman government concentrated power and skewed the playing field (Levitsky and Way, 2010:115). For that reason, Goldstein summarizes the first decade of Croatia's multipartism, 'no elections after 1990 can be considered fair because the opposition were discriminated against in many ways' (1999: 259). As a vast majority of the HDZ leading members who then took over state offices were ex-Communists, they ruled in the way that 'their former Party had taught them', i.e. as if they still were in a one-party system (Ibid: 211). Consequently, the principle of separation of powers, a corner-stone of every democratic system, was neglected by the new Croatian political elite from the very beginning. In particular, Tuđman, the chief executive, had full control over the government and parliament throughout the 1990s (Dolenec, 2013: 133). Thus, as stated in the following journalist commentary, even in the most dramatic moments for Croatia during this period, its President was not willing to consult with other state institutions:

'President Tuđman together with his Supreme State Council [*Vrhovno državno vijeće*, established in January 1991 as Tuđman's informal advisory body] has assumed all the power in Croatia, while the Parliament has not been convened for two months. Who will and when decide on the separation [from Yugoslavia]?' (*Danas*, 28 May 1991).

At the same time, the judiciary and the state administration were soon purged at all levels and then packed with people based on their political affiliation.²⁶⁶ In addition, through the process of privatization of state- and socially-owned enterprises

²⁶⁶ Vladimir Primorac, then serving as a Croatia's Supreme Court judge, notes that 60 percent of judges, at all levels, were replaced in the years that followed the HDZ's 1990 electoral triumph (Hudelist and Primorac, 1994: 30). What is more, Daniela Dolanec writes that around 200 of them (almost 1/5 of the overall number) left the judiciary between 1991 and 2000 (2013: 135-6). The political control of the Croatian judicial system was cemented with the 1994 election of the High Judicial Council members. Instead of those nominated by judges through secret ballot, the elected ones, esteemed to be loyal to the government were nominated by a para-institutional committee set by Tuđman (Ibid).

which, as Tuđman imagined, was to create a ‘homegrown business elite’,²⁶⁷ large chunks of money were transferred into the pockets of his family members, party colleagues and the HDZ sympathizers (Ramet, 2010: 261). As noted by Ottaway:

‘Legalization enacted in April 1991 gave socially owned firms about a year to submit their proposals for privatization and to secure the approval of a government bureau, the Agency for Restructuring and Development [...] As a consequence, 97 per cent of the socially owned firms were taken over by the new Croatian Privatization Fund, which proceeded to allocate them in a thoroughly corrupt and clientelistic manner, to entrepreneurs with close connections to the HDZ. Banks, furthermore, only made credit available to supporters of the ruling party’ (2003: 115).

Corruption, cronyism, and nepotism thus went hand in hand in Tuđman’s years in office (Ramet, 2010: 261). At the same time, while the state television and most of the private stations were ‘tightly controlled by the government’,²⁶⁸ a few independent ones were systematically bullied through a widespread use of libel laws (Fisher, 2006: 129).²⁶⁹ Between 1994 and 1997, independent newspapers and

²⁶⁷ Designed so as to establish a new capitalist class of 200 families, as Tuđman once famously stated, the economic policy of the Croatian leadership was xenophobic and in many ways discouraged foreign direct investments (Bičanić, 2001: 170).

²⁶⁸ In his critique of Antun Vrdoljak who, adjacent to the positions of a Vice-President of the Republic and of the HDZ, served as the general manager of the Croatian Television (*Hrvatska televizija* - HTV) from 1990 to 1995, Saša Milošević, one of the HTV journalists fired during this period because of his (Serb) national identity, describes the political influence on HTV’s program as follows: ‘There had never been a greater censorship on HTV than now [...] Although the black lists officially don’t exist, it is almost impossible for Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, Vlado Gotovac or Savka Dabčević Kučar [notable opposition figures] to show up in the program [...] Belgrade-based intellectuals and Serbian (as well as Croatian) opposition are given space on air only when pointing at Milošević’s dangerous politics [...] Only reports made by foreign media that favor Croatian politics are shown [...] Round tables in which everyone thinks the same are organized [...] *Dnevnik*, the central information program is becoming an itinerary of the President of the Republic: whom did he receive and who received him, where did he go and what did he go – without any differentiation between important and irrelevant. *Dnevnik*, officially lasting for 30 minutes, once started with Tuđman’s 11 minute-long speech on referendum, followed by a 16 minute report on his flight by Croatian Airlines. Never and nowhere [can be found] a single critical remark about the President, his work or the HDZ’ (*Danas*, 29 October 1991).

²⁶⁹ Much of the government’s attitude toward independent media in Croatia during those years can be told on the basis of the Vrdoljak’s following observation: ‘People from the Radio 101 [then the most popular opposition radio station in the country] were involved in criminal activities up to their throats [...] And those from Feral [then the leading Croatian political weekly] were nothing but a bunch of criminals too’ (Interview, October 2011).

journalists faced about 700 libel suits (Ottaway, 2003: 116). Finally, through the electoral authorities, the HDZ sought to constantly manipulate the rules of the game and maximize chances for its own political success.²⁷⁰ Even people like Vlado Gotovac, one of the intellectual symbols of the *Maspok* movement, came to be disappointed by the fact that 'Croatia had become a one-movement system, in which the HDZ controlled the army, the police, the judiciary, scientific institutions, the educational system, economic administration, and television' (quoted in *Ramet*, 2006: 587). As Puhovski nicely notes:

'It turned out that while Gotovac and Tripalo were democratically oriented, Tuđman was, in contrast, democratically successful [...] And he understood it as a winner-take-all' (Interview, October 2011).

This system of power which, many rightfully argue, controlled every aspect of life in Croatia during the 1990s was, again, entirely controlled by one man, Franjo Tuđman. By the end of the decade, a journalist noted, Croatia was transformed into 'an autocratic regime, rife with nepotism, corruption, and economic incompetence, run by an egoistic ruler who was obsessed with historical injustices and worldwide conspiracies against his nation, and who was backed by an obedient party' (Kusovac, 2000: 57).²⁷¹ In the manner of Latin American old-fashioned *caudillos*, Tuđman used the levers of power to aggrandize himself and his family, his cronies,

²⁷⁰ Thus, for instance, a special voting district for Croats living abroad was created before the 1995 parliamentary election. Given the absolute political dominance of the HDZ in the diaspora, a few were surprised by the fact that the ruling party won all 12 seats within the newly created district. What is more, not a single election in Croatia was organized under the same rules between 1990 and 2000. As noted by Mirjana Kasapović, a well-known Croatian political scientist, 'there has been no new democracy in Central and Eastern Europe with such frequent and radical changes of electoral systems in a mere decade' (2000: 5).

²⁷¹ As such, Jović writes, 'Croatia ended the decade of the 1990s in unofficial isolation, and with no formal agreements with the EU' (2006: 86).

and his party (Ibid: 584).²⁷² Tuđman's personal authority was so big throughout this period that, in the eyes of most Croats, he 'seemed larger than life' (Ramet, 2008: 195). At the same time, as thoroughly elaborated in the next section of this chapter, the political authority of his party seemed much larger than it actually was.

4.2.3. Croatian (President's) Democratic Union

The political domination of the Croatian Democratic Union, which began in 1990, lasted for an entire decade. Put more precisely, it lasted as long as the party was in a position to politically rely on its president's personal charisma. The way in which the HDZ was internally organized rendered its political performance substantially dependent on Tuđman. Hence, however powerful the ruling Croatian party may have appeared to be during this period, the real source of its political strength was its leader. As pointed out in an International Crisis Group report on Croatia, the HDZ was 'a broad movement rather than a modern political party, representing a wide range of political views and interests, united behind the authority of its leader, President Franjo Tuđman, in the aim of achieving Croatian sovereignty and independence' (1998: 1).²⁷³ In a similar tone, Čular commented that 'the HDZ did not have an ideology; its program was actually a call for the creation of an independent Croatian state; end of story' (Interview, October 2011).

The accomplishment of this goal was, for the reasons mentioned above, regarded by Tuđman as his personal political achievement. Accordingly, his entire

²⁷² Kasapović used the term 'republican monarch' (2008) to describe Tuđman's political role throughout these years.

²⁷³ Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/Croatia%202.pdf>. In relation to that, analyzing growing tensions between different ideological factions within the heterogeneous Croatian ruling party, one journalist noted as early as in January 1991 that 'the HDZ would have collapsed already had there not been Tuđman's charisma' (*Danas*, 8 January 1991).

political activity during the presidency period was defined by the self-concept of the Father of the Nation. As Ramet notes:

'In Tuđman's mind, it was he himself who could best be trusted to know what should be done, what was in Croatia's interest, and where the rules should be bent. Just as the father in the family may set rules for his children to which he himself is not subject, [...] so too Tuđman, as Father of his country, could preside over a system in which he (and his inner circle) could be exempt from the rules and laws which applied to other people' (2010: 259).

Establishing a semi-presidential system of government, the 1990 Croatian constitution provided legal basis for much of Tuđman's later political activity.²⁷⁴ Yet, the amount of power subsequently concentrated in his hands greatly exceeded his constitutionally defined role. In fact, soon there was practically no field of life in Croatia in which the President 'did not have an influence if he wanted to' (Goldstein, 1999: 259). Accordingly, the Government was marginalized to the extent that elaboration and implementation of strategic decisions made by Tuđman and his advisors became its main function. As effectively put by Puhovski:

'Tuđman had his own personal [political] hierarchy. He made decisions together with people he played cards with, people that did not necessarily have any political position [.]. Therefore, on one occasion, I spent a whole night convincing Carla del Ponte [then Chief Prosecutor of the UN Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia] that not a single president of the Croatian Government could be held accountable for war crimes because no one had asked them anything' (Interview, October 2011).

²⁷⁴ The President, who was to be directly elected (Article 95), was thus granted the authority to appoint and relieve of duty the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, deputy prime ministers and government members (Article 98); to dissolve the Parliament (Article 104); to pass decrees with the force of law and take emergency measures in the event of a state of war [...] or when government bodies are prevented from regularly performing their constitutional duties' (Article 101); etc. The text of the Constitution is available at: <http://www.constitution.org/cons/croatia.htm>.

And indeed, to make sure the Government remained politically obedient, he nominated between 1990 and 1995 as many as six prime ministers even though the HDZ had a stable parliamentary majority during this period.²⁷⁵ How long would its officials stay in office was entirely dependent on the personal loyalty to the President (Ibid). In view of this particular principle of political selection, a very few could have been surprised by Tuđman's decision to appoint his son, Miroslav, the head of the Croatian Intelligence Agency in 1993.²⁷⁶

Over time, by using his power extensively in 'decision-making in the government, parliament, party, but also in daily, education, sport, and such matters', Tuđman made the autocratic way of ruling 'not only a political feature but an institution underlying a wide range of social activities' (Cular, 2000: 35). And, as if this form of political control was not solid enough, the President went on to set up a wide range of specialized agencies and other institutional bodies personally controlled by him.²⁷⁷ As a result, during his time in office, a virtual parallel government emerged in

²⁷⁵ Stjepan Mesić (May-August 1990), Josip Manolić (August 1990 - July 1991), Franjo Gregurić (July 1991 - August 1992), Hrvoje Šarinić (August 1992 - April 1993), Nikica Valentić (April 1993 - November 1995), Zlatko Mateša (November 1995 - January 2000).

²⁷⁶ In his memoirs, Mate Granić, Vice-President of Croatian Government (1991-1993) and the Foreign Minister (1993-2000), writes the following about the President's political role during this period: 'Tuđman had complete control over the ministries of defense, foreign affairs, and police, as well as over the information services, and for a while he also controlled the Ministry of Finance' (2005: 29). Accordingly, the Prime Minister and the cabinet members would often learn from the press about important decisions made by Tuđman and his personal aides (Ibid).

²⁷⁷ When I asked him about the institution where the most important decisions for Croatia were made during this period, Vrdoljak, one of Tuđman's closest associates, was clear: 'VONS [The Defense and National Security Council – *Vijeće za obranu i nacionalnu sigurnost*] was the supreme authority'. To my following, more precise question about whether important decisions were also made within the ruling party organization, Vrdoljak himself replied as precisely as possible: 'No, no, and no!' (Interview, October 2011). Functioning of the abovementioned Supreme State Council also shows the level of power concentration in his hands as well as the irrelevance of his party in the decision-making processes. In this regard, Marko Čulić, a well-known Croatian journalist, then a regular contributor to *Danas*, writes the following: 'The presence in the Council of the heads of the Government and Parliament, formally the second and third person in Croatia's political hierarchy, could make it look like a brain trust of the supreme state authorities in the Republic. But only until the President shows up, to whom they serve as mere advisors, i.e. "support staff" [...] It is hard to imagine that they could autonomously decide on anything that the President had previously "consulted" them about [...] Tuđman surrounded himself with people who were not nominated by his party and some of them, mostly his advisors, were not even recruited from its ranks' (*Danas*, 3 December 1991).

Croatia, 'covertly displacing legitimate constitutional bodies' (Ramet, 2010: 260).²⁷⁸ What is more, with the 1999 creation of the Presidential Council (*Predsjedničko vijeće*) Tuđman ventured that far to form a 'preventive counter-government' to a potential opposition government that could have been formed following an upcoming parliamentary election (Kasapović, 2001: 21).

Needless to say, the same pattern of personalized power organization was to be found within the Croatian Democratic Union. By playing the key role in the HDZ's establishment and political development, Tuđman secured the status of its undisputed leader. As pointed out by Mesić, 'although we [the HDZ founders] had thought we would be able to control him, Tuđman soon established the system of power in which he decided about everything' (Interview, January 2012). In effect, Puhovski accordingly notes, 'he needed a party only as apparatus that would execute his orders' (Interview, October 2011). His point of view is shared by Banac:

'The party [HDZ] was largely irrelevant. It served as a transmission belt for decisions made above. It did not create opinions, ideas, and politics' (interview, September 2011).

Thus, the party that had authoritatively ruled Croatia throughout the 1990s was, at the same time, autocratically ruled by its president. Other members of the party leadership did not have any independent influence on the decision-making processes (Kasapović, 2001: 20). The officially adopted party rules and procedures were, as a result, regularly ignored (Ibid).²⁷⁹ 'They actually existed only to mask the

²⁷⁸ Thus, for instance, Miko Tripalo protested against Tuđman's practice not to consult with the Parliament, the Government, and the coalition partners about the matters of highest importance for Croatia. Instead, Tripalo writes, 'Tuđman transformed the Supreme State Council, his advisory body into a state one, which is unconstitutional' (*Danas*, 29 October 1991). Marko Veselica, a *Maspok* veteran with a failed ambition to politically organize nationally-oriented Croats, criticized Tuđman even more fiercely, arguing that the Croatian president was 'leading the country into totalitarianism' (*Danas*, 26 November 1991).

²⁷⁹ 'He was an autocrat, no question about it', Vrdoljak told me about Tuđman. 'But he was bound to be; how else would he rule' (Interview, October 2011).

dominance of the informal decision-making structures', Čular told me (Interview, October 2011). At the same time, as emphasized by Banac, Tuđman had an absolute control over the mobility of HDZ members within the party ranks (Interview, September 2011). Those who had a problem to accept his autocracy were regularly purged from the HDZ. The best-known example of this sort relates to the 1993 expulsion of Stjepan Mesić (Croatia's first Prime Minister, the HDZ's Secretary General and the Speaker of the Parliament) and Josip Manolić (the second Prime Minister and a Vice-President of the party), which came as a consequence of their critique of Tuđman's role in the Bosnian war.²⁸⁰ More to the point, after the Second HDZ Congress, held in October 1993, none of the five party vice-presidents stayed in office. At the same time, merely ten out of 63 Main Board members kept their positions. In 1998, on the occasion of the Fourth Congress, only one out of four vice-presidents and six out of 110 delegates of the Main Board were re-elected. Throughout these years, Čular pointed out, the voting process at the HDZ meetings was strictly controlled as the delegates' ballots would on their behalf be cast by a number of party representatives loyal to the President (Interview, October 2011).²⁸¹

The real power in Croatia during Tuđman's rule was, to summarize, located in the informal networks and parallel organizations personally controlled by him. In addition, Tuđman's personal popularity during this period significantly exceeded the boundaries of the HDZ constituency (see *Table 10*). For the reasons elaborated above, most Croats regarded him as politically much greater than the party he led. In

²⁸⁰ Mesić told me that he had stood up against Tuđman's intention to use the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina so as to integrate a predominantly Croat-populated part of its territory into Croatia: 'He thought, if the world allowed the creation of a Greater Serbia [Mesić here referred to the aforementioned Belgrade-sponsored military campaign of Bosnian Serbs], it would allow the expansion of Croatia too [...] Concerning BiH, Tuđman and Milošević wanted the same' (Interview, January 2012).

²⁸¹ Only in 2002 was this practice changed and party delegates got a right to actually vote (Ibid).

that regard, one could say, the popular understanding of the ruling political structure in Croatia was very accurate.

