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Original scientific article

PERCEPTION OF THE MONTENEGRIN STUDENT POPULATION ON NATO MEMBERSHIP

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SUMMARY:

At the beginning of June 2017 Montenegro has become a full member of the NATO alliance. This decision was preceded by a perennial debate about the pros and cons of such a decision that took place in the framework of the political structures, civil society, the academic community and other segments of the Montenegrin public. The public debate about the impact of the membership on the future of Montenegro took place between the two extremes in the public discourse. On one side, there was a substantiated and warranted debate between those who affirmed this decision and those who opposed it. However, to a large extent, this debate has remained in the shadow of the so-called negative campaign that was followed by a strong populist rhetoric, which has a tray in every way to challenge the arguments of the other side. This negative campaign, which presents itself on both sides, instead of using the arguments and facts, they try to gain the support by reviving the traditional historical narrative of state friends and enemies, traitors and patriots. Rather than using reasonable, logical and practical solutions, both sides in the debate played their cards on emotions and attachment of citizens that affiliate themselves to certain ideological or political programs.

We estimated that it is very important to determine the effect of such campaigns on a portion of the student population in order to determine the perception of these categories of Montenegrin citizens. We analysed the perception and

attitudes of young people through a questionnaire, which in the period from 1 to 15 May 2017, was filled in by 206 students of the University of Montenegro, mostly from the departments of Social Sciences. Of the total respondents, 19% of the students were from the Faculty of Law, 18% of the Political Sciences, 16% of the economy, 5% from the Faculty of Sciences, 14% from the Department of English, 13% of students of History, 9% Psychology and 6% of students from the Department of Teachers.

KEY WORDS:

Montenegro; Young; Perception; NATO; Russia;

SAŽETAK:

Crna Gora je početkom juna 2017. godine postala punopravna članica NATO-. Toj odluci prethodila je višegodišnja debata o pozitivnim i negativnim aspektima takve odluke koja se vodila u okviru političkih struktura, civilnog društva, akademske zajednice i drugih segmenata crnogorske javnosti. Debata o uticaju članstva u NATO, sa jedne strane je vođena kroz razmjenu argumenata onih koji su afirmisali i osporavali tu odluku. Istovremeno, na drugoj strani, vođena je negativna kampanja bez argumenata i činjenica. Negativnom kampanjom, pokušavala se dobiti podrška zasnovana na oživljavanju tradicionalnih istorijskih narativa o *državnim prijateljima i neprijateljima, izdajnicima i patriotama*. Cijenili smo da je značajno utvrditi efekat takve kampanje prema djelu studentske populacije kako bi utvrdili percepciju ove kategorije crnogorskih građana. Percepciju i stavove mladih analizirali smo preko upitnika koji je u periodu od 1. do 15. maja 2017. godine popunilo 206 studenata Univerziteta Crne Gore uglavnom sa katedri društveno-humanističkih nauka. Od ukupnog broja ispitanika, 19% studenata bilo je sa Pravnog fakulteta, 18% sa Političkih nauka, 16% sa Ekonomije, 5% sa Prirodno-matematičkog fakulteta, 14% sa katedre za Engleski jezik, 13% studenata Istorije, 9% Psihologije i 6% studenata sa katedre za Učitelje.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

Crna Gora; Mladi; Percepcija; NATO; Rusija;

INTRODUCTION - HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The formation and development of Montenegrin statehood was quite often formed under the influence of an external factor. Since the first Slovenian principality, many influences and interweaving of various military-political interests were noticeable on the territory of Montenegro. Initially focused on the questions of religious jurisdiction between Rome and Constantinople, these interests will eventually evolve into a direct interference of external factors, with the ambition to strengthen their position in this area and to expand the system of values for which they stood. From the Byzantine Empire, the Roman Curia, the Venetian Republic, Ottoman, Russian, Austrian and French empire and all the way to the interests of local-neighbouring states, the territory of Montenegro is strongly associated with such foreign policy influence. The consequence of this is the fact that the entire concept of Montenegrin statehood, to a lesser or greater extent, developed itself with some kind of alliance or enmity with any of the great powers that had some self-interest in the territory of Montenegro.