Table 10. The winning results (vote % and absolute numbers in million votes) in the elections in hybrid regime Croatia

Election year	1990	1992	1995	1997
Tuđman	-	57.8 (1,519)*	-	61.4 (1,337)*
HDZ	41.9 (1,201)	44.7 (1,176)	45.3 (1,093)	-

*Source: Nohlen and Stover (2010); *Presidential election results*

Thus, in the 1992 general elections, Tuđman won 57.8 per cent of the vote as a presidential candidate, i.e. 13 per cent – or in absolute numbers 342,663 votes – more than his party's list. In the next parliamentary election, held in October 1995, the HDZ garnered 45.3 per cent of the vote.²⁸² Two years later, Tuđman was re-elected president by winning 61.4 per cent of the vote, 244,587 more than his party.

Both in terms of internal organization and public perception, the Croatian Democratic Union remained throughout the 1990s essentially dependent on its president. The strength of Tuđman's personal political appeal thus determined the course of the party's political development. The HDZ's political cause was certainly helped by Tuđman's leading role in the victorious 1992-1995 Croatian War of Independence and, as pointed out by Levitsky and Way, 'his ability to manipulate nationalist appeals and security threats to sideline opposition challenges' (2010: 115). In a longer run, however, the over-reliance on his personality inhibited the party's institutional development, making it vulnerable to various political threats.

²⁸² The party secured the majority of seats (75/127) by winning all 12 reserved for Croatian Diaspora.

In fact, already in 1993, in the election for the upper house of the Parliament (Chamber of Counties), the HDZ won fewer votes than the coalition of opposition parties (45.5 vs. 48 per cent).²⁸³ Thus, notwithstanding the war situation, the ruling party lost public support due to a number of corruption scandals in which its members were involved. Moreover, the HDZ lost the 1995 election for the local assembly of the capital city of Zagreb, organized at the peak of national euphoria stirred by the successful military operations against the Serb rebels.²⁸⁴ This time, Tanner writes, ‘the prestige of the President was not enough to win the HDZ the absolute majority it demanded (1997: 302). The level of the party’s political dependence on Tuđman became fully apparent in the first parliamentary election held after his death in December 1999.²⁸⁵ On 3 January 2000, following three consecutive electoral triumphs under Tuđman’s rule, HDZ was heavily defeated. In disarray during the campaign (Dolenec, 2013: 150), the party won 26.8 per cent of the vote, almost 20 per cent less than in the 1995 election. As a consequence, the Croatian hybrid regime collapsed less than a month after the departure of its leading political figure.

²⁸³ Owing to the electoral system, the HDZ got more than 57 per cent of seats in the Chamber

²⁸⁴ Despite the electoral result, Tuđman refused to give his - constitutionally required - consent to the appointment of an opposition candidate for the mayor of Zagreb. ‘We cannot allow an “opposition situation” in the capital’, the Croatian president then famously proclaimed (Cular, 2000: 40).

²⁸⁵ Even the way Tuđman died showed how much the party he created depended both symbolically and effectively on him. Namely, long-time gravely ill, Tuđman was clinically dead some time before the departure. At the same time, HDZ members publically claimed that Tuđman was still successfully executing his duties. Moreover, a month prior to his death, they passed a constitutional amendment allowing Tuđman to remain President, i.e. to die in the office, supposedly as he wished.

Table 11. HDZ's electoral performance after the regime change in Croatia

Election year	2003	2007	2011
Vote %	33.9	36.6	23.8

Source: Croatian State Election Committee (reports available at: <http://www.izbori.hr/2003Sabor/index.htm>)

In the subsequent period, the Croatian Democratic Union proved able to revive the memory of its leading role in the struggle for the country's independence and, as a result, make a strong political comeback (see *Table 11*).²⁸⁶ In 2003, on the wave of the popular discontent caused by the government's decision to start 'delivering' Croatian generals to the Hague War Crimes Tribunal, the party even managed to win the parliamentary election. Yet, in the last parliamentary election, following an open conflict of its leading members over the party presidency, the HDZ made the worst result since the introduction of multipartism in Croatia.

4.3. Montenegro: Single-party multipartism

4.3.1. Political pluralization without democratization

The transfer of political power to the new generation of Montenegrin communists, named by their supporters 'Young, Handsome, and Bright' (*Mladi, lijepi i pametni*), was formalized on the SKCG Tenth Congress summoned at the end of April 1989. On the occasion of the highest party meeting, whose opening was – in accordance with the decades-long practice – marked by an intonation of the Yugoslav and the Communist International anthems, previously nominated delegates elected a new 11-

²⁸⁶ In this respect, Jović points out that 'by making reference only to Tudjman's success in achieving independence for Croatia – and by avoiding praise for achievements in the decade of his rule since – Sanader [the new party boss and future Prime Minister] presented himself as a reformer from within the HDZ (2006: 98).

member leadership. Momir Bulatović and Milo Djukanović, the two men who would mark political development of Montenegro in the years to come, became the Head of the Party and its Secretary-General respectively.

Glorification of the October and January protests and condemnation of the old political elite, dominated the discussion. The two were, perhaps, most effectively sublimed in an address of Miomir Mugoša, a Congress delegate, who stated that the 'Montenegrin people regained its greatness by shaking off a gluey web of bureaucracy which lots of small and big spiders had perfidiously been creating for more than two decades, thereby parasitizing off the state institutions' (*RTCG*, 3 February 2012). Moreover, many speakers accentuated their predecessors' political 'manipulation' of the character of the abovementioned demonstrations. As pointed out by Veselin Vukotić, the coordinator of the Party's interim presidency:

'Neither from abroad nor domestically were people manipulated. These events do not signify any Serb-ization of Montenegro but [an expression of] the will to restore dignity of the Montenegrin nation' (*Ibid*).

Freshly elected Party Secretary was way less 'diplomatic' in his critique of the old comrades, arguing that 'the longtime scaring of the Montenegrin people with a potential Greater Serbian hegemony, as a denier of the Montenegrin nation and the state, has been shameless and, as it has luckily turned out, futile'. This 'battle against an imaginary enemy' based on 'twisted hallucinations', Djukanović went on, was actually supposed to keep the existing elite in power and divert political and popular attention away from its members (*Ibid*).

On the other hand, while standing united against the political past, the highest representatives of the reconstructed Montenegrin leadership had different ideas

concerning political future. Those that prevailed for the moment were, ironically, largely in line with the pre-January official Party politics. Firstly, albeit advocating democratization at all levels of the state and society, most of the SKCG officials opted against the introduction of multiparty system in Montenegro. Hence, contrary to the demands for genuine political pluralism put forward by a progressive minority within the Party, one of the general conclusions of the April Congress was that 'more parties do not mean more democracy' (Pavićević, 1997: 88).²⁸⁷ Consequently, legalization of political organizations established in course of 1989 (The Association for Improvement of Democratic Processes – *Udruženje za unapređivanje demokratskih procesa*; The Association for Yugoslav Democratic Alternative – *Udruženje za jugoslovensku demokratsku alternativu*; The Democratic Alternative – *Demokratska alternativa*; and The Democratic Party – *Demokratska stranka*) took place as late as in July 1990.²⁸⁸ Moreover, the first multiparty elections in the Montenegrin history were called only at the beginning of October.

Secondly, the official identity policy of the newly elected Montenegrin leadership was, again, greatly consistent with the one conducted by the old Party guard. On the one hand, as a matter of absolute political priority, the new ruling elite continued to whole-heartedly support the maintenance of the Yugoslav federal state.

²⁸⁷ Such general position on political pluralism of the highest Party organ might perhaps seem surprising in view of certain political developments that, subsequent to the January protest, took place in Montenegro. Thus, for instance, less than three weeks before the Congress, a - politically avant-garde for that time - popular referendum was organized, on which the Montenegrin citizens chose among three candidates for the position of the Republic's representative in the Yugoslav collective Presidency. What is more, the local Party organs were obliged to decide on the nomination of the Congress delegates. Nonetheless these examples of cadre politics democratization were not followed by immediate major political changes in Montenegro. Speaking on behalf of the progressive, democracy-oriented forces inside the new Montenegrin political leadership, Ljubiša Stanković told me that their ideas were completely marginalized within a year after the 1989 revolution (Interview, January 2012).

²⁸⁸ The new bill on political association was passed by the Montenegrin Parliament on 11 July 1990. A few weeks later, the Parliament adopted the amendments (no. 64 to 82) to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, abolishing the existing delegate model of representation and allowing for direct multi-party parliamentary elections.

Accordingly, its authorities also took a hostile position on all sorts of nationalism that could destabilize the federation. Just like two decades earlier, the highest price of such policy was paid by those who were marked as Montenegrin nationalists.²⁸⁹ On the other hand, contrary to predictions of many who understood the January demonstrations as a triumph of Serbian nationalism in Montenegro, its leadership kept promoting the idea of Montenegro's statehood and – albeit vaguely defined – its national interests in Yugoslavia. A clear indication of the continuity in this regard was comprised in the abovementioned statements made by the highest Party officials April Congress. On the same occasion, in the official opening address, the following was stated:

'Montenegro is a state within Yugoslav federation [...] Should there will be no federation, Montenegro, as a sovereign state, will independently decide on the form of relations with other states' (*Krug*, 22 September 1990).

In a similar vein, at the meeting held on 21 October 1989, the SKCG Central Committee concluded that the 'Montenegrin nation and Montenegrin state are, definitely, a reality' (Burzan, 2009: 114). Two weeks earlier, in the old royal capital of Cetinje, the Montenegrin government organized massively-attended re-burial of the remains of King Nikola and the members of his family. Given the political circumstances under which they died in exile, a symbolic connotation of this event was particularly strong.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Thus, following their March 1989 interview in a Slovenian daily *Mladina*, in which, while arguing against the old thesis about the Serbian ethnic origin of Montenegrins, they characterized the January revolution as the 'fall of Montenegro' and the beginning of 'a new Greater Serbian political occupation', the four prominent Montenegrin intellectuals (Jevrem Brković, Milorad Popović, Mladen Lompar and Sreten Zeković) were first demonized by the state media and then pressed charges against by the State Attorney.

²⁹⁰ In this context, it is very indicative that in an opinion poll published in November 1990, a month before the first multiparty elections in Montenegro - won convincingly by the SKCG - 81.3 per cent of the respondents expressed very positive or positive attitude toward Montenegrin nation (Pavićević, 1997: 84). Moreover, in a census organized next year, 61.8 per cent of the Republic's population declared themselves as Montenegrins

Yet, the most important element of the new Montenegrin leadership's political inheritance from the old elite, concerns the monopoly of power. Whereas those at the top of Montenegro's monolithic system of government had been altered at the beginning of 1989, the system itself remained intact.²⁹¹ In effect, adjacent to the use of infrastructure of still the only party in the Republic, it implied the absolute control of media, state institutions and financial resources. With the unconstrained use of the power mechanisms they acquired, the new party leaders were in a position to arbitrarily create an ambience for the introduction of political pluralism. Thus, while formally establishing democracy, they actually sought to maximize the chances for continuation of the political dominance.²⁹² Although the party leaders gradually accepted a new political rhetoric – including terms such as democracy, multiparty system, human rights and freedoms etc. – the process of Montenegro's political transition unfolded in the name of the 'January revolution' rather than of democracy (Pavićević, 1997: 85).

With an enormous advantage over the recently founded political rivals, and the slogan 'We Know How' (*Mi znamo kako*),²⁹³ the Communist Alliance of Montenegro – under the original name – entered the December elections campaign. Due to its monopoly of power, both *de jure* and *de facto*, the conditions for the political contestation were 'hardly free and fair' (Bieber, 2003: 16). Thus, for instance, the information about the political alternatives were limited and – where available –

(by comparison, the percentage of Serbs in Montenegro was 9.3). As pointed out by Milorad Popović, a well-known Montenegrin novelist, it is paradoxical that most of the people who, among others, carried the portraits of Slobodan Milošević during the 1989 January demonstrations, declared themselves Montenegrins two years later (2011: 143).

²⁹¹ Roberts accordingly characterized the 1989 January revolution as 'a sort of palace coup' (2007: 434).

²⁹² In this regard, Montenegro stands as one of the most paradigmatic examples of the - typical for a wider region during the transition period - exploitative reconstruction of state by political establishment, defined by Grzymala-Busse (2007) as 'rebuilding the post-communist Leviathan'.

²⁹³ It is hard not to notice the similarity between this and the slogan ('With Us, There is No Uncertainty') of the Socialist Party of Serbia for the 1990 parliamentary election

usually aimed at discrediting opposition (Ibid). Put simply, the SKCG did not act as one of a number of equal participants in this multi-party contest but much more like 'a state party using all the advantages brought about by a total control over the state apparatus and resources' (Darmanović, 2003: 156). In view of that, one could rightfully argue that the electoral results might have fairly easily been anticipated. After all, as showed by the aforementioned opinion poll, whereas 43.1 per cent of Montenegrins expressed a month before the elections their party preference for the SKCG, as many as 55.3 per cent anticipated its triumph (Pavićević, 1997: 85).

4.3.2. The years of dominance

On 9 December 1990, the first 'democratic' elections in political history of Montenegro took place. With the enormous political advantage over its competitors and the revolutionary legitimacy of its leadership, the Montenegrin League of Communists (renamed in July 1991 the Democratic Party of Socialists – *Demokratska partija socijalista*, DPS) won a landslide victory. The SKCG got an impressive 52.6 per cent of the vote, thus securing 83 out of 125 parliamentary seats. Among the parties that triumphed in the initial multiparty elections in the republics of socialist Yugoslavia, its result was by far the best.²⁹⁴ To complete the great political success, the SKCG's candidate and the party head, Momir Bulatović, won the concomitantly organized presidential election.²⁹⁵

The popular verification of its political legitimacy allowed the SKCG/DPS to keep a strong grip on the abovementioned centers of power. Throughout the

²⁹⁴ The second-best was the result of the Socialist Party of Serbia which, as previously mentioned, won 46.1 per cent of the vote in the December 1990 parliamentary election.

²⁹⁵ Winning 76.1 per cent of the vote, Bulatović was elected President in the second round.

following years, Darmanović writes, the party successfully used the hyper-privileged position to render the opposition politically uncompetitive:

'The DPS held the system together by assiduously using its complete control over state organs and resources in order to squelch critics and rivals and win elections.'²⁹⁶ The usual range of methods was employed, including party domination of the state-owned media; the packing of offices with party favorites; the maintenance of slush funds; occasional intimidation of adversaries; the abuse of police authority to influence the electoral process; and manipulations of the electoral system. Backed by these kinds of tactics, the DPS easily bested its dispirited opponents and retained an absolute majority of seats in the Montenegrin parliament' (2003: 147).

A first-hand indirect confirmation of these claims recently came from Milo Djukanović, then the Party Vice-president and the Montenegrin Prime Minister. 'When I think about those times today', he told me in a June 2012 interview, 'I have no doubt that we had a serious advantage over our political competitors'. Accordingly - and perhaps a bit unexpectedly - Djukanović also pointed out that 'it would be a caricature plagiarism of history to say that an ambience for fair elections existed during this period in Montenegro' (Ibid).

In other words, the 1990 introduction of multi-party system did not bring about a genuine political change in Montenegro. Notwithstanding formal democratic reforms, the nature of its political regime remained predominantly authoritarian. Thus, like a majority of former communist countries in transition from non-democratic rule, Montenegro saw the establishment of hybrid political system in the early phase of this process. Unlike most of the similar regimes, however, the Montenegrin remained

²⁹⁶ Throughout the entire hybrid regime period in Montenegro, the government controlled most of the country's economy. A number of formal steps toward privatization were made in the 1989-1996 period (Ivanović, 2001: 2-3), but the state remained the biggest owner of the capital and by far the biggest employer. The ruling party's political cause was, needless to say, very much helped by this fact.

stable until the very collapse as the incumbent SKCG/DPS maintained absolute political dominance throughout these years.

In the early elections held in December 1992, despite exceptionally bad political and economic result of its two-year rule,²⁹⁷ the Democratic Party of Socialists thus managed to win enough votes (42.7 per cent) to keep the monopoly of political power in Montenegro (46/85 seats). As a result, the DPS became the only party in the post-communist countries of the South-East Europe that succeeded in preserving an absolute parliament majority after the second election (Goati, 2001b: 132). At the same time, after two electoral rounds, its leader, Bulatović, won the second presidential term.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, in the November 1996 election, the incumbent party triumphed again notwithstanding further worsening of the economic situation in Montenegro.²⁹⁹ Moreover, albeit challenged by a coalition of the two biggest opposition parties – the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (*Liberalni savez Crne Gore* - LSCG) and the People's Party (*Narodna stranka* - NS) – that formed political alliance because of the inability to even threaten its political hegemony,³⁰⁰ the DPS won not only an absolute majority of seats (45/71) but this time even an absolute majority of the vote (51.2 per cent). Among the ex-communist parties in the wider region, its result was once again unrivalled (Ibid: 137).

²⁹⁷ Following its electoral victory in December 1990, the socialist Yugoslavia collapsed and the new state federation with Serbia was created and almost instantaneously put under the international sanctions. Montenegro's industrial output dropped as a consequence by more than 30 per cent, while the unemployment rate rose to 23.6 per cent (Djurić, 2003: 140).

²⁹⁸ Bulatović won 63.3 per cent of the vote in the second round.

²⁹⁹ In 1995, the country's GDP stood at 50.2 per cent whereas its industrial output was only 41.1 per cent of the 1990 level (Djurić, Ibid: 140).

³⁰⁰ Interestingly, compared to their individual performances four years earlier, the two parties jointly made a worse electoral result. In 1992, they got 27 (NS – 14 and LSCG – 13 respectively) out of 85 mandates (32 per cent), whereas in the 1996 election, their 'People's Concord' (*Narodna sloga*) coalition won 19 out of 71 seats (27 per cent).

Using the uncompromised monopoly of power, the DPS was able to conduct an extremely lavish campaign for the 1996 election, 'this time beating the opposition in terms of money spent by a margin of 10:1' (Bieber, 2003: 28). Besides, the ruling Montenegrin party was in a position to unilaterally change the electoral rules so as to maximize the prospects of political triumph.³⁰¹ And although the comparative political experience of the SPS and the HDZ may suggest differently, a conclusion might hence be drawn that the DPS's absolute domination over the Montenegrin politics during this period was a result of its hyper-privileged position relative to the political competition. However, this argument could certainly not account for the fact that, unlike the , the party managed to survive in power the 1997 collapse of the Montenegrin hybrid regime and the ensuing loss of the 'special' political status. Instead, I maintain and elaborate in the following section, the real key to understanding both stability and durability of the DPS's political preponderance lies in its power organization and, more particularly, its high-level institutionalization.

4.3.3. Party as a political value

For the reasons thoroughly elaborated in the preceding chapters, a national program alike those put forward by the political and intellectual elites in Croatia and Serbia could not have served toward the end of the 1980s as a solid political platform for broad-based popular mobilization in Montenegro.³⁰² Montenegrins of diverging

³⁰¹ The new electoral law introduced 14 electoral districts at the national level. Previously, the entire country represented single electoral district. Hence, as mentioned above, the DPS got 51.2 per cent of the vote and as much as 63.4 per cent of seats. At the same time, even though the electoral census stood at 5 per cent, the Social Democratic Party (SDPCG) – despite winning 5.7 per cent of the vote – did not get into the parliament because of the district organization.

³⁰² This was, perhaps, most convincingly demonstrated by the electoral results of those political parties and coalitions that, throughout the early 1990s, promoted the idea of renewal of Montenegrin independent state. Advocating the transformation of the Yugoslav federation into a confederation of the six sovereign states, The Union of Reform Forces (*Savez reformskih snaga*) won 14 per cent of the vote (17/125 seats) in the 1990 parliamentary election. Two years later, the pro-independence Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (12 per cent) and the Social Democratic Party of Reformists (4.1 per cent) got merely a few percent more.

political motives and ambitions were brought together during this period by the sense of dissatisfaction with the socio-economic and political situation in the Republic and the resultant opposition to its leadership. No sound national program stood behind the political promotion of the young communist cadres in Montenegro.³⁰³ Instead, a plethora of different political viewpoints outlined above, converged into a single request for resignation of their political predecessors. Therefore, even though the Montenegro's new party elite was, in the process of power consolidation, as politically dominant as Milošević's was in Serbia, none of its representatives had enough of personal authority to impose himself as a dominant political figure during this period.³⁰⁴ Thus, subsequent to the January 1989 coup, political power was distributed within the top ranks of the Montenegrin ruling party.

The resulting principle of cooperative decision-making at the party elite level was, because of its personal structure as well as complex political and socio-economic circumstances in which it operated, constantly reaffirmed in the following years. Launched into the high politics at a very young age,³⁰⁵ and hence not having much of political experience and leverage, the members of the SKCG leadership were inclined to work together so as to justify the enormous popular trust and consolidate the newly acquired positions of authority. The need for their close collaboration was, in addition to the prolonged economic crisis in Montenegro, augmented by the worsening political situation in the Yugoslav federation and, in particular, the legalization of domestic political competition. Finally, the Belgrade

³⁰³ 'The national idea was much greater in other Yugoslav republics. Montenegro was simply not in that political game', Svetozar Marović, a long-time highest official of the Democratic Party of Socialists, told me in the December 2012 interview.

³⁰⁴ In this respect, one might find indicative the number of candidates for the party President (13) and the Secretary General (15) nominated by the party's local organizations ahead of its October 1990/1 Congress (held in two parts).

³⁰⁵ At the time they were elected the Party President and the Secretary-General, Momir Bulatović and Milo Djukanović were 32 and 27 years old respectively. Most of the other members of the new SKCG leadership were also in their late 20s and early 30s.

authorities were, throughout the early 1990s, steadily increasing the pressure on the Montenegrin political elite as a result of its 'political disobedience',³⁰⁶ which gave another strong impetus to the process of its inner-party cooperation.

Therefore, compared to the Socialist Party of Serbia, Croatian Democratic Union, and a great number of other monocratic-led political organizations in recently pluralized political systems, the structure of power of the ruling party in the Montenegrin hybrid regime looked substantially different. What we find in the DPS during this period could, in words of William Schonfeld, be characterized as the oligarchic type of leadership in which 'a limited coalition of people tend to exercise disproportionate share of influence over a group's collective decisions', and where 'the titular head of the organization may be [...] more powerful than any of his colleagues, but they collectively are significantly more influential than he is' (1981: 231). At the party's top, put simply, no one emerged as a supreme political authority (Goati, 2001b: 146). The DPS head, Bulatović, played a role of *primus inter pares* rather than of charismatic and indisputable leader (Ibid: 156).³⁰⁷ When I recently asked him about the decision-making procedures in the SKCG/DPS throughout that period, Bulatović accentuated the crucial importance of regular consultations with the party associates:

³⁰⁶ Despite the outward harmony of their relations, political interests of the governments in Belgrade and Podgorica would not always match during this period. As earlier mentioned, the Montenegrin leadership was then facing with dire economic and political situation in the country. This brought about gradual moderation of its political discourse, most apparent in its efforts to normalize political relations with the neighbors. At the same time, politically dominant Serbia sought to obstruct this process. Bieber thus reminds that 'in response to a rapprochement with Albania [...] the Serbian authorities stopped trucks crossing the Montenegrin-Serbian border,' justifying the embargo by 'a ban on the export of goods from Serbia, which were deemed strategic during the times of crisis' (2003: 24). Taking this into consideration, one cannot be surprised by Milošević's decision to officially support the presidential candidacy of Branko Kostić who ran against Momir Bulatović in 1992.

³⁰⁷ On this subject, it is also important to mention that, contrary to semi-presidential systems introduced in many transition countries (including Serbia and Croatia), a new Constitution of Montenegro (an incomplete text available at: <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/4163>), adopted in October 1992, established a 'classical parliamentary system' (Goati, 2001b). Accordingly, Bulatović's authority as the President of the Republic was equivalent to his political influence within the party he led.

‘Everything went through the party. Vice-presidents would come to my office on Mondays and Fridays and this is where everything would be discussed and decided’.³⁰⁸

At the same time, he emphasized ‘an intensive intra-party political life’ in the course of his presidency:

‘We used to spend a lot of time in debates, factions [within the Party] were allowed as well as individual dissenting opinions, and the Party was an exceptionally strong organization precisely because of that’ (Ibid).³⁰⁹

In the aforesaid interview, notwithstanding the bitterness of their political divorce, Djukanović – then a Vice-President of the Party – strongly corroborated Bulatović’s claims:

‘Bulatović would rarely allow himself to make a decision individually. It [the decision-making] would, as a rule, involve consultations and shared responsibility’.³¹⁰

And while in numerous cases across the wider region, charismatic leaders (re)defined - thereby often organizationally weakening - political parties in accordance with their personal political ambitions, those of the DPS’s leadership members were, on the contrary, defined by their party. Between 1990 and 1997, there were no purges in the Democratic Party of Socialists alike those in the Socialist Party of Serbia and the Croatian Democratic Union. Apart from adding Pejanović-Djurišić to the list of vice-presidents in 1992, the structure of the top party ranks remained unaltered. At the same time, in comparison to the SPS and the HDZ,

³⁰⁸ Interview, January 2012.

³⁰⁹ The intensity of political life within the DPS was demonstrated in the process of nomination of a party candidate for the 1992 presidential election. More than 5,000 members at the local party level took part in the process and, initially, as many as 36 candidates were nominated. Bulatović and Kostić accepted the nominations after receiving the biggest support of the party base. On 25 November 1992, the Main Board members voted 50 to four in favor of Bulatović’s candidacy. Endorsed by Milošević, Kostić still decided to run as an independent candidate.

³¹⁰ Interview, June 2012. Svetozar Marović, another party Vice-President, confirmed these claims during our talk, emphasizing the ‘team work within the leadership of the DPS as one of main reasons behind its continuous political successes’ (Interview, December 2012).

personal changes within the DPS's Main Board were of a significantly smaller scale.³¹¹

During this period, the highest representatives of Montenegro's leading political force remained, without an exception, effectively subordinated to its political interests. 'When we look at the comparative [party] practice in the region', Djukanović told me, 'this is something that really differentiates us'. As a result, political power in the Montenegrin hybrid regime was, albeit distributed within its leadership, concentrated entirely inside the structures of the ruling party.³¹² Accordingly, the entire menu of manipulation, guarantying the hyper-privileged political status of the Democratic Party of Socialists, was to be used for the purpose of perpetuating its rule. Therefore, despite its bad political and economic record, a high level of internal structural coherence rendered the DPS's political domination almost unchallenged. At the same time, the Montenegrin hybrid regime remained unusually stable during these years.

Moreover, when assessed against the abovementioned criterion, the results of the elections held in Montenegro prior to the 1997 regime collapse clearly imply that the country's political public perceived its ruling party as a political value *per se*.

³¹¹ Thus, most of its members (27 out of 50 top-ranked) were re-elected at the second party Congress, in March 1994.

³¹² Unsurprisingly, then, the constellation of power within the DPS was simply reflected onto the state level. Following the first parliamentary election, the leading political posts in the Republic were distributed among its highest representatives: Bulatović became the President, whereas Djukanović and Svetozar Marović – the two powerful Party vice-presidents – took the offices of the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament respectively.

Table 12. The winning results (vote % and absolute numbers in thousand votes) in the elections in hybrid regime Montenegro

Election year	1990	1992	1996
DPS	56.2 (171,3)	42.7 (126,1)	49.9 (150,2)
Bulatović	42.2 (170,1)*	42.8 (123,2)*	-

Source: Goati (2001a); *Presidential election results (first round)

Throughout this period, the level of popular support for the DPS in the parliamentary elections had been in line with - and even slightly higher than - that for its presidential candidate (see *Table 12*). Thus, in the 1990 general elections, with a high turnout of 75.7 per cent (304,947 votes cast) the party won 1,034 votes more than its head. Two years later, with the turnout of 67.3 per cent (295,519 votes cast), the margin of votes in favor of the DPS was 2,900. The analytical value of these data becomes fully apparent when placed in juxtaposition against those on the previously elaborated electoral performances of the other two political parties that are in the focus of this study.

Evident all through this period, the DPS's political significance came to be manifested even strongly during and following the inner-party struggle that brought about the end of Montenegro's hybrid regime. Merely a few months after the party's great electoral triumph in November 1996, its two leading figures, Bulatović and Djukanović, opened a new political front in the country. The division between the DPS's President and a Vice-President resulted from their disagreement over the issue of political partnership with Milošević. While the former stayed loyal to the old political friend, despite terrible economic and political consequences of his belligerent politics, the former gradually moved away from him, and toward new, Western

political partners.³¹³ The political contest between the two most powerful men of the DPS unfolded entirely within its institutional structure. Throughout the first half of 1997, Bulatović and Djukanović exchanged political arguments in a series of face-to-face debates organized at the local party level. The final word in the discussion belonged to the DPS's Main Board. In the meeting held on 11 July, 62 out of 99 members of the Party's highest body stood by Djukanović. Previously mentioned Pejanović-Djurišić became a new head of the DPS, whereas Djukanović – who would replace her a year later – was voted for its candidate for the upcoming presidential election. Interestingly, regardless of the inner-party defeat, Bulatović continued presenting himself as the highest DPS official. Together with the Main Board members who supported him, he even went on to organize the 'Third Party Congress' in August 1997.³¹⁴ 'It was all about preserving the name of the DPS' (*Naša Borba*, 20 July 1997), one commentator wrote, thus effectively pointing out how politically valuable asset the party was.

The conflict between the key figures of the country's most powerful political organization led to an end of the regime they had built together. As a significant number of its members joined Bulatović's newly created Socialist People's Party (SNP), the DPS lost a great deal of political influence at both state and local level. Thus, albeit still in power, the party was no more in the hyper-privileged position relative to political competition. As noted by Darmanović:

'From that moment, the political game in Montenegro changed completely, with new rules and a new balance of forces. In retrospect, we can see that the second transition was

³¹³ Symbolically, the stage for the political battle within the leadership of the ruling Montenegrin party was set with Djukanović's aforementioned interview in which he discarded Milošević as 'a man of obsolete political ideas'. See: footnote no. 229.

³¹⁴ A regular Third Congress of the DPS was summoned in October 1998.

beginning and that semi-authoritarianism and dominant-party politics were on their way out' (2003: 148).

The result of the October 1997 presidential election was an unambiguous indicator of the political change taking place in Montenegro. After Bulatović narrowly won the first round (47.44 against 46.71 per cent), Djukanović prevailed in the second by less than 5,500 votes (out of 344,000 cast). What is more, a month before the election, the 'Agreement on Minimum Principles for Development of a Democratic Infrastructure' (*Dogovor o minimumu principa za razvoj demokratske infrastrukture u Crnoj Gori*), with 'free and fair elections' as one of the key elements, was signed by all party leaders in Montenegro. This was the official beginning of a new age of its political development, and, to quote Darmanović again, 'something like a set of roundtable negotiations held seven years late' (Ibid: 149).

The substantial alteration of the conditions for political competition did not, however, bring about a new political order in Montenegro. For the reasons elaborated above, the DPS turned out being able to outplay political rivals even on a level field. On 31 May 1998, in the country's first internationally observed, free and fair parliamentary election,³¹⁵ the ruling party – in a coalition with two smaller parties – won 48.9 per cent of the vote and absolute majority of seats (42/78). Political domination of the Democratic Party of Socialists thus continued notwithstanding the collapse of the Montenegrin hybrid regime.

³¹⁵ In the OSCE/ODIHR report on the election, the following is stated: 'The Election Observation Mission is pleased to note that most of the recommendations issued by OSCE Election Observation Mission in 1997 and by the OSCE/ODIHR Technical Assistance Team in February 1998 have been implemented. The legal framework and administrative procedures were adopted by consensus among all parliamentary parties, and the voting was carried out without any major problems on Election Day. The parties should be commended for their calm behavior after the elections and for accepting the results' (available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/montenegro/15101?download=true>). In this regard, it is very important to mention that the biggest opposition party in Montenegro, SNP, officially accepted the result of the election (NIN, 4 July 1998).

Table 13. DPS's electoral performance after the regime change in Montenegro

Election year	2001	2002	2006	2009	2012
Vote %	42	48	48.6	51.9	45.6

Sources: *Nohlen and Stover (2010)* and *State Electoral Commission of Montenegro* (reports available at: <http://www.rik.co.me/>)

In fact, in all the elections organized in Montenegro subsequent to the regime change, the DPS performed extremely well (see *Table 13*). To a great extent, this could be attributed to the party's post-2001 ideational reorientation toward renewal of the country's sovereignty, successfully carried out in the 2006 referendum.³¹⁶ Adjacent to the DPS's leading role in the pro-independence political bloc, its political cause has certainly been helped by the reluctance of most opposition parties to fully accept the outcome of the plebiscite.

4.4. Concluding remarks

The organization of the wide-ranging nationalist movements in Serbia and, somewhat later, Croatia determined the course of their post-communist political transformation. Originally emanating from the intellectual circles, there was a growing sense of dissatisfaction in both states concerning their political and economic rights in the Yugoslav federation. By the end of the 1980s, in Croatia and Serbia alike, the stage was set for the emergence of a political figure that would channel political energy accumulated in the populace toward fulfillment of given national goals. The rapid ascent of Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman to the positions of supreme political authority in Serbia and Croatia respectively was, as previously argued,

³¹⁶ 55.5 per cent of voters expressed their support for the renewal of Montenegro's independence.

possible precisely because of the character of the political movements which they got to lead.

Being promoted into the status of undisputed political and, more importantly, national leaders, Milošević and Tuđman were able to monopolize the entire system of political power in the newly established hybrid regimes, including the party organizations they headed. Consequently, despite the fact that one of them was a communist-successor party that even maintained ideological continuity with its political predecessor whereas the other was created from the scratch as an anti-establishment political organization, the two parties came to be organized along the same pattern of power structure. The personalization of political authority within the two organizations effectively prevented their institutionalization which, notwithstanding considerable power resources, determined their political fates relative to the regimes' collapse.