Discontinuity with this policy occurred after the end of World War I when Montenegro statehood was abolished. Royal family Petrović-Njegoš was taken down from the throne, official institutions of the Kingdom of Montenegro were abolished and Montenegro was merged with Serbia at first and then in the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The restoration of the statehood on the second session of AVNOJ 1943. had limited all attempts of external influence on the situation in Montenegro. Constitutional provisions of socialist state and every question of foreign policy were carried over to the federal authorities and there was not a special interest in these issues among local politicians in. Official Montenegro in the federal authorities supported the views that have affirmed the policy of neutrality between the Western and Eastern military bloc and the concept of non-alignment and economic cooperation with third world countries.

The problematisation of the foreign policy position of Montenegro and the questions of military alliances were again the main topic in the late 20th century, after the political divisions in the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists. The centre-left political party, formed in 1991 from the League of Communist, during the first five years of the nineties supported the policies of Slobodan Milošević. Over time, party top will reach the division that will evolve into a form of ideological conflict

between the two models of the future development of Montenegro. Finally, this conflict will generate and open dilemmas of foreign policy priorities of Montenegro and later the question for its classification in the military-political alliances. The part of the political structures of the Democratic Party of Socialists, led by President Momir Bulatović will continue to support Milošević while the second part of the leadership will move away from this policy and take an open pro-Western stance. The new, pro-Western political power in the Democratic Party of Socialists was led by then-Vice President Milo Đukanović. The basic concept of this political power was based on the rejection of Milošević's policy, democratisation of society and creating the conditions for Montenegro's economic viability. Over time, these ideas will take the form of a rounded political agenda that includes greater independence of Montenegro in the federation with Serbia and intense rapprochement with the European Union. Pro-Western political faction in the ruling party won the support of the Euro-Atlantic partners and the majority of Montenegrin citizens supported Đukanović's choice to run for the president in 1997. A year later, the pro-Western political structures have also won in the parliamentary elections. The new political majority in Montenegro was showing an increasing distance from the authorities in Belgrade, taking strong diplomatic activity and establishing partnership relations with the European Union and the United States. Montenegrin state leadership was recognized among the Euro-Atlantic allies as a leader of the pro-Western policy in the Balkans. Finally, after the fall of Slobodan Milošević in 2000, Montenegrin leadership has openly begun to promote a policy of independence, which will be confirmed in a referendum in 2006.

MILITARY ALLIANCE IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Almost in all the electoral processes from 1997 and especially after 2000, the relationship with the military-political alliances is a very frequent topic of Montenegrin public discourse. Since the presidential election in 1997 until the last parliamentary elections in October 2016, the main topic of political campaigns has been the attitude about the Montenegrin independence. Regarding this segment of political activities, parties are grouped into two streams: the pro-independence and the unionist. In both of them there are the national and civil political parties, but the division relative to Montenegro independence has determined their position in

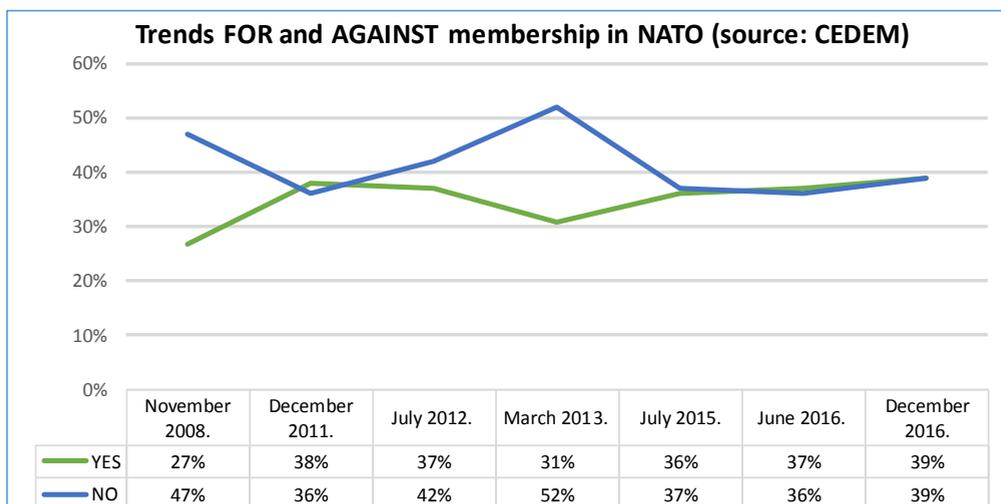
politics. The attitude towards the independence of Montenegro is directly reflected on the attitude of political parties towards foreign policy priorities. The parties that were in favour of Montenegro's independence have absolutely supported Montenegro's membership in the European Union and NATO, while in the Unionist parties there was a great distance regarding these issues, especially towards NATO membership.