On the other hand, as discussed in the preceding sections, a narrow circle of young and relatively unknown party officials took over political power in Montenegro in the January 1989 coup. Contrary to dominant political trends in most of the Yugoslav federation during that period, the political change in its smallest republic was not a result of broad nationalist movement. Due to the ambivalent attitude and the lack of clear policy of all the post-WWII generations of its political leaders, the national question in Montenegro was left essentially unanswered. Consequently, only Montenegrins were, at that moment, without an unambiguous political alternative for Yugoslavia. Unlike their compatriots throughout the federation, politically and nationally uniting toward the end of 1980s behind what they wanted, Montenegrins of different 'political colors' jointly stood up against what they did not want anymore.

Under these circumstances, given the ideational heterogeneity of the prevailing political forces and, in particular, the absence of a clearly articulated and among them widely accepted notion of Montenegrin national interest, there was no room on the Republic's political scene for the appearance of a Tuđman- or Milošević-like charismatic political leader. In Montenegro, when compared to the neighboring Republics, playing on the 'national card' was not nearly as potentially beneficial in political terms. For that reason, the need for the particular type of political leadership emerging around this time in the neighboring republics was not nearly as big. As a result, none of the members of the Montenegrin post-1989 party elite was in a position to acquire nearly as much political influence as the Croatian and Serbian leaders. Instead, they were to work together so as to transform the enormous popular trust into a genuine political power.

Throughout the 1990s, in light of the legalization of domestic political competition, the principle of cooperative decision-making at the party summit was constantly reaffirmed. Accordingly, political activity of the highest representatives of Montenegro's ruling party during this period was guided primarily by its officially proclaimed political interest. Contrary to the cases of Croatia and, in particular, Serbia where a communist-successor party also prevailed, all the power mechanisms of the newly established Montenegrin hybrid regime were put in function of maintaining the dominant party's rule. Thus, the initial dispersion of power within its highest ranks emanating from the specific character of the 1988/9 process of political mobilization in Montenegro, rendered this party institutionalized and capable of surviving in power the regime collapse.

5. HYBRID REGIME PARTY OUTCOMES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Charles Tilly writes that ‘if we are to arrive at explanations, we will have to construct relevant, verifiable causal stories resting on differing chains of cause-effect relations [...] whose efficacy can be demonstrated independently of those stories’ (1997: 50). The present study puts forward a model explaining diverging party outcomes in hybrid regimes. It posits, first, that depending on whether they were institutionalized, dominant parties in hybrid regimes lost power or stayed in office as these regimes ceased to exist; and, second, that depending on whether political mobilization leading to the establishment of hybrid regimes was nationalist, their dominant parties subsequently did or did not institutionalize.

The underlying causal mechanism is clearly identified in the foregoing in-depth study of the three hybrid regime cases. In line with the theory-centric orientation of this thesis, the following chapter tests applicability of the model within a wider empirical context. Its main ambition is to show the extent to which the model is ‘separable from the setting in which it was originally derived’ (Evans, 1995: 6). To that goal, using Levitsky and Way’s 2010 study as the empirical framework, a comparative analysis of a number of cases of hybrid regime democratization within the last two decades was made. In addition to the three states that are in the focus of this thesis, another 13 were covered by the research.

Before testing the model’s generalizability, the thesis sought to ascertain the appropriateness of the categorization of these cases as democratized hybrid regimes. In this respect, based on the literature review presented in the Chapter 2, it identified two things concerning the way hybrid regimes were generally defined that

asked for additional clarification. The ambivalent political character of these regimes has been thoroughly elaborated and generally recognized as their typological *differentia specifica*. Regardless of the label they use to name hybrid regimes, scholars thus seem to agree that the combination of elements of democratic and authoritarian political systems is what makes them differ from both. In that regard, this study rests upon the scholarly consensus. On the other hand, it calls attention to the fact that widely accepted criteria for determining *the level of electoral competitiveness in hybrid regimes* and, even, their *longevity* are still missing.

The latter criterion is necessary so that we could create an essentially needed temporal framework for the analysis of hybrid regimes. Without being able to identify the moment of regime establishment and/or collapse, it is impossible to answer most questions relating to its political dynamics, including the one that this research puts forward. At the moment, however, it is as a rule an entirely subjective impression about the state of political affairs in a given regime at a given time that, in one's view, determines its longevity. Accordingly, scholars dealing with hybrid regimes tend to announce (often repeatedly) their inception and demise whenever political situation seems to change or be changing in authoritarian or democratic direction.³¹⁷

³¹⁷ The conceptual 'fluidity' underlying such analyses is demonstrated in the following example from the Levitsky and Way's research on the regime change in Romania: 'The Constantinescu government (1996-2000) was democratic [...] the 2000 election was considered free and fair, and incumbent forces were badly defeated. Iliescu returned to the presidency and his PDSR won a solid plurality in the legislature. Under Iliescu (2000-2004), Romania fell back into competitive authoritarianism [...] However, following the launch of formal EU negotiations in 2000, external constraints were formidable [...] International monitoring helped to ensure relatively clean parliamentary and presidential elections in 2004 [...] The governing party's presidential candidate was defeated [...] The subsequent transition was peaceful. Romania was democratic after 2005' (2010: 103). The authors thus imply that hybrid regime in Romania was first re-installed and then again dismantled within a single electoral term in-between two democratic polls. Similar observations can be found in Freedom House reports (where countries are, on yearly basis, shifted back and forth between the categories of 'an electoral democracy' and 'not an electoral democracy') as well as other expert analyses that often serve as the main source of information on political regimes in general.

This results in the failure to make a necessary analytical distinction between a regime itself, as an established set of political rules, and a temporary worsening/improvement of democratic record of a given country. Therefore, albeit acknowledging that most democratic transitions did not unfold without occasional emergence of various authoritarian tendencies, this thesis strongly argues against such conceptual relativity. To avoid it, a more precise time-framing of hybrid regimes, recognizing their longevity, is required. Thus, as the temporal minimum of hybrid regime existence, this research proposes a period of two consecutive electoral cycles of unlevel playing field, separated by an un-fair/-free electoral competition. Following the same logic, as the temporal minimum of democratic regime existence, this research proposes a period of two consecutive electoral cycles of level playing field, separated by a free and fair electoral competition. In a number of countries that at some point witnessed democratic opening through electoral defeat of hybrid regime rulers, new incumbents failed to institutionalize political change, i.e. to establish a new regime. As such democratic 'situations' do not necessarily lead to the creation of democratic regimes, the two should, based on the temporal criterion, be analytically differentiated.

The level of electoral competitiveness is another element of hybrid regime theory that needs to be more clearly defined. As emphasized above, the character of the electoral process is what denotes the key difference between ostensibly similar hybrid regime and electoral democracy. Diamond thus notes that 'the distinction between electoral democracy and electoral authoritarianism turns crucially on the freedom, fairness, inclusiveness, and meaningfulness of elections' (2002: 28). At the same time, electoral competition is also what makes hybrid regimes different from various forms of authoritarianism. *De jure* or *de facto* non-existent in authoritarian

regimes, it is to provide the opposition in hybrid regimes with however minimal, meaningful opportunity for a triumph. As demonstrated by a number of dominant party systems in which incumbents regularly win elections with enormous margins,³¹⁸ the mere existence of legal opposition does not necessarily imply a possibility of electoral turnover, i.e. does not make a system competitive. 'Turnover is not even envisaged' in these regimes, Giovanni Sartori famously remarked (1976: 230). This thesis therefore proposes that elections are to be considered sufficiently competitive, i.e. that a regime is to be regarded as hybrid, if the opposition is able to continuously secure not less than 1/3 of the vote.

Based on these criteria, seven cases from the Levitsky and Way's list (Slovakia, Macedonia, Taiwan, Romania, Mexico, Peru, and the Dominican Republic) are found to be relevant for the comparative study. At the same time, as elaborated in the following section, the generalizability of the model cannot be tested against six cases since they either do not qualify as hybrid regimes (Benin, Ghana, Nicaragua, and Guyana) or cannot be considered democratized (Mali and Ukraine).

5.1. Problematic cases of hybrid regime democratization

5.1.1. Benin

One of the 'problematic' cases of hybrid regime democratization is Benin. Because of its successful direct transition from authoritarianism to democracy, this thesis argues that Benin should not be considered hybrid regime in the first place.

Against all odds, this poor and extremely weak African state succeeded in implementing democratic reforms and maintaining stability of the new political regime

³¹⁸ For instance in Belarus, the only European regime of the kind, Lukashenka won the last three presidential elections with the following percentages: 77.4 (2001), 84.4 (2006), and 79.7 (2010).

subsequent to the peaceful collapse of Mathieu Kérékou's military dictatorship.³¹⁹ Kérékou was voted out of office in March 1991, a year after a National Conference decided – contrary to his expectations – to initiate the process of creation of new democratic institutions and to name a transitional government headed by his opponent Nicéphore Soglo.³²⁰ In the years that followed, Benin witnessed a series of competitive and widely considered free and fair elections and a number of successful alternations of executive power (Gisselquist, 2008: 789).³²¹ At the same time, state institutions demonstrated a surprisingly high level of autonomy from political pressures.³²²

For these reasons, Benin came to be praised as 'West Africa's most vibrant democracy' (Magnusson, 2001: 219) and, even, 'a shining example of democracy' in the entire continent (Bierschenk, 2009: 338). Notwithstanding serious structural impediments to the process of institutionalization of the post-1990 system of governance, the country thus managed to stay on the democratic political course.

³¹⁹ Like in many other African states, the overall capacity of state institutions in Benin was at an exceptionally low level. At the same time, the country's socio-economic picture of Benin was dreadful. In 1990, the year of the National Conference which initiated its democratic transition, Benin's GDP per capita was \$273 and was well below the sub-Saharan African unimpressive average of \$528 (Gisselquist, 2008: 791). In addition, political parties were so poorly organized that three presidents elected in the course of the next two decades took the office 'without a party' (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 292).

³²⁰ Largely dependent on foreign assistance (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 292), Kérékou's Marxist-Leninist government grew toward the end of the Cold War increasingly vulnerable to rising popular protests. In the situation where he was no longer able to effectively rely on the security apparatus or the assistance from abroad, Kérékou saw a way out in organizing a National Conference (officially named *Conférence Nationale des Forces Vives de la Nation*) that was to confirm his political legitimacy. He thereby sought to alleviate the political crisis by providing a platform for the expression of criticism and allowing for certain liberal political reforms but without changing the regime's single-party character (Bierschenk, 2009: 340).

³²¹ See: Freedom in the World 2013 report on Benin (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/benin#.UzQi4ahdUIA>).

³²² This relates primarily to the Constitutional Court which 'successfully managed several institutional disputes in the young democracy' (Seely, 2005: 370). Thus, in 1996, the Court nullified 25 per cent of the vote in the presidential election. Soglo, the incumbent president, accepted the outcome and left the office albeit claiming voting irregularities and accusing the Court of complicity with Kérékou, his challenger and former dictator (Magnusson and Clark, 2005: 561).³²² In the 2001 election, Soglo pulled out of the race 'when he was clearly on his way to losing the second round' and his supporters claimed, 'against most evidence', that the election was stolen (Ibid). In the following period, the Constitutional Court blocked several Kérékou's attempts to manipulate state institutions (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 296).

5.1.2. Ghana and Nicaragua

Unlike Benin where the collapse of authoritarianism resulted in the immediate establishment of a democratic system, one can clearly identify periods in Ghana's and Nicaragua's recent political development marked by semi-authoritarian rule. Yet, in line with the aforementioned longevity criterion, the present study argues that these periods did not last long enough for the two states to qualify as a hybrid regime.

The first multiparty elections after the 1981 military coup in Ghana were organized in December 1992. Previously, Jerry Rawlings and his junta (Provisional National Defense Council – PNDC) lifted a decade-long ban on party politics and drafted a proposal of a new, liberal constitution (Abdulai, 1992: 66).³²³ The creation of democratic infrastructure did not bring about instantaneous democratic change in Ghana.³²⁴ Yet, throughout the following years, constitutional reforms were put in place essentially altering the regime's undemocratic character.³²⁵ As a result, the 1996 general elections in Ghana were judged free and fair by international

³²³ At the end of the Cold War, the Ghanaian authorities recognized the introduction of political reforms as an efficient way to preserve positive international reputation which they earned by liberalizing the economy notwithstanding the severity of their authoritarian rule. Namely, throughout the 1980s, the PNDC detained citizens indefinitely without trial, confiscated properties without assigning cause, forced citizens into exile or imprisoned them on nebulous grounds, and carried out many political executions (Gyimah-Boadi, 1994: 77). At the same time, the Constitution remained suspended and the Rawlings government ruled by decree.

³²⁴ Thus, the December 1992 parliamentary election was boycotted by the opposition because of numerous irregularities in the presidential balloting held a month earlier. With the government's blatant exploitation of all the advantages of incumbency and disenfranchisement of a significant number of opposition supporters who were not allowed to register to vote, there can be no doubt that the electoral playing field was far from level (Gyimah-Boadi, 1994: 79). Such impression was further strengthened by the intimidation of opposition activists by government-sponsored paramilitary groups, libel suits and violent attacks against independent media and 'blacklisting' of pro-opposition entrepreneurs (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 302). Under these conditions, Rawlings was elected president, winning 58.4 per cent of the vote, whereas his newly created party organization, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) got 77.5 per cent.

³²⁵ The NDC government had observed virtually all the constitutional provisions and the opposition parties were thus able to play 'an active political role outside parliament by criticizing government policies and practices in the lively independent press' (Jeffries, 1998: 190). Even Levitsky and Way point out that the Rawlings government invested heavily in democratic institutions during this period, which allowed the Electoral Commission, the Supreme Court and other important state bodies to become independent to the point that they would often act against the incumbent interests (2010: 303)

observers.³²⁶ Moreover, after heavily contesting the result of the 1992 presidential election, the opposition now accepted the electoral outcome – which might be regarded as the ultimate confirmation of electoral competitiveness – even though Rawlings won another presidential term and his party secured a majority of seats.³²⁷ In addition, the subsequently organized elections were also ‘widely seen as “free and fair” by both partisan competitors and an array of international observers’ (Lindberg and Morrison, 2005: 7). During this period, as stated in the 1998 Freedom in the World report on Ghana, ‘the country slowly continued to consolidate democratic institutions’.

This thesis therefore maintains that a democratic regime in Ghana was established in 1996 and, accordingly, that the period of semi-authoritarian rule (1992-1996) in this country was too short for it to be considered a hybrid regime case. Instead, one could talk about democratizing tendencies during the final years of authoritarian regime in Ghana just as, to make a parallel, authoritarian tendencies within a wider democratization process may be identified in post-2000 Romania.

Similar to Ghana under Rawlings, the case of Nicaragua does not seem to satisfy the longevity criterion to be enlisted as a hybrid regime. The period of semi-authoritarian rule in this country, that is to say, did not last long enough to be regarded as a regime. Levitsky and Way suggest that ‘competitive authoritarianism emerged in Nicaragua in the late 1980s’, but also point out that ‘the 1990 election [easily won by the opposition] was clean’ (2010: 140-144). As this election is

³²⁶ As stated in the Freedom in the World 1998 country report (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/1998/ghana#.UzRn1qhdUIA>).

³²⁷ Rawlings won 57.4 per cent of the vote; the result of his NDC was 53 per cent (133/200 parliament seats).

generally regarded as the moment of its democratization,³²⁸ it turns out that a hybrid regime lasted in Nicaragua for a few years only. Moreover, the leverage of external factors (in the first place the United States) on the Nicaraguan political life was so significant and destabilizing during those years that we can hardly talk about the existence of any political regime in the country. In relation to that, a number of scholars (Close, 2007; Anderson and Dodd, 2002; Williams, 1994) suggest that the 1984 general elections, easily won by Daniel Ortega and his Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN),³²⁹ were already competitive enough and that genuine democratization did not subsequently occur in Nicaragua primarily because of the political influence of the American administration.

In the aftermath of these elections, the U.S. officials, already working closely with the Nicaraguan opposition, sought to portray Ortega's victory as 'a product of FSLN strong-arm tactics' (Anderson and Dodd, 2002: 84). Throughout the years that followed, the external pressures on the Sandinistas' government intensified,³³⁰ which, in return, led to a considerable tightening of the political space that had opened up during the electoral process (Ibid).³³¹ During this period, Levitsky and Way argue, semi-authoritarian regime emerged in Nicaragua as the FSLN established hegemonic control of the state and much of the economy (2010: 140). Yet, because

³²⁸ See the last Freedom in the World country report (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/nicaragua#.UzRiXKhduIA>).

³²⁹ The Sandinistas came to power in the 1979 revolution which put an end to the Somoza dictatorship. In the 1984 elections, Ortega and his party made almost identical results, winning respectively 66.9 and 66.8 per cent of the vote.

³³⁰ The U.S. Congress first introduced trade embargo to Nicaragua in May 1985 and then, a month later, approved \$27 million in aid to the counterrevolutionary movement (known as 'contras').