Pro-Western-independence political structure since 1997 have continuously received the support of citizens in elections. This position has opened the possibility, that after the fall of Milošević in 2000, to openly start the process of renewal of Montenegrin statehood, which was finally achieved in the referendum in 2006. The political program of the parties, which were in the block for the restoration of independence in the foreign policy, was fully committed to the idea of cooperation with the European Union and the NATO alliance. These parties have announced this in all of their electoral processes and the concept of the so-called Euro-Atlantic integration was an integral part of the offer in the elections from these structures to the citizens. This is confirmed in the declaration of independence in which was emphasized the commitment of the political structure of Montenegro to become a member of the European Union and the NATO alliance. The declaration states that Montenegro is strongly committed to access European and Euro Atlantic NATO security structures and to continue to contribute to the strengthening of the stability and security of the region (Declaration, 04. 06. 2006, p. 2-3). Commitment of political elites to the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration was also confirmed in the preamble to the Constitution of Montenegro (Constitution, 19. 10. 2007).

In the past, through functioning in the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, the so-called twin-track policy was established, whereby Montenegro, during the time of the joint state, made its first steps in the process of the European Union. Already in 2006 Montenegro has made the first step in the process of approaching the NATO alliance. On 29 November 2006 Montenegro was invited to join the Partnership for Peace military-political program of bilateral cooperation with NATO. In the following year, a military mission to NATO was already established in Brussels and from a summit in Bucharest in 2008 Montenegro participated in the NATO summit as an observer. After a complex process of reforms, Montenegro has received an invitation for membership on 2 December 2015. The Protocol of Accession was signed on 19 May 2016 and the next year it was ratified by all 28 member states. Meanwhile, the

Protocol of Accession, 29 April 2017, was confirmed by the deputies of the Montenegrin Parliament, while depositing its instrument of ratification of the contract, Montenegro on June 5 formally became a new, 29th member of the NATO alliance.

The process of Montenegro's integration in NATO, which lasted for ten years, was accompanied by intense changes on the political scene. We have already stated that back in the nineties the independence political parties defined as their foreign policy priorities Montenegrin membership in NATO. Later on, this idea has also become part of the political program of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists, which has promoted NATO as one of the priorities of foreign policy. The commitment of the ruling parties in Montenegro's membership in NATO was not accompanied by adequate public support. Continuous research on the relationship of Montenegrin citizens can be traced from 2008 when the support for the membership in NATO was the smallest but in the meantime the difference was significantly reduced. In November 2008, only 26.9% of citizens supported the NATO membership while 46.9% were against it. Gradually this number was decreasing and at the end of 2011 for the first time we had more citizens who supported the membership. Over time the number of those who supported the membership was tied to the number of opponents and if we exclude the research from the beginning of 2013, the number of citizens who supported or opposed Montenegro's membership in NATO was between 36% -39%.