³³¹ Various restrictions on the political opposition were imposed during this period. Moreover, the leading anti-government daily *La Prensa* was shut down in June 1986 in response to its support of the U.S. Congress's approval of another \$100 million in aid to the contras (Ibid).

of the general situation in the country, there was not much to be controlled at that moment.³³²

To summarize, the Nicaraguan political development in the late 1980s was indeed marked by the FSLN's non-democratic (semi-authoritarian) governance. Nonetheless, because of the short period of time to which it refers, it cannot be categorized as hybrid regime. Moreover, considering the powerful external factor substantially influencing the country's political dynamics, it is hard to talk about the existence of any political regime during this period.

5.1.3. Guyana

In contrast to the Levitsky and Way's categorization, this thesis does not find Guyana to be a case of hybrid regime due to the lack of electoral competitiveness in the observed period (1968-1992). As previously argued and demonstrated here, the mere existence of legal political opposition and regular organization of elections do not necessarily render a regime competitive.

Prior to the defeat of the People's National Congress (PNC) in the 1992 general elections, generally considered to be the first free and fair polling since this former British colony became independent in 1966, Guyana represented 'the most authoritarian postcolonial Caribbean state' (Hinds, 2005: 67).³³³ Structured around the ruling party, the Guyanese regime was maintained through a series of rigged elections and the political oppression carried out by the security forces. And while

³³² As a consequence of the internationalization of its internal political conflict, the country's economy was reduced to a shambles by the end of the 1980s (Vickers and Spence, 1992: 552). At the same time, the growing tension between the two political camps in Nicaragua escalated into a full-blown civil war which took tens of thousands of lives.

³³³ The PNC's main political rival was the leftist People's Progressive Party (PPP) regarded by the US as 'a Marxist threat' (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 147). On this basis, authoritarian Guyana was the second biggest U.S. aid recipient in the region and, for a while, its leading recipient per capita given that its ruling party was (Ibid: 144-5).

opposition parties were often denied permits for public meetings, their activists were spied on, arrested, and occasionally killed (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 147). In effect, ‘the PNC transformed Guyana into a de facto one-party state over which the party was paramount, and which systematically trampled on civil rights and liberties while closing all legal and constitutional means of removing it from power’ (Hinds, 2005: 67).

And indeed, the incumbent party scored landslide triumphs in the three consecutive general elections held during this period, winning 70.1 per cent of the vote in 1973, 77.7 per cent in 1980, and 78.5 per cent five years later. ‘What varied from election to election’, Chaitram Singh notes, ‘was how many seats in the parliament the PNC would reserve for itself and how many it would concede to the PPP’ (2008: 73). Thus, before the 1992 electoral victory,³³⁴ symbolizing ‘a milestone in the transition from authoritarian to democratic politics in Guyana’ (Griffith, 1997: 267), the opposition did not have a genuine opportunity to challenge the ruling party’s political domination. Instead, regularly organized elections served merely to create an impression of popular legitimacy of the PNC’s governance.

Therefore, in line with the argument about the necessary level of electoral competitiveness, this thesis regards pre-democratic Guyana as an example of authoritarian and not hybrid political regime.

5.1.4. Mali and Ukraine

The list of ‘problematic’ hybrid regime democratizers identified by Levitsky and Way ends with two cases which, this thesis argues *still cannot be considered democracies*. The first one is Mali, another extremely weak and poor African state

³³⁴ The PPP garnered 53.5 per cent of the vote; Winning 42.3 per cent, the PNC came second.

which,³³⁵ unlike in many regards similar Benin, did not manage to establish a stable political system after the fall of authoritarianism.

Following a bloody rebellion against the dictatorship of Moussa Traoré who came to power in a military coup in 1968, the first multiparty election in Mali was organized in February 1992. Despite very promising political opening,³³⁶ it was a hybrid, not democratic regime that subsequently emerged in this country. The new government frequently attacked independent media, occasionally arresting journalists and editors (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 298). Moreover, contrary to the first, the second legislative election, held in April 1997, was marred by serious irregularities. In addition, the procedure by which, in May, Konaré was re-elected president was condemned as flawed by both the Malian opposition and by international observers (Myers, 1998: 200).

It seemed that the 2002 turnover in power could mark a new chance for democracy in Mali as, initially, the government repression against the opposition and the media scaled down significantly. However, by the time next elections took place in 2007, signs of authoritarian backsliding became apparent (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 299). Once again, the opposition challenged the electoral outcome, claiming government abuse of state resources, pre-circulation of marked ballots, manipulation of the voter registry etc. (Ibid). Yet, given the lack of a credible international confirmation of such claims and the absence of reports of major government power abuse in 2008, Levitsky and Way scored Mali as a democracy. At the same time, in

³³⁵ In 1993, measured by the United Nations Human Development Index, Mali was ranked no. 171 among 174 nations. Its GDP per capita stood at \$270, while the literacy rate of adult population was only 28 per cent (Moestrup, 1999: 175).

³³⁶ Winning 48.8 per cent of the vote, an anti-government Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) scored a landslide victory. Two months later, with 69 per cent of the vote, the party's candidate Alpha Oumar Konaré triumphed in the second round of the presidential election. Their victory, the fact that the elections were clean and the decision of the rebellion leader Amadou Toumani Touré not to run for presidency, led many to believe that the Malian transition from one-party rule would have democratic conclusion.

view of the turbulent post-authoritarian development and the chronically weak state structures, they warned about a high likelihood of democratic collapse in this country.

And indeed, the subsequent period showed how easy it was for the hard-won democratic gains in Mali to slip away (Smith, 2001: 79). In January 2012, a few months before the next presidential election was to be held, fighters representing the marginalized Tuareg minority from the poorly-controlled northern part of Mali organized a rebellion against the central government.³³⁷ Dozens of Malian soldiers were killed by the rebels, which led to a wave of popular protests against the President, blamed for the inability to restore control over the problematic region. On March 21, a group of army officers staged a coup, deposing Touré, detaining the government members and suspending the constitution. Soon after, they agreed to transfer the power to a transitional government, required to organize new elections within a year.³³⁸

In a nutshell, whatever political future of Mali may be, the country's recent political past certainly proves the analytic importance of the aforementioned regime longevity criterion.

Similarly, Ukraine has not yet witnessed the establishment of a functional democratic regime. In 2004, after a decade of Leonid Kuchma's semi-authoritarian rule (Darden, 2001; Kuzio, 2005; McFaul, 2005) and an attempted electoral fraud which brought hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians into the streets, Viktor Yushchenko became a new president. His democratic governance and the subsequent free and fair elections, including the 2010 presidential balloting which

³³⁷ After 1962-1964 and 1990-1994, this was the third such rebellion in Mali (Keita, 1998).

³³⁸ The two rounds of presidential election were held in July and August 2013. The parliamentary election took place in November 2013.

brought to power Viktor Yanukovych, a pro-Russian representative of the Kuchma-era political elite, made many believe that Ukraine actually democratized during this period (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 218). Nonetheless, like in the case of Mali, such claims soon proved largely unsubstantiated as much of the democratic achievements of the Orange Revolution were reversed in the course of Yanukovych's presidency.

Establishing political control over the Constitutional Court enabled him to annul the 2004 constitutional reform that had reduced the presidential powers. Subsequently, Yanukovych launched a systematic campaign aimed at eliminating any viable political opposition, which culminated with the October 2011 imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko, former prime minister and his most outspoken political rival.³³⁹ In addition, his administration significantly reduced Ukrainians' civil and political rights, established tight media control,³⁴⁰ and introduced a new electoral law favoring his Party of the Regions (Ibid).³⁴¹

Notwithstanding mounting international criticism, Yanukovych continued to eliminate political opponents and tighten his grip on the Electoral Commission, the judiciary, and the media, all intended to secure him re-election in 2015. In November 2013, likely because he saw it as a potential obstacle to the realization of his political ambition, the Ukrainian president decided, against the will of a majority of his countrymen, not to initial a previously arranged Association Agreement with the EU. Demanding Yanukovych to proceed with the deal,

³³⁹ See the last Freedom in the World country report (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/ukraine#.UxWNRuNdUIC>).

³⁴⁰ The OSCE/ODIHR report on the 2012 parliamentary election thus notes that 'the media environment is characterized by a virtual absence of editorial autonomy on television' (available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/98578>).

³⁴¹ Under these circumstances, independent observers found the 2012 parliamentary election to be 'characterized by the lack of a level playing field, caused primarily by the abuse of administrative resources, lack of transparency of campaign and party financing, and the lack of balanced media coverage' (OSCE/ODIHR, 2012: 1).

hundreds of thousands of pro-European Ukrainians once again occupied the centre of Kiev. Following a brutal police reaction, which left dozens of people dead, the protesters requested Yanukovych's resignation and the organization of early presidential and parliamentary election.³⁴²

In brief, while certain democratic tendencies were apparent in the years that followed the 2004 Orange revolution, the establishment of democratic regime in Ukraine is yet to take place.

5.2. Party fates in democratized hybrid regimes

5.2.1. Slovakia

In many regards, this hybrid regime case resembles those we find in Croatia and Serbia. Here, as noted by Levitsky and Way, the regime emerged 'in a context of nationalist mobilization' (2010: 92). Albeit much smoother than the Yugoslav, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia had a similar political pretext.

In the aftermath of the 1989 collapse of the country's communist regime, ethnic issues came to dominate its political agenda and significantly complicate the tasks of constitutional and economic reform (Wolchik, 1993: 153). This was particularly evident in Slovakia, where the existence of the Slovak National Party (SNS) and other nationalist groups radicalized the debate about the political and economic future of Czechoslovakia and 'pushed other political forces to take more extreme positions' (Ibid: 155). The national question, i.e. the constitutional place of

³⁴² The political crisis in Ukraine has continued and, because of Russia's open interference, significantly complicated throughout the upcoming months.

Slovakia within the federation, thus became its most salient political issue (Haughton, 2001: 752).

Among political organizations promoting Slovak national interests, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) soon proved to be the most influential. Akin to the Croatian Democratic Union, it was founded in March 1991 'by an eclectic mix of nationalists, dissidents, and former apparatchiks' (Carpenter, 1997: 207). Although, initially, it did not take open pro-independence stance, the party's 'language on the national question positioned its sails in such a way as to catch the strong nationalist winds and carry the party on toward power' (Haughton, 2001: 751). The HZDS 'touted all things "Slovak" and 'propagated mistrust of nonethnic Slovaks' (Fish, 1999: 48). In this regard, the party's victory in the June 1992 parliamentary election marked 'the triumph of nationalist populism' (Carpenter, 1997: 207) and, as it soon became apparent, the establishment of a hybrid regime in Slovakia.³⁴³ Throughout the following years, the incumbents' power abuse repertoire was more or less standard.³⁴⁴ It included, among other things, hollowing out political and legal institutions, absolute control over the National Television as well as constant pressure on independent media,³⁴⁵ politically-motivated manipulation of the state financial resources,³⁴⁶ and persecution of political adversaries.

³⁴³ Winning somewhat lower percentage of the vote than two years earlier (35 vs. 37.2 per cent), yet significantly higher compared to what three other most successful parties won together (30.7 per cent), the HZDS also triumphed in the 1994 parliamentary election.

³⁴⁴ The exception in this regard relates to the 1995 abduction of a son of Michal Kovac, the Slovak President and the most serious political rival of the Prime Minister and the incumbent party leader, Vladimir Meciar, which many believed was organized by the Government-controlled security services (Carpenter, 1997: 216).

³⁴⁵ The latter brought about 'mugging and menacing of critical journalists and the bombing of their automobiles' (Fish, 1999: 49).

³⁴⁶ Carpenter reminds that, without offering an explanation, the Slovak government withdrew in March 1995 the license of one of the country's largest investment funds (which owned an opposition newspaper, *Sme*). This fund was then taken over by another fund owned by the father of intelligence chief Ivan Lexa, an HZDS member and Meciar's long-time friend. The Meciar government, Carpenter notes, was thus 'able to re-appoint

Beside the nationalist background, what makes the Slovak regime so similar to its Croatian and Serbian counterparts is the personalization of political power. The former's development was 'closely linked to the political career of Vladimir Meciar' (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 93).³⁴⁷ The founder and leader of the HZDS, Meciar returned to the position of Prime Minister following the 1992 election. As the head of government, with his Czech colleague Vaclav Klaus, he finalized the process of negotiations that led to the republics' 'Velvet Divorce' on 1 January 1993. Throughout the following years, Slovak national identity and independence remained at the heart of his political agenda. And while presenting himself as the father of the Slovak nation, Meciar sought to portray his political opponents as its enemies (Haughton, 2003: 269).

The concentration of power in Meciar's hands proved detrimental to the process of institutionalization of his party. As noted by Fish, 'personalization' was the most significant trait of the HZDS's organizational development throughout the 1990s:

'Personalization of the party involved a process of encouraging/forcing the departure of nearly all of the many capable members who had staffed the organization's ranks in the formative years. It also included recruiting a new mass of people who were attracted to the party exclusively by the loyalty to Meciar himself. By 1994, most of the organization's original leaders had quit. This slowmotion coup enabled Meciar to assert full control and eliminate potential rivals' (1999: 47-8).³⁴⁸

political supporters to key positions in the media, to financial institutions, as well as to a host of other public and private organizations without any opposition, all while maintaining a high popularity rating' (1997: 216).

³⁴⁷ Emphasizing the strength of that link, Stephen Fish (1999) coined the term 'Meciarism' to describe the character of the 1992-1998 regime in Slovakia.

³⁴⁸ Similarly, Deegan-Krause notes that 'while HZDS initially possessed a fairly wide range of prominent personalities, each with their own bases of support, the party saw a steady exodus of top-level elites' (2006:

Another process, which went hand in hand with personalization of the HZDS, was the party's 'de-ideologization' (Ibid). If it was to be completely personalized, the party 'had to be stripped of any genuine ideological or programmatic content that could constrain the leader, constitute a standard against which his performance could be judged, or serve as an alternative source of loyalty and motivation' (Ibid: 47). Consequently, the HZDS gradually evolved into little more than a political movement of Meciar-loyalists which 'consistently acted to sustain the rule and political dominance of its leader', whereas 'its political programme and ideological identity remained unclear' (Lewis, 2000: 166).³⁴⁹

Table 14. Electoral performance (vote %) of Vladimir Meciar relative to his party organization before and after the hybrid regime collapse

Election year	1998*	1999	2002*	2004
Meciar	-	37.2	-	32.7
HZDS	27	-	19.5	-

*Source: Nohlen and Stover (2010); *Presidential elections*

In terms of HZDS's political functioning and, as indicated in *Table 14*, in the eyes of its followers, the party thus became synonymous with the leader. In line with our model, Meciar's political organization lost power as a result of the 1998 parliamentary election that marked the end of hybrid regime in Slovakia.

88-97). 'New personalities emerged to fill the gap', he writes, 'but they depended heavily of Meciar's favors for their position' (2012: 195)

³⁴⁹ In this regard, Tim Haughton reminds that the party officials would often point out that Meciar 'controlled the party totally' and 'decided everything' (2001: 754).

5.2.2. Macedonia

Compared to the case of Slovakia, it is much more difficult to identify the moment of hybrid regime collapse in Macedonia as the democratic change in this country unfolded gradually and was affected by the outbreak of an inter-ethnic violence. By the time its Parliament proclaimed independence in September 1991, hybrid regime was already in place in this former Yugoslav republic.

Following the first multiparty election, held in November 1990, a coalition based around the ex-communist Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) took power. Initially partaking in the ruling coalition, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (simplified as VMRO-DPMNE), which held most seats (38/120), left the dysfunctional government in July 1992.³⁵⁰ In January 1991, the SDSM head and former high official of the Yugoslav League of Communists, Kiro Gligorov was appointed interim president.

The SDSM ruled Macedonia in a comparative authoritarian fashion. The government used unreformed levers of power inherited from the communist regime; opposition activists were regularly harassed, while both public and private media were tightly controlled (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 125). The 1994 parliamentary election was marked by intimidation, irregularities and fraud,³⁵¹ due to which the VMRO-DPMNE decided to boycott the second round of voting. And while the ruling

³⁵⁰ As noted in the 1998 International Crisis Group report on Macedonia, the first governing coalition was an uneasy one: 'Frequent walkouts by VRMO-DPMNE and the ethnic Albanian parliamentarians [...] hampered the legislative process. Often parliamentary sessions were cancelled because there were not sufficient members present to form a quorum. The parliament failed to reform the constitution, electoral system, privatization, government administration and a number of other issues confronting the new republic' (available at: file:///C:/Users/PC/Downloads/045_elections_macedonia.pdf).

³⁵¹ See Freedom in the World 1998 report on Macedonia (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/1998/macedonia#.UxcrHT9dUIA>).

coalition thus easily won a vast majority of seats (95/120), Gligorov triumphed in the presidential race with 52.6 per cent of the vote. Four years later, Macedonia saw the first turnover in power which, nonetheless, did not change the character of its political system. Winning 28.1 per cent of the vote, the VMRO-DPMNE came first in the October/November 1998 parliamentary elections and, with a bloc of Albanian parties, subsequently formed a coalition government. The regime continuity was apparent in the new incumbents-organized media bullying, politically motivated violence, even against parliament members,³⁵² and wide-spread vote-fraud in the 1999 presidential contest and the 2001 municipal elections.