The attitude towards the military-political alliances after 2006 is articulated through the dominant political party activities, while non-governmental organizations, government institutions, the media and intellectuals have generally followed the processes dictated by the political structure. On the political scene we can distinguish three models of action in relation to issues of military-political alliances. First, the parties that in this period were the holders of state power (Democratic Party of Socialists, Social Democratic Party, Liberal Party, Positive Montenegro, the Social Democrats and the National Party of Albanians, Bosnians and Croats) who in their programs and also publicly supported the membership in NATO. The program of Democratic Party of Socialists also states that: Montenegrin membership in NATO is a strategic goal of the state policy that contributes to the stability and security of the country and preserves its integrity and sovereignty. This is a prerequisite for the achievement of other strategic objectives: the society of the rule of law, democracy and development of economy (DPS Program, 2015). The structures that have been advocated on the need of Montenegro's membership, explained that NATO membership will provide political and military stability of the country, that Montenegro will stop the negative trends of social development and will join the community of the most developed and democratic countries in the world, that membership will increase the democratic capacities of the society, reduce corruption and organized crime, and finally have a positive impact on the Montenegrin economy. By joining NATO, Montenegro will provide itself long-term security and stability, which are necessary for further democratic development and economic prosperity that we want to achieve (Đukanović, 21. 05. 2006, p.3.). The membership in the Alliance keeps the border of Montenegro and its permanent sovereignty and guarantees stability and security (Pažin, 08. 06. 2016, p. 2). Membership in NATO strengthens the political profile of our country, guaranteeing the safety, security and stability as well as economic development (Garčević, 08. 06. 2016, p. 2). At the same time, they were very hard on opponents claiming that they want to stop Montenegro on its way to be closer to modern, European values. The centuries of roaming has led to this lagging behind in the Balkans, including Montenegro. Our opponents say: no NATO and Europe, we should remain on the traditional way of development of Montenegro. And that means in the way of further backwardness, instability, on the way of wars and poverty (Đukanović, 06. 09. 2016 p.2).

On the other hand, among those who opposed the decision about the accession of Montenegro in North Atlantic alliance, are most of those political structures who in 2006 advocated the preservation of the union with Serbia. There are relative programmatic differences among members of this political structure but their political action combines attitudes towards two questions: resistance to any form of cooperation with the Democratic Party of Socialists and its President Milo Đukanović and the question of Montenegro's membership in NATO. A part of the political structures is in favour of EU membership but opposes NATO membership (Program goals-NOVA). Other members of this bloc as the Democratic People's Party, are advocating the strengthening of all forms of cooperation with the Russian Federation (DNP-program). In the campaign against Montenegro's membership, the political structure argued that NATO is a militaristic organization in the function of imperialist expansion and the requests of individual members. They explained that the Montenegrin people allegedly opposed this decision, but that the political elite, because of a benevolent attitude of the international community, is pushing the story of the NATO alliance. As an alternative to NATO membership they advocated a military-neutrality that will be guaranteed by the Russian Federation and a strong mark of their campaign was focused on the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. The fact that NATO bombed Yugoslavia for them was one of the key reasons Montenegro should not go to NATO. Thus, from the representatives of these political structures could be heard that Montenegro today is in danger of seizing the sovereignty and becoming a colony (Zogović, 01. 06. 2016, p. 4). Montenegro does not want to join the military alliance, which recently bombed and killed our citizens, which destroyed our country and did everything in its power to be on the other side of the side where there was a Serbian national interest (Mandić, 27. 06. 2016, p. 27). Speaking about the Balkan Alliance of military neutral countries, the leader of DNP particularly emphasized the role of Russia in the possible implementation of these initiatives (Knežević, 28. 06. 2016, p. 2). The membership in NATO does not only seek additional, heavy financial costs of the countries that are members, but it brings suffering, blood and tears, making the lives of citizens' less safer and more vulnerable to various terrorist organizations (Vučurović, 16. 07. 2016, p. 2.).

As the campaign for membership in NATO was entering the final stage, a third group was formed among the political structures, which is not fully determined on this issue and it is linked to two political structure of the recent establishment

(Democrats and Demos). Although the rhetoric of these structures might suggest that they do not support NATO membership, their explicit attitudes are largely absent. These parties do not have in their political programs a clear definition of foreign policy and military priorities. Due to the sensitivity of the issue, commitment to the highest democratic standards, where on the top place is “Vox populi - vox dei”, we are determined to take on this issue and consult citizens by organizing a referendum (Democrats, 2015). Although they did not have a clearly defined position on foreign policy priorities, these parties have participated in the campaign and a central theme of their performance was insisting on holding a referendum on this issue. Instead of a referendum with the previously public space for communication of arguments for and against, we have an operation of falsifying reality and avoidance in making democratic decisions (Lekić, 26. 06. 2016, p. 18). Fragile mathematical and illegitimate majority cannot decide on behalf of all citizens of Montenegro. Therefore, we in the name of those who are against, but also on behalf of those who are, urge the referendum and that is it (Bečić, 17. 04. 2017, p. 3). If the decision about the membership in NATO, at any time, is made based on half of the Parliament it will be a proof that NATO members are not interested in lives and happiness of the Montenegro’s citizens and in the progress of the state (Danilović, 19. 01. 2017, p. 3.).