Subsequent to the change in government, which coincided with the outbreak of war in neighboring Kosovo, tensions between Macedonian majority and ethnic Albanians reached the critical point. At the beginning of 2001, demanding political empowerment of Albanian minority in Macedonia, a paramilitary group (National Liberation Army) attacked the state security forces. The authorities reacted forcefully against the armed revolt, which led to an open warfare. In August 2001, peace deal (Ohrid Framework Agreement) was signed between the government and political representatives of the Albanian rebels, obliging the latter to lay weapons in return for comprehensive state institutions' reform.³⁵³ NATO troops were employed in disarming the population and securing the Agreement's implementation, which transformed Macedonia into a de facto international protectorate (Ibid: 127).

The 2001 conflict cast a political shadow over the coming years. Notwithstanding the official elite-level Macedonian-Albanian political cooperation, the

³⁵² See Freedom in the World 2001 country report (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2001/macedonia#.UxhHFz9dUIA>).

³⁵³ The full text of the Agreement is available at: <http://www.ucd.ie/ibis/filestore/Ohrid%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>.

country remained ethnically largely divided and, despite another change in government, non-democratic.³⁵⁴ The 2002 parliamentary election, which brought the SDSM back to power, took place in an environment of violence and serious irregularities (Gromes, 2009: 11-13). The problems such as the government-sponsored corruption, attacks on journalists, political control of the judiciary, and opposition boycotts of parliament sessions, continued throughout the following period (Ibid). Unsurprisingly, both OSCE/ODIHR and domestic opposition parties reported significant irregularities with the 2004 presidential contest and, in particular, the 2005 municipal elections. International observers also found the 2006 parliamentary elections, won by the opposition VMRO-DPMNE, to be marked by serious flaws, including pre-election violence, ballot stuffing, vote buying, theft of ballots, etc.³⁵⁵

Under the VMRO-DPMNE government, through the adoption of a number of anti-corruption, media and Ohrid Agreement-related constitutional reforms, the process of genuine regime change in Macedonia began. Still, opposition parliamentary boycotts remained frequent and the first round of the next parliamentary elections, held in June 2008, was, like many before, marked by violence and irregularities (mainly in predominantly Albanian regions). This time, however, the government reacted by re-organizing electoral process wherever it was deemed unfair or fraudulent, thereby encouraging a large international-observer presence in the problematic areas (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 128). Moreover, against the earlier political practice in Macedonia, the biggest opposition party (SDSM)

³⁵⁴ As stated in the Freedom in the World 2004 country report, 'during the course of the year, three of the five signatories to the 2001 Ohrid Accords – which had barely averted a civil war in the country – repudiated the agreement, and two of those parties calling for an outright partition of the country into Macedonian and Albanian sections' (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2004/macedonia#.Uxhm-D9dUIA>). Throughout the following years, a number of Albanian anti-government militias remained active, causing a number of violent incidents. At the same time, as the 2001 agreement recognized much greater rights of an Albanian minority, ethnic Macedonians remained predominantly opposed to it (Gromes, 2009: 15).

³⁵⁵ All the reports are available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom>.

accepted the defeat due to which Radmila Šekerinska even resigned as its leader.³⁵⁶ Finally, in contrast the previously organized elections, the following presidential (2009) and parliamentary balloting (2011), both won by the incumbents, met most international standards for democratic elections and were characterized as ‘competitive, transparent, and well-administrated’ by international observers.

Table 15. Two decades of Macedonia’s post-communist political transition

Hybrid regime Period								Democracy period
1990	1991	1994	1998	2001	2002	2006	2006 - 2008	2008 -
SDSM wins	Macedonia independent	SDSM wins again	VMRO wins (1 st turnover in power)	Ethnic conflict	SDSM wins (2 nd turnover in power)	VMRO wins (3 rd turnover in power)	Regime change	Free and fair elections (2009, 2011)

Source: Author's table

In view of that, as demonstrated in *Table 15*, this thesis supports Levitsky and Way’s assessment that Macedonia had democratized by 2008 (Ibid: 127). As the VMRO-DPMNE had been in power since the 2006 election subsequent to which, as noted above, it initiated the process of democratization, the party outcome in this case is categorized as a survival in power. And while it was difficult to obtain solid qualitative data about the internal power organization of the VMRO-DPMNE, the electoral results from the observed period indicate a high level of popular support for the party. In 2008, the VMRO-DPMNE won almost 49 per cent of the vote (481,501 in absolute numbers). By comparison, its candidate, Gjorge Ivanov, got 35 per cent (345,850) in the first round of the 2009 presidential election. Ivanov won the

³⁵⁶ The coalition organized around the VMRO-DPMNE secured 64/120 seats, against 28 won by the SDSM-led coalition.

presidency in the run-off but still garnering fewer votes (453,616) than his party a year before. In the 2011 parliamentary election, the VRMO-DPMNE triumphed again, winning 39 per cent (or 438,138) of the vote.

At the same time, nationalist ideas did not serve as a mobilizing force behind the party's 2006 electoral success.³⁵⁷ Instead, the party program listed the following priorities: economic reforms, unemployment and poverty, fight against corruption, and NATO integration.³⁵⁸ This should be attributed to the 2004 triumph of a moderate, pro-reform faction of the VMRO-DPMNE, led by the current party head Nikola Gruevski, over a nationalist party faction (Ibid).³⁵⁹

5.2.3. Taiwan

The conceptual disorder underlying democratization studies is most convincingly demonstrated in the case of Taiwan. Depending on the analysis in question, one might conclude that a democratic regime in this country was established somewhere between 1986 and 2000.

Undisputedly, the Kuomintang (KMT) politically dominated Taiwan from its Chiang Kai-shek-led elite's 1949 arrival to the island until the electoral defeat of its presidential candidate, Lien Chan, in 2000. Most likely in view of the length of the KMT's preceding rule, some authors marked this presidential election as the moment of Taiwanese democratic change. Levitsky and Way thus argue that 'Taiwan was democratic only after 2000' (2010: 317). In contrast, Dan Slater and Joseph Wong claim that democratization in this country began with the 1986/7 liberal reform as a

³⁵⁷ The thesis takes the 2006 election as relevant since the country democratized in the following period.

³⁵⁸ See:

http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/bs/infoCountryPage/setimes/resource_centre/bios/gruevski_nikola?country=Macedonia.

³⁵⁹ See more in the International Crisis Group 2004 report on Macedonia (available at: http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/040803_macedonia_make_or_break.pdf).

result of which martial law was lifted and opposition parties were allowed to register.³⁶⁰ ‘Democratic transition in Taiwan was thus relatively smooth and stable’, Slater and Wong write, pointing out the 1992 legislative election (see *Table 16*) as the ‘first fully contested’ in the country’s history (2013: 725). At the same time, for Hung-mao Tien and Yun-han Chu, this particular electoral competition was ‘a watershed event in the course of Taiwan’s regime transition, which initiated the stage of democratic consolidation’ (1996:1141). Similarly, John Copper notes that the 1992 election ‘contributed to further democratization of Taiwan’s political system’ (1992: 76). Interestingly, a few years later, the same author wrote that the 1995 legislative election was ‘the most democratic in Taiwan to date and the first in which there was a real challenge to the ruling party’ (1996: 34).

Table 16. KMT’s electoral performance during Taiwan’s political transition

Election year	1989	1992*	1995	1998
Number of seats in the Legislative Yuan	94/130	95/162	85/164	123/225

*Source: Nohlen et al. (2001); *The first direct legislative election in Taiwan (previously, a certain number of delegates were appointed by the President)*

However, most scholars consider the 1996 presidential election, the first direct polling for the country’s highest political post, to be the final point of its political transition.³⁶¹ In addition, a number of Freedom House reports point out that ‘the

³⁶⁰ Up to that point, only two ‘tiny, co-opted, and totally inconsequential’ parties were allowed to exist outside the KMT (Solinger, 2001: 33). Therefore, this thesis accepts the categorization of Taiwan before the aforesaid reform as de facto an ‘authoritarian one-party regime’ (Greene, 2007: 261).

³⁶¹ Although, as previously mentioned, Levitsky and Way consider Taiwan to be democratic only after 2000, they do acknowledge significance of the political reforms put in place prior to the 1996 elections: ‘After defeating hardliners in the 1993 party congress, Lee [Teng-hui, the KMT president] pushed through a 1994 constitutional reform to establish direct presidential elections, which would be held in 1996. The government

country's transition from an authoritarian to a democratic state was consolidated by the March 1996 presidential election'.³⁶² Accordingly, this thesis takes the 1996 election as the regime change moment. Throughout the early 1990s, notwithstanding the introduction of multiparty electoral competition which led to the transformation of Taiwan from authoritarian into a hybrid regime,³⁶³ the country remained non-democratic. With the playing field still severely skewed, Levitsky and Way write, the KMT entered the 1990s with 'a supremacy over domestic politics achieved by few authoritarian regimes':

'Media access, for example, was badly skewed: All three television networks, most radio stations, and Taiwan's two leading newspapers were in the hands of the state, the KMT, or allies. In addition, overlapping state, party, and business ties gave the KMT a huge financial advantage [...] Much of party-owned enterprises' profits – estimated at up to \$500 million a year – were channeled into KMT coffers [...In exchange,] local KMT factions were granted contracts or oligopolistic concessions in sectors such as transportation, construction, utilities, and banking' (2010: 315).

The KMT's tremendous resource advantages 'made elections manifestly unfair and gave challenger very little chance of winning' (Greene, 2009: 263).³⁶⁴ Yet, in the following years, even though the ruling party maintained a considerable financial superiority over its rivals, the character of political game in Taiwan changed

also took additional steps to delink state and party, for example, by formally eliminating the KMT's presence in the military and state-run universities, and it opened the door for new private television stations' (2010: 316).

³⁶² Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/taiwan#.UzIN46iSwIA>.

³⁶³ Pertaining to the electoral competitiveness criterion, this thesis considers Taiwan to be hybrid regime in the period subsequent to the 1989 legislative election. In 1992, for the first time after the state was founded, the opposition managed to make a noteworthy electoral appearance. The leading opposition force, Democratic Progressive Party – DPP, won 31 per cent of the vote, while another 14 per cent belonged to independents. In 1995, the DPP garnered 33.2 per cent of the vote; the New Party, created after a 1993 split within the KMT, came third, winning 13 per cent.

³⁶⁴ For good reason then, in the violence-marred campaign for the 1992 legislative election, members of the leading opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) sought to portray the KMT as a 'party of corruption and political persecution of opposition politicians' (Copper, 1992: 73).

substantially owing to a series of government-initiated reforms. The emerging party system was ‘truly inclusionary’, Tien and Chu write:

‘In the summer of 1995, a new network television license was awarded to a DPP-affiliated operator and over a dozen more new radio stations, including many former underground stations operated by DPP and New Party politicians, were licensed [.] Also, starting from 14th Party Congress [held in August 1993], all high-ranking [military] officers were taken off the delegation list. And for the first time in its history, no four-star general in active duty was nominated to the Central Standing Committee [.] The judicial branch had undergone more profound changes. Since early 1992 a large number of independent-minded young judges have pushed for sweeping reforms in the judicial system to protect impartiality, eliminate corruption and nullify political influence’ (1996: 1155-1156).

As a result, the 1996 presidential election and the legislative balloting two years later were generally considered to be free and fair.³⁶⁵ The latter was decisively won by the KMT (46.4 per cent of the vote; 123/225 seats) despite the regime change that had previously taken place.³⁶⁶ This thesis therefore regards the party outcome in Taiwan as a case of incumbent’s survival in power. As such, it fits into our theoretical model as the Kuomintang represented highly institutionalized political party due to specific historical conditions under which its organizational development unfolded (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 313). During the decades in power, while being characterized by ‘superior party discipline and organization’ (Chu and Diamond,

³⁶⁵ It should be mentioned that in May 1998, six months before the legislative election, a new law was enforced in Taiwan banning companies connected with political parties from bidding for public contracts and designates life imprisonment for bid-riggers (Freedom in the World 1999 country report, available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/1999/taiwan#.UzWwLahdUIA>). Expected to reduce corruption and reform business contract procedures, this law, in addition to the aforementioned reforms, significantly curbed the KMT’s powers.

³⁶⁶ In this regard, while arguing that ‘Taiwan is now indisputably a democracy, and in many respects an impressively pluralistic, open, and spirited one’, Chu and Diamond point out that ‘among some 60 democracies that have emerged since the third wave of democratization began in 1974, only in Taiwan has the former authoritarian ruling party held on to power (while maintaining its name and organization) through repeated competitive, open, and fair elections’ (1999: 808).

1999: 816), the KMT developed strictly formalized procedures, vibrant intra-party life, and democratic centralism in decision-making. As noted by Cheng, the process of democratic procedures' institutionalization within the ruling party in Taiwan was particularly visible in the period after the legalization of political opposition:

'Changes have been made in the rules governing the selection of candidates who run for public office on the KMT ticket, of delegates to the party congress, and even of the party leadership. Nomination is no longer a top-down process, but proceeds from the bottom up, beginning with open registration, a kind of non-binding primary reflecting the preferences of rank- and-file members, and the selection of candidates by a nominating committee largely based on the results of the primary. Around two-thirds of the delegates to the Thirteenth Party Congress in June 1988 were selected through a competitive electoral process. This congress elected, from the floor, the Central Committee members from a long list of candidates who had either been recommended by the party's Organization Committee or nominated from the floor' (1989: 496).

Finally, although the national question - the relationship with the Chinese mainland - had traditionally loomed large on the Taiwanese political horizon, the KMT did not seek to preserve political domination following the hybrid regime establishment by playing that card. In fact, because of the increasing factionalization during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the party did not seem to have a clear agenda on this particular issue. In his analysis of the 1992 legislative election in Taiwan, Copper thus notes:

'The one-China or two Chinas also proved destructive for the KMT, clearly dividing the ruling party and making it a less able performer during the campaign [...] Perhaps the KMT should declare unequivocally that debate on the [independence] issue is not productive and

should be avoided. It might even admit that the issue cannot be resolved in Taipei or Beijing, that Washington holds the key' (1992: 77).

Throughout the following years, the KMT maintained a moderate centrist position on unification that placed it between the pro-independence DPP and the pro-unification New Party (Greene, 2009: 262). What is more, a new cleavage of socio-economic justice emerged during this period as a salient political issue in Taiwan 'cross-cutting the existing cleavage on national identity' (Tien and Chun, 1996: 1142). In other words, and as predicted by our model, we did not witness a nationalist mobilization in Taiwan around the time the hybrid regime was established in this country.

5.2.4. Romania

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the case of Romania most convincingly demonstrates the need for the establishment of more precise criterion of the hybrid regime longevity. Otherwise, one could announce the establishment/collapse of a given regime whenever it appears to have become more or less democratic.

Levitsky and Way thus argue that within just a few years of Ion Iliescu's third presidential term (2000-2004) Romania saw an authoritarian backlash followed by another democratic breakthrough. In contrast, the present study identifies the 1996 general election as the moment of democratic change in Romania. The defeat of Iliescu and his Party of Social Democracy (PDSR) marked the end of hybrid regime in this country,³⁶⁷ characterized by the widespread repression of the opposition forces, government's high-level media control, politicization of electoral bodies and

³⁶⁷ Winning 54.4 per cent of the vote, Emil Constantinescu triumphed over Iliescu in the second round of the presidential election. At the same time, Constantinescu's Romanian Democratic Convention won the parliamentary election with 30.2 per cent.

the persistence of a number of other elements of the old authoritarian state (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 99). As a result, the nature of the electoral competition in Romania changed substantially and the following electoral contests were widely sanctioned as free and fair by international observers (Pop-Eleches, 2008: 474). Therefore, what in view of the increased political pressure on state and private media Levitsky and Way saw as the post-2000 re-establishment of semi-authoritarianism in Romania (2010: 103), turned out to be a temporary worsening of the country's democratic record. Stated differently, the return to power of Iliescu and his party 'was by no means the return of the quasi-authoritarian regime that followed the collapse of Ceausescu's rule in December 1989' (Tismaneanu and Kligman, 2001: 81).

This thesis therefore posits that the collapse of hybrid regime in Romania took place in 1996 and, hence, that the party outcome in this case was a defeat. Given the highly personalized structure of authority within the incumbent party, its loss of power fits into the research model. Throughout the hybrid regime period, political power in Romania was concentrated in the hands of the country's president, Ion Iliescu. To a great extent, Alina Sturzu explains, this was a result of the role he (claimed to have) played in the process of political transition from one-party rule:

'Iliescu was the uncontested leader of the National Salvation Front [FSN], a personality whose participation in the 1989 events and the breakdown of the communist regime was crucial. Constructing himself an image of the "savior" of the nation, he has been considered the most influential politician of post-communist Romania' (2011: 316).³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ In effect, even though he did not play a significant political role in the terminal phase of Ceausescu's rule, Iliescu had close personal and family ties to high-level Communist circles (Pop-Eleches, 2008: 469). More importantly, notwithstanding the Front's official anti-communist rhetoric, much of its policies soon proved to be anti-reformist. In addition to the prominent role of several high-ranking former Communist officials in the Front's leadership and the rapid departure from the party of most anti-communist dissidents, this led many to the conclusion that the revolution in Romania had been hijacked by a Communist cabal (Ibid).