In addition to the differentiation of the entire political scene in this regard, the campaign was marked by a strong presence of populist messages that were heard from both sides. There could often be heard among the ruling political structures that the question of NATO’s is the most important challenge of the Montenegrin society and that therefore all other things should be put in the second place. This thesis was especially frequent during political campaigns when the results in the process of approaching the NATO alliance was praised for being the most important achievement of the ruling structures. In addition to the principal positions on strengthening the rule of law, greater security and economic development, campaign advocates of NATO integration did not follow any of the specific explanations for each of these premises. Such an approach was also used by the side that opposed the membership in NATO, who have their own ideas formulated over the theory of the so-called military neutrality, without precise explanation who would guarantee this imaginary military neutrality. Certain clarification of this idea was tried to be explained by the example of one of the members of the EU Lisbon Treaty, Article 42 - the so-called Ireland clause. According to their interpretation, if Montenegro joins

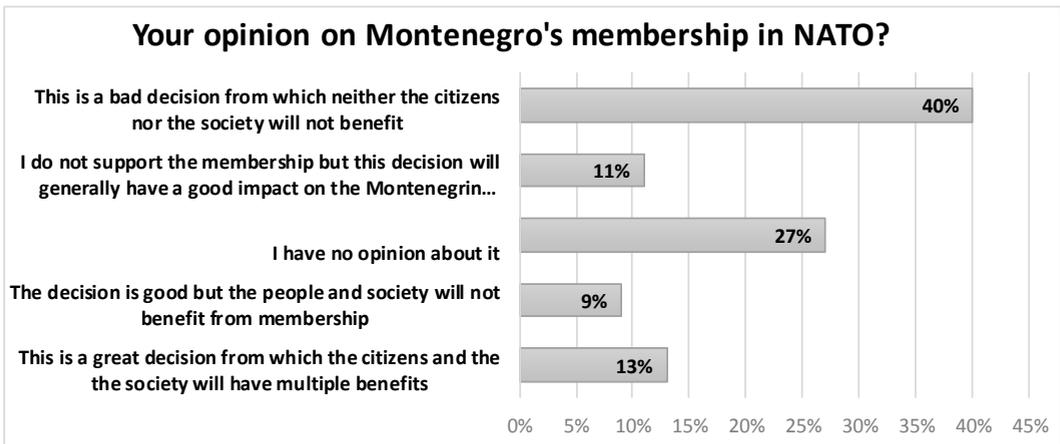
the European Union, this segment of the Lisbon Treaty, which says that member states should provide assistance to the country which is militarily threatened, there would be an adequate guarantor of Montenegro's military neutrality (Neutral, 2015). Using populism as a way of acting in the public stage, structures that oppose the membership, have often played on traditional relations with Russia and one of the strongest arguments that was used was the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and the victims of this military campaign that has taken place in Montenegro. Today we are sending a message that we do not reconcile with the imposition of oblivion, and that the majority of Montenegro is strongly against NATO membership and that any solution that has not been adopted in a referendum which would be guaranteed by Russia and NATO, will not be acceptable to us and we will not respect it (Knežević, 10. 01. 2016, p. 2.). All these circumstances contributed to the fact that the whole story of the military-political alliance was not without political interference, populism and causing various fears among citizens.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT POPULATIONS

The campaign on Montenegro's membership in the military alliance reflected on a number of segments of public life. In the foreground there was the political scene, but the question of future military-political alliances reflected on other segments of public life: the media, NGOs, industrial companies, educational institutions as well as the intense withdrawal of individuals from different institutions. Under the influence of these circumstances the perception of young people was created who by different models of communication received information about the military-political alliances. Students of the University of Montenegro, which were the subjects of this study, have formed their own experience of military-political alliances predominantly through the media, social networks and through what can be heard in public life (58% of respondents). The residues have formed their experience through the views of the commitment to a particular political idea (22%) or through the family members of the household and the attitudes of the older ones (20%). The fact that almost six out of ten respondents' views on military-political alliances was formed under the influence of the media, social networks and what is heard in public life, suggests that the room for indoctrination of the population was enormous. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the campaign was marked by a strong wave of populist rhetoric. In