His political supremacy was further strengthened by the semi-presidential system of governance as well as the lack of clear separation of powers which allowed the executive to dominate, which is why the presidential contest during this period overshadowed the parliamentary balloting (Shafir, 1997: 144). The fact that in 1992, two years after the National Salvation Front won two thirds of the vote in the first multiparty election organized after the collapse of communism in Romania, Iliescu left the party he chaired, created a new one (Democratic National Salvation Front, soon to be renamed PDSR) and still managed to win both presidential and parliamentary elections, clearly demonstrates the amount of his personal political leverage. The same could be said about his electoral performance relative to his party's during the hybrid regime period (see *Table 17*).

Table 17. Electoral performance (vote %) of Ion Iliescu relative to his party organizations' in hybrid regime Romania

Election year	1990	1992	1996
Iliescu	85.1	47.2*	28.2*
Party organization	66.3	27.7	21.5

*Source: Nohlen and Stover (2010); *First round results*

And while the hybrid regime incumbent party's fate in Romania was as generally predicted by the research model, the ideational background for the political rise of its leader was not. Iliescu, contrary to the model's assumption, did not gain political prominence as a result of a nationalist movement. During his second presidential term (1992-1996), arguably due to his party's coalition with nationalistic political forces, Iliescu did occasionally play 'the populist-nationalist card', at one point even warning that 'an opposition victory would lead to Yugoslavization of Romania through the secessionist plans of Hungarians in Transylvania' (Pop-

Eleches, 2001: 161). Yet, in terms of the character of political mobilization which preceded the very establishment of hybrid regime in Romania, the national idea did not play the dominant role. Instead, Iliescu used mainly economic arguments to win popular support, thereby catering to the upcoming transition-related fears, neuroses, and phobias among Romania's industrial workers and peasants (Tismaneanu, 1993: 314).

5.2.5. Mexico

The general election held in July 2000 marked the end of the 71-year-long rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico. Throughout most of this time, the country represented an authoritarian system in which, notwithstanding regular multiparty elections, political competition practically did not exist.

Until the 1988 general election, no opposition presidential candidates or party lists could win more than 20 per cent of the vote (see *Table 18*).³⁶⁹ An early 1980s economic crisis challenged the incumbent party's political hegemony,³⁷⁰ leading to a series of opposition triumphs at municipal elections and, more importantly, the first meaningful presidential contest in recent Mexican history (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 153). It was still won by PRI's Carlos Salinas, but only after a major fraud, including vote count manipulation, ballot stuffing and multiple voting, was carried out (Ibid).

³⁶⁹ In line with the electoral competitiveness argument, this thesis therefore maintains that Mexico could be characterized as a hybrid regime case only in the subsequent period of the PRI's governance.

³⁷⁰ In 1982, Mexican government announced that it would no longer be able to finance its foreign debt. Many Latin American countries followed suit, which resulted in the partial breakdown of the region's trade and financial linkages to the world economy and its worst economic crisis in the 20th century (Cavarozzi, 1992: 665).

Table 18. Presidential elections (vote %) during the last three decades of PRI's rule

Election year	1970	1976	1982	1988	1994	2000
Best performing opposition candidate	14	0*	16.4	31.1	25.9	42.5

*Source: Nohlen (2005a); *In the 1976 election, PRI's José Lopez Portillo was the only candidate*

And while the opposition finally got at least an idea of political success, the PRI continued ruling by the use of fraud, repression, including dozens of opposition activists' killings (Eisenstadt, 2004: 121), tight media control, and almost unlimited access to the state finances. Mexico, in a word, entered the post-Cold War period as a competitive authoritarian regime (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 153). Yet, by mid-1990s, a number of political reforms were put in place, largely as a result of intense democratizing pressure from the U.S. brought upon Mexico in the process of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement adoption. A decisive impetus to the process of democratic change in this country came from its President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) who initiated multiparty talks which resulted in the 1996 adoption of a reform pact named the National Accord. By making electoral authorities free of political influence, and equalizing parties' access to financial resources and the media, the agreement 'did much to level the electoral playing field' (Schedler, 2000: 12). The Accord democratized Mexico and post-1996 elections were democratic, Levitsky and Way argue (2010: 160).

Establishing democracy or not,³⁷¹ the 1996 reform did by all means irreversibly change the country's political landscape. Before the end of the decade, the opposition won more than a third of the federal states and controlled more than a half of the country's population. In the 1997 legislative contest the PRI came first but lost majority in the lower chamber,³⁷² 'inaugurating an unprecedented experiment with divided government' (Schedler, 2000: 7). Three years later, in the aforementioned historic general election, PRI's presidential candidate Francisco Labastida lost to Vicente Fox, while the opposition Alliance for Change won the Chamber of Deputies.³⁷³ And while the late 1990s were marked with a fierce debate about whether Mexico qualified as an electoral democracy, 'it now became clear and beyond dispute' (Ibid: 5).

The party outcome (defeat) in Mexico was different than generally predicted by the research model. At the moment of the loss of incumbency, the PRI represented a highly institutionalized political organization. Over the decades in power, the party evolved into a disciplined, cohesive, patronage-based vote-getting machine with institutionalized procedures for career advancement and presidential succession (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 152).³⁷⁴ Moreover, in the course of the 1990s, the PRI embarked on 'rapid decentralization of party politics', moving toward 'open conventions and primaries' as the way to nominate candidates for all levels of government (Estevez et al, 2008: 46). Rank-and-file and electorate hence became

³⁷¹ Even in the late 1990s, as stated in the Freedom in the World 2001 country report, human rights violations were widespread, the judicial system was weak, politicized, and corrupt, political and civic expressions were restricted throughout rural Mexico, government critics were intimidated, while the media, albeit largely private, still depended for advertising revenue on the government (available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2001/mexico#.Uxbnmz9dUIA>).

³⁷² Out of 500 seats total, the PRI secured 239, seven short of the two biggest opposition parties – the National Action Party and Party of the Democratic Revolution – combined.

³⁷³ Fox came first, winning 42.5 per cent of the vote. The Alliance won 38.2 (against PRI's 36.9) and secured 224/500 seats in the Chamber.

³⁷⁴ The constitutional limit of only one six-year presidential term certainly contributed to the ruling party's institutionalization by preventing personalization of political power in Mexico.

increasingly decisive in determining the fate of politicians contending for party's nomination (Diaz-Cayeros and Langston, 2005), as demonstrated in the open 1999 presidential primary. Besides, PRI's electoral results (relative to its presidential candidates') from the hybrid regime period show that the party was publically perceived as a political value *per se* (Table 19).

Table 19. Electoral performance (vote %) of the PRI and its presidential candidates in hybrid regime Mexico

Election year	1988	1994	2000
PRI	51	50.2	36.9
PRI's presidential candidate	50.7	48.7	36.1

Source: Nohlen (2005a)

On the other hand, as hypothesized by the model, institutionalization of the Mexico's hybrid regime dominant party corresponds with its lack of nationalist-populist agenda around the time of the regime establishment. Although one of PRI's officially proclaimed goals was 'the protection of revolutionary legacy', the party had no clearly defined ideology and therefore employed temporary projects – mostly related to economic reforms - to legitimize political hegemony and evade full democracy (Cheng, 2008: 128).

5.2.6.Peru

Hybrid regimes come into being either subsequent to their political leaders' triumph in competitive elections (post-communist Europe) or as a result of gradual liberalization of long-standing authoritarian political systems (e.g. Ghana, Taiwan, Mexico). In the former group of regimes, incumbents would invest previously acquired popular mandate in creating systems of government in which, in terms of the access to

power, they were hyper-privileged relative to political opponents. Most often, however, it was their promise of (more) democracy that had initially won the electoral support.

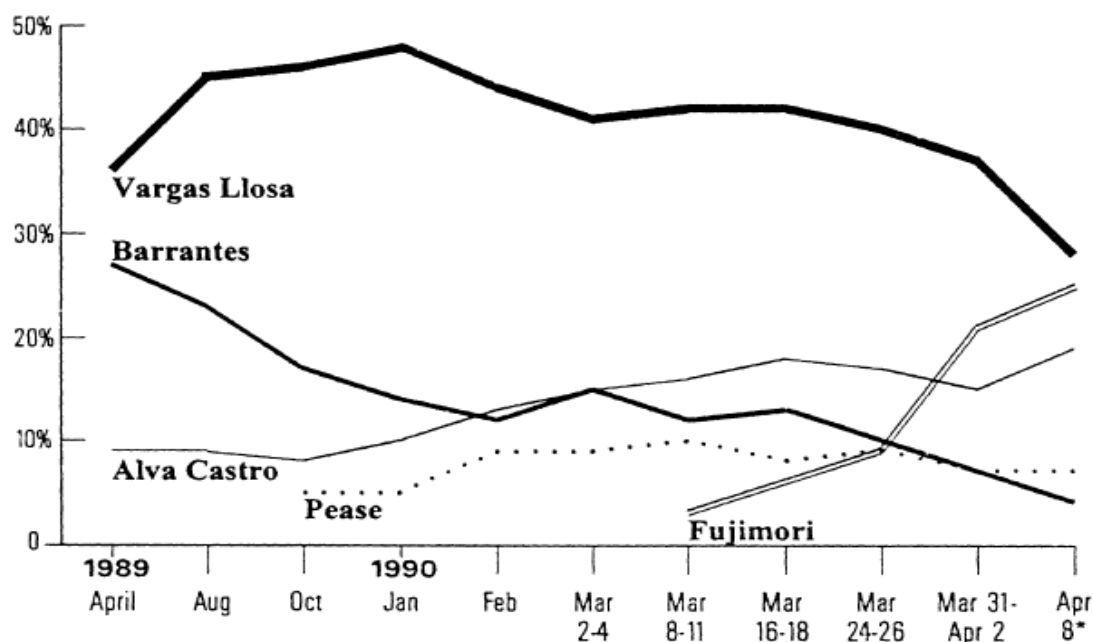
In Peru, on the other hand, the establishment of hybrid regime seemed to correspond with political expectations of a majority of people. In April 1992, the country's president Alberto Fujimori dissolved the Congress and assumed its legislative powers. In his words, the aim of this constitutional coup (widely known as *autogolpe*) was getting rid of a 'false democracy dominated by party cliques' (Levitsky and Cameron, 2003: 8). Interestingly, Peruvians predominantly endorsed Fujimori's decision. The level of public support for the president soared from 53 per cent right before the coup to as much as 81 per cent in the wake of it (Levitsky and Cameron, 2003: 8).³⁷⁵ In massively backing the coup, 'Peruvians essentially converted Fujimori into a democratic dictator' (Levitsky, 1999: 80-81).³⁷⁶ Another distinctive trait of the Peruvian case of hybrid regime relates to Fujimori's victory in the April/June 1990 presidential election. Coming closely behind Mario Vargas Llosa, internationally acclaimed novelist, in the first round of election (29.1 vs. 32.6 per cent of the vote), Fujimori triumphed with an impressive margin in the second, winning 62.4 per cent. His success was so unexpected that many country experts came to regard it as a sort of 'political paradox' (Weyland, 2000). Merely a month before the

³⁷⁵ Moreover, until the end of his first term, Fujimori's approval rating remained above 66 per cent (Ibid).

³⁷⁶ Levitsky explains the referendum outcome in the following way: 'Peru experienced massive political and socioeconomic problems in the early 1990s that literally brought the state to the brink of collapse. Hyperinflation, the violent advance of the Shining Path guerrillas, and executive-legislative deadlock created a climate of ungovernability that legitimated – if it did not precipitate – the coup. Yet the erosion of support for the democratic regime was also a product of a longer-term crisis of the Peruvian political class [...] By the late 1980s, all of Peru's political parties [...] were perceived to have been co-opted into an aging and predominantly white, Lima-based political elite that was increasingly out of touch with the day-to-day realities of most Peruvians. As a result, many Peruvians came to view the entire party system as an "oligarchic" political class' (1999: 80-81).

election, public opinion polls showed no more than one percent of support for Fujimori (see *Table 20*).

Table 20. Peruvian voters' presidential preferences (1990 elections)



*Percentage of total vote in first round.

Source: Schmidt (1996)

What makes Fujimori's initial political success even more interesting is the fact that he won the election without a clearly defined and, because of his underdog status, widely known political platform. Few Peruvians knew much about his positions on the issues because the media had neglected him and his message was cast in generalities (Ibid: 343). In view of all these factors, many came to attribute Fujimori's unforeseen political rise and, in particular, the popular support for his subsequent non-democratic decisions to the culmination of a series of structural problems in Peru

toward the end of the 1980s, including the aforementioned party politics collapse, socio-economic downfall, guerillas' insurgency etc.³⁷⁷

In many regards, hybrid regime established by Fujimori subsequent to the 1992 democratic breakdown resembled most cases analyzed in this chapter. In a nutshell, civil liberties were regularly and massively violated; the president's political opponents were persecuted by the previously purged state institutions and newly created mafia networks, state resources were massively used to finance his political campaigns, whereas most media were tightly controlled (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 164-5).³⁷⁸ Yet, the level of power personalization we find in this particular regime is unmatched by its counterparts. Peru under Fujimori represented a 'prototypical case of neo-populism', Robert Barr argues and further explains:

'He [Fujimori] ruled in a top-down, personalistic manner; he made direct appeals to Peru's poor, particularly the unorganized masses; he made heavy use of an "anti-system" or "anti-political" rhetoric that lambasted the political class for causing the nation's many problems; he manipulated the institutions of government to concentrate power in the executive office, thereby facilitating his use of state resources for personal political gain' (2003: 1162).

And while other state institutions were, as expected, entirely subordinated to the president's political will, he even did not bother to organize a proper political party

³⁷⁷ Weyland thus reminds that, between February 1988 and May 1990, Peruvian Gross Domestic Product dropped by nearly a quarter, government spending declined from above 30 to less than 20 per cent of GDP, while the inflation rate went up from around 20 to more than 60 per cent. At the same time, brutal guerilla movement known as the 'Shining Path' spread across the country, killing state officials, community leaders and ordinary people. As the police and military counterinsurgency was 'equally brutal', Peru, adjacent to economic collapse, 'seemed headed toward full-scale civil war by the end of the decade' (2000: 485).

³⁷⁸ Levitsky writes that many journalists were followed, harassed, and intimidated by death threats during this period, while a number of regime critics were forced to leave Peru to avoid various legal charges. The Congress was transformed into a virtual rubber stamp, whereas the nominally independent National Board of Elections as well as the Supreme Court and other judicial institutions were stacked with Fujimori-loyalists. In addition, the powers of the *Fiscal de la Nación*, another formally independent body authorized to investigate and prosecute abuses by state officials, were transferred to a government-controlled body (1999: 79-80).

to help him govern. Regarding himself as the ‘savior of the country from the acute crises of hyperinflation and terrorism’ (Ibid), Fujimori believed, particularly after the landslide victory in the 1995 general elections,³⁷⁹ that his personal political appeal would be strong enough to keep him in power (see *Table 21*).

Table 21. Fujimori’s electoral performance (in million votes) relative to his party organizations’

Election year	1990	1995	2000
Fujimori	1,93	4,64	5,52
Party organization	0,81	2,19	4,18

Source: Nohlen (2005b)

Pertinent to such conviction, he founded throughout the 1990s as many as four parties but ‘no real political organization’ (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 163). This turned out to be politically very costly as his last party list, ‘Peru 2000’, created right before the 2000 legislative election, failed to win a majority of seats (52/120). Subsequently, Fujimori sought to compensate for this political setback through the bribery of the Congress members. However, once this was publicized, he was forced to call new elections and, under enormous pressure both domestic and international, flee the country. The free and fair 2001 general elections, in which the Peru 2000 did not even partake, effectively put an end to the hybrid regime in this country.

The unparalleled personalization of political power thus proved to be the major weakness of the Peruvian regime and, as generally predicted by the research model, the ultimate reason behind its breakdown. Expectedly, the party outcome in this

³⁷⁹ Fujimori was re-elected President with 64.3 per cent of the vote.

particular case was a collapse, notwithstanding the changing names of poorly institutionalized incumbent party organization(s) during Fujimori's presidency. In the course of the political mobilization preceding the regime's establishment (1990-1992), we did not witness, in any form, the presence of the national idea. Still, if we – as elaborated in the last section of this chapter – presumed that the populist mobilization in Peru and the rest of Latin America could serve as a functional equivalent of the nationalist mobilization in post-communist Europe, this case would fit entirely into our model.

5.2.7. The Dominican Republic

Hybrid regime in this country collapsed in the aftermath of the 1994 fraudulent general election. Long and complicated post-authoritarian political transition of the Dominican Republic (Conaghan and Espinal, 1990) was thus successfully brought to an end. A generally positive course of this process seemed to be changed with Joaquin Balaguer's electoral triumph and return to the presidential office in May 1986.³⁸⁰

Subsequent to his re-election, the country slid back into competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 135). His rule, albeit less repressive than during the earlier terms,³⁸¹ was characterized by manipulation and the use against

³⁸⁰ In words of Jonathan Hartlyn: 'Ever since May 1961, when Rafael Trujillo's 31-year-old dictatorship ended under a hail of assassins' bullets, the Dominican Republic has been moving, albeit haltingly, toward democracy. Free elections were held in 1962, for instance, but the winner was overthrown less than a year after he took office. Two years later came a civil-military uprising, followed days later by a U.S. military intervention. The legitimacy of elections held in 1966 was clouded by this intervention, and overt military pressure against the opposition limited the democratic nature of the 1970 and 1974 elections. Only in 1978 did a democratic transition occur as political power passed from one political party to another through elections, though international pressure was crucial in ensuring that the results would be respected. Elections that were democratic but incident-prone followed in 1982 and 1986' (1990: 92).

³⁸¹ Balaguer had previously served as the President from 1960 to 1962 and from 1966 to 1978. Throughout the 1970s, channels of representation in Dominican Republic were seriously curtailed under his civilian-authoritarianism. Catherine Conaghan and Rosario Espinal write the following about the character of his rule:

political opponents of the most important state institutions, including judiciary and the Central Elections Board. In addition, the concentration of power in Balaguer's hands created strong incentives for him not to hold fully free and fair competitive elections (Hartlyn, 1994: 102). And indeed, the 1990 election, narrowly won by the incumbent president was marred by irregularities and allegations of fraud that were widely believed by large numbers of Dominicans (Ibid: 106).

What is more, the next general election was stolen via massive manipulation of the voter rolls (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 136). This time, the charges of electoral fraud were well-documented and 'the accuracy of the tally widely disbelieved, both domestically and internationally' (Hartlyn, 1994: 91). Faced with fierce criticism from abroad, while his political alliance network (including the church and business sector) was collapsing, Balaguer was forced to leave the office. New presidential elections – to be deemed free and fair by international observers – were called for 1996. And while Balaguer did not run this time, his Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC) performed poorly two years later, in the first democratic balloting after 1986 (see *Table 22*). Hence, the party outcome in this case is scored as a defeat and, given the structure of power within the PRSC, is in line with our theoretical model.

In many aspects, Dominican hybrid regime was patrimonial (Hartlyn, 1994). The political power was, as mentioned above, monopolized by the powerful president. Holding the office for as long as five terms, Balaguer was able to 'largely ignore his party structure' (Hartlyn, 1990: 96).³⁸² The fact that, at the time the 1994

'Although Balaguer did not close the Congress, it was completely subordinated to the executive. While the Government did not officially ban political parties (with the exception of Marxist organizations), party life was limited by the repressive tactics of state agencies and paramilitary forces [...] Balaguer used consultations with hand-picked individuals to replace institutionalized decision-making in the Dominican Republic' (1990: 562).

³⁸² Thus, for instance, Balaguer invited Carlos Troncoso, 'a politically unknown businessman without ties to any mass constituency', to join him as a Vice-presidential candidate on the ticket for the 1986 election. Four years

presidential election was held, he was 86-years old and almost completely sightless did not by any means jeopardize his absolute political supremacy within the PRSC.³⁸³ Albeit with a solid organizational capacity, his party was structured around a mix of personalism and clientelism (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 134). Consequently, as demonstrated by its electoral performances in 1998 and, particularly, in the years following Balaguer's 2002 departure, the PRSC failed to develop organizational autonomy vis-à-vis its founder and the historic leader.

Table 22. PRSC's electoral performance (vote %) during and after Balaguer's party chairmanship

Election year	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
PRSC's result	41.6	34.6	39.1	16.8	24.4	10.9	1.5

Source: Nohlen (2005b)

Finally, as in the case of Peru, political platform on which hybrid regime was (re)established after the 1986 elections was mainly focused on socio-economic matters and, most often, did not seem to be 'nationally colored'. Prior to the return to power, Balaguer embarked on a broad-based populist mobilization, promising order and progress, and advocating reforms such as modernization, urbanization, and import substitute industrialization. In this regard, he could be characterized as a right-wing populist who wanted to impose modernizing capitalist revolution from above.³⁸⁴ At the same time, Balaguer invited the masses 'to weigh in on his previous

later, once again in a manner very similar to Slobodan Milošević's, he chose 'at the last minute' the same candidate for the same position (Ibid).

³⁸³ His slogan for the 1990 presidential election, 'Balaguer: A Route without Danger', seemed to be taken very seriously by the party officials.

³⁸⁴ See an excellent analysis of Balaguer's political career at: <http://sdonline.org/37/joaquin-balaguer-and-contemporary-dominican-politics-and-society/>.

statesman achievements' (Liberato, 2013: 82). If populist mobilization was taken as a functional equivalent of post-communist nationalist mobilization, this case would also fit into our theoretical model.

5.3. Comparative lessons

As shown in the table below and thoroughly elaborated above, the results of the comparative analysis of party outcomes in democratized hybrid regimes suggest that our model is entirely applicable to three of these cases. In Slovakia, we find an example of non-institutionalized dominant party that lost power as the regime, built upon a nationalist platform of its leader, ceased to exist. In Macedonia and Taiwan, institutionalized ruling parties without nationalist agendas stayed in office in the face of the regime collapse. In four other cases, the model's causal mechanism works only partially. Although we did not witness a nationalist mobilization in Mexico around the time of the hybrid regime establishment, its institutionalized dominant party suffered – contrary to our expectations – a defeat in the elections that put an end to the regime. In Romania, the Dominican Republic, and Peru, we also do not find examples of nationalist mobilization even though the lack of institutionalization of their ruling parties resulted – as anticipated – in the turnover in power after the regime-changing elections.

In that regard, one should bear in mind that the analytical focus of this study is primarily on the post-communist political context in which, for the reasons mentioned in the outline of the research model, the national issue is generally expected to be politically salient. Yet, the universe of cases examined in this chapter exceeds the study's original empirical domain and, beside Taiwan, stretches onto the region of Latin America where the national issue has, as a rule, been long settled. At the same time, one can there identify a high incidence of mass political protests which, albeit

ideationally different, bear a great resemblance to the processes of post-communist nationalist mobilization. By default, these populist movements appeal to very heterogeneous social groups and are organized around a strong, charismatic leader (Germani, 1978; Conniff, 1982; Collier and Collier 1991; Oxhorn 1998). They call for the radical redrawing of social borders along lines other than those that had previously structured society (Panizza, 2005: 9). In principle, populism comes about 'when personalistic leaders base their rule on massive yet mostly uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of people' (Weyland, 2001: 18). The role of populist leaders is thereby very important as they mobilize electorate and greatly influence the process of 'defining the morphology of populist ideology' (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2012: 10). As demonstrated by the region's recent political experience, populist movements frequently led to the establishment of hybrid regimes (Levitsky and Loxton, 2012).

On this basis, one could argue that the populist mobilization in Latin American countries might be considered a functional equivalent to the nationalist mobilization in post-communist states. This would increase the level of generalizability of our model as it would become entirely applicable to the cases of hybrid regime dominant party defeat in the Dominican Republic and Peru.

Table 23. General applicability of the model explaining party outcomes in democratized hybrid regimes

Country	Hybrid regime period	Nationalist mobilization	Party institutionalization	Party Outcome	Model Applicability
Slovakia	1992-1998	Yes	No	Defeat	Yes
Macedonia	1990-2008	No	Yes	Survival	Yes
Taiwan	1989-1996	No	Yes	Survival	Yes
Romania	1990-1996	No	No	Defeat	No
Mexico	1988-2000	No	Yes	Defeat	No
The Dominican Republic	1986-1998	No*	No	Defeat	No
Peru	1992-2000	No*	No	Defeat	No

*Source: Author's table; *Cases of populist mobilization*

On the other hand, six cases of hybrid regime democratization listed by Levitsky and Way either do not qualify as hybrid regimes or cannot be considered democratized. These cases, as elaborated above, could therefore not be used to test the generalizability of the model.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The world-wide proliferation of hybrid regimes has been one of the most dominant trends of the global political development in the post-Cold War period. Across Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America, by legalizing opposition parties and allowing for competitive elections, authoritarian rulers formally adopted democratic rules of the game while, in effect, resisting the genuine regime change. Their dream was ‘to reap the fruits of electoral legitimacy without running the risk of democratic uncertainty’ (Schedler, 2002: 37). With the aim of ensuring the continuity in power in the newly ‘democratized’ political systems, they invented a variety of mechanisms of political manipulation which were to provide them with a decisive advantage over political rivals.

A flourishing body of literature has recognized the prevalence of hybrid regimes in the last quarter of a century. Particular academic attention has been given to their diverging fates, i.e. the fact while a majority of these regimes consolidated and survived to date, a number of them – notwithstanding the aforementioned political advantage of their authoritarian rulers – underwent the process of democratization during this period. Three types of factors (Western political influence, incumbent power, and opposition activity) have been identified in the literature on hybrid regimes as crucial for their developmental trajectories. At the same time, the diverging fates of dominant parties in democratized hybrid regimes have been largely neglected. As a consequence, we currently do not know much, if anything, about the reasons why most of these parties lost power at the moment of regime change while some managed to stay in office nonetheless.

Aiming to contribute to a better understanding of this understudied political phenomenon, this thesis focuses on the three cases of democratized hybrid regimes in the Western Balkans region (Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia). As a potential reason behind the above said academic neglect, it firstly points to the fallacious tendency of interested scholars to elide the notion of hybrid regimes with that of their ruling parties. It thereby lists a number of cases of hybrid regime survival in the face of turnover in power, and vice-versa. Thus making a clear analytical distinction between the two, the thesis moves to offer an explanation for the different party outcomes in the countries under investigation.

To that goal, it brings together two distinct bodies of literature (on hybrid regimes and political parties) and, on that basis, puts forward an innovative theoretical argument about party institutionalization as the key determinant of the outcomes in question. Unlike most related studies referring to the amount of power of party organizations as the only analytically relevant dimension of their strength, the thesis concentrates primarily on the internal structure of their power. It demonstrates that, irrespective of the power capacity, political parties in recently pluralized regimes regularly serve as personal political tools of their leaders. The thesis therefore argues that, in this particular political context, party institutionalization first and foremost relates to the process through which a given party organization acquires political influence irrespective of its leader's.

Accordingly, the first (internal) element of the proposed party institutionalization model is related to (de-)personalization of political power in the party organization. Because of the inapplicability of the existing measurement indicators, the thesis identifies an alternative way to assess the level of power personalization by looking at the composition of party's leadership and central

bodies. The argument is that in party organizations with personalized power structure, party heads will seek to 'maintain discipline', i.e. assure submission to their authority by means of regular and considerable changes of these organs' makeup. The second (external) element of the model refers to popular perception of the party organization. This is of key importance for the perpetuation of hybrid regimes conditioned, as a rule, by their dominant parties' electoral performance. To assess the amount of political influence of these parties against their leaders' personal political leverage (which is in line with the afore-stated basic assumption about party institutionalization in newly pluralized political systems), the thesis proposes the juxtaposition of their electoral results in an observed time period.

Its main argument is therefore the following: whether the ruling party will survive in power the collapse of hybrid regime (party outcome) is determined by the way its power is internally structured and the way its organization is publicly perceived (party institutionalization). Before testing its empirical validity, the thesis sought to identify the reasons behind dissimilar patterns of power organization, i.e. diverging levels of power personalization of the dominant parties in hybrid regimes. Focusing on the recent post-communist political experience, it recognized the national question as an extraordinarily powerful tool for the broad-based political mobilization against the ideologically and institutionally crisis-ridden communist systems. Building upon the literature on charismatic leadership, it thereby pointed to the frequent emergence of politically ambitious individuals that would advance national programs averse to the existing regimes. Triumphant in the initial multiparty elections, most of them 'invested' the popular legitimacy into the creation of – still non-democratic – highly personalized systems of governance. In the newly established regimes, party organizations they headed would be subordinated to their

personal political goals and, albeit initially benefiting from the leaders' charisma, prevented from becoming institutionalized.

The model tested by the thesis is thus built upon the two main assumptions: first, the diverging fates of dominant parties in hybrid regimes are determined by these parties' (lack of) institutionalization; and second, (the lack of) their institutionalization is determined by the salience of the national question in the process of political mobilization leading to the regime establishment. As outlined below and thoroughly elaborated in the third chapter, the cases of party outcomes in the hybrid regimes in Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro strongly corroborate the theoretical validity of the model. Pursuant to the fundamental principles of the process tracing method, the thesis identified the presence of the hypothesized conditions (nationalist mobilization and the lack of party institutionalization) and established the causal link between them and the observed party outcome (the loss of power) in the former two cases. In the case of Montenegro, the thesis found the conditions absent (the lack of nationalist mobilization and the party institutionalization) and – as therefore expected – the different party outcome (survival in power). In addition, the thesis pointed to a number of contextual (common Yugoslav past, crisis-ridden development, international isolation, etc.) as well as theoretically relevant similarities (uneven playing field, significant opposition activity) and differences (dominant parties' origins and economic policies, and the scale oppression of the opposition forces) between these cases, with the reference to which the observed outcomes could not be explained.

Throughout the decades that followed the establishment of the socialist Yugoslavia, the sense of discontent with the political and economic status of Croatia and Serbia developed among their intellectual and political elites. Suppressed by the

federal authorities during Tito's presidency, the resultant nationalist narratives turned, in the years after his death, into the platforms for popular mobilization against the political status quo. In the atmosphere of political crisis and uncertainty, Milošević and Tuđman succeeded in imposing themselves as the 'desperately needed' protectors of national interests in Serbia and Croatia respectively. Subsequently, on the basis of the electoral support for the national-patriotic strategy, the two leaders established hybrid political regimes in which the decision-making power was monopolized by them. At the same time, their party organizations (the Socialist Party of Serbia and the Croatian Democratic Union) were transformed into mere transmission belts for the realization of their political ambitions. The elections organized in this period, in which compared to the SPS and HDZ their leaders performed much better, clearly reflected the structure of their power. As a consequence, notwithstanding significant power capacities, the two parties failed to institutionalize during the years of incumbency, which led to their loss of power at the moment of regime change.

In Montenegro, because of the extremely negative political treatment by the Serb-dominated government, the general sense of political dissatisfaction (similar to the aforementioned) existed throughout the period of the Yugoslav kingdom. However, following the end of the Second World War, the small state became politically and economically most favored part of the newly created socialist Yugoslavia. As a result, Montenegro witnessed a few decades of the unprecedented socio-economic progress while its political elite and public grew a very strong pro-Yugoslav sentiment. On the other hand, potentially sensitive issue of the under-developed Montenegrin national identity remained unaddressed. When in the course of the 1980s Yugoslavia descended into the crisis, the national program similar to

those in Serbia and Croatia – and, hence, the room for emergence of a Milošević-/Tuđman-like charismatic leader – did not exist in Montenegro. None of the members of its new political leadership that came to power in January 1989 was therefore able to gain as much personal political influence. Instead, the decision-making power was distributed within the top ranks of Montenegro's ruling party. In the years to come, the highest representatives of the Democratic Party of Socialists acted strictly in line with its established political interests. The whole menu of manipulation in the subsequently founded hybrid regime was duly employed to secure the party's continuity in power. Measured by the electoral results from this period, the DPS even enjoyed somewhat greater popular support than its president. Successfully institutionalized, the party managed to survive in power the regime change in Montenegro.

Finally, in line with the theory-centric orientation, the thesis also sought to identify the level of generalizability of the research model. Using the 2010 Levitsky and Way's study as the empirical framework, it tested the relevance of the observed causal mechanism for the party outcomes in other cases of democratized hybrid regimes. It found the model entirely applicable to three of them (Slovakia, Macedonia, and Taiwan). In four other cases (Romania, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Peru), largely due to the empirical diversity, the underlying causal mechanism works only partially. If, however, the populist mobilization in Latin America was taken as a functional equivalent of the nationalist mobilization in post-communist states, the latter two of these cases would fit into the model. Furthermore, the thesis finds Benin – categorized by Levitsky and Way as a hybrid regime from 1991 to 2006 – to be a case of direct democratic transition from authoritarian regime. On the other hand, it argues that the two cases from the Levitsky and Way's list of

hybrid regime democratizers (Mali and Ukraine) cannot be considered democratized yet. In addition, thesis holds that, either because they did not last long enough (Ghana and Nicaragua) or were not electorally competitive enough (Guyana), another three of these regimes could not be qualified as hybrid regimes in the first place and, alongside Benin, could therefore not be used for testing the model's generalizability.

And while the focus of the present study is on hybrid regimes which underwent democratic transition during the post-Cold War period, it should be acknowledged that these regimes are still found in a significant number of countries worldwide. This thesis could therefore help us better understand their current political dynamics and, possibly, anticipate their future political development. When the latter is concerned, its findings might also be of practical relevance provided, of course, that we previously leave the boundaries of science, led by the idea of democracy as the only politically legitimate system of governance of our time.

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Dušan Pavlović (Belgrade, June 2011)
Goran Čular (Zagreb, October 2011)
Ilija Vujošević (Podgorica, July 2013)
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