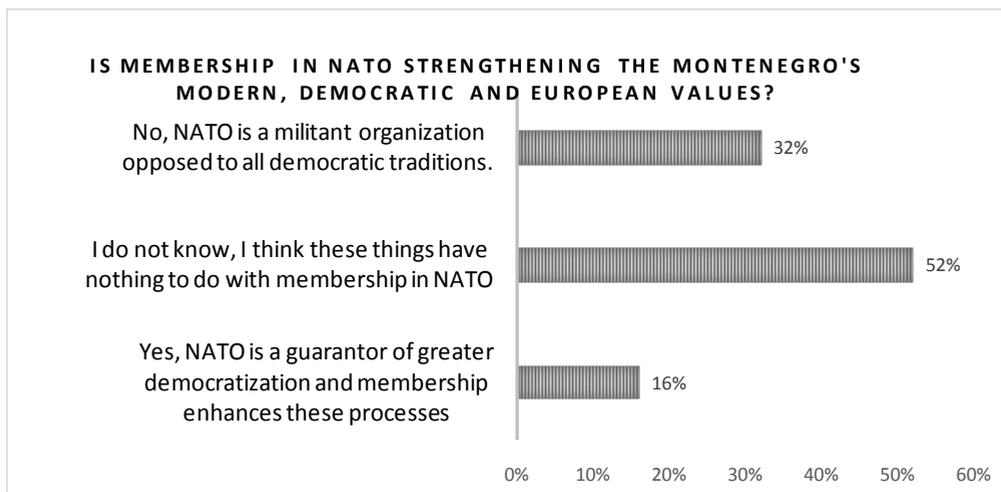
the public discourse and in the media, there was less official-verifiable information about the military-political alliances as opposed to a strong populist campaign.

In general, the respondents who participated in the survey do not have a positive attitude towards Montenegro's membership in NATO. Most of them (40%) believe that Montenegrin society will not have any benefit from the membership. Just above a quarter (27%) have no opinion on this decision while 33% in some way support such a decision. However, even among those who support the membership there were only 13% of the total number of respondents who believe that the decision is good and that individuals will benefit from it but also society in general. Among the group of respondents who in the membership see positive things, 9% of them claim that the decision is good but that the citizens and society will not have any great benefits from it, while 11% said they do not support membership but that society will generally benefit from such a decisions.



Relatively poor trends in the structure of responses to the question about the general attitude of young people towards the NATO alliance are not too problematic, as can be the perception of young people on these issues. This can be seen through their responses, where it is recognized that the most important message of advocates for the membership in NATO did not reach them. Safety that is guaranteed by this wide military alliance, a value system that is based on civilian control of the military structure, meeting the highest legal and democratic standards, the possibility of stronger economic growth, the arrival of investors in Montenegro and similar topics that the membership in NATO promotes, did not reach this population. The most graphic confirmation of this thesis is the fact that more than a half of respondents (51%) did not recognize

a single positive thing from Montenegro's membership in NATO. On the other hand, among those who recognized some of the benefits of membership, there are 19% who believe that membership will provide military and political stability of the country. Others believe that the NATO membership is a prerequisite for the membership in the European Union (16%), then that it will affect the strengthening of the Montenegrin economy and job creation (10%), while only 4% of them have seen the opportunity for enhancing democracy and democratic processes in Montenegro. These results clearly show that attitudes that have affirmed the policy of Euro-Atlantic integration among this population did not achieve the proper effect. A quarter of respondents have recognized the basic policy messages that propagate membership and those are the accession to the European Union and the creation of new jobs by strengthening the economic potential of Montenegro. Moreover, we should not forget that most of those who recognized the positive aspects of membership focused on the military and political stability. A significant number of these responses may suggest that young people are watching this process mainly through joining a military alliance while the membership value elements are placed in the background. The perception of young people that membership in NATO is predominantly a military issue, accurately confirms the answer to the question: whether the membership in NATO strengthens Montenegrin society to modern, democratic and European values. In response, only 16% of respondents confirmed this thesis, while twice as many (32%) responded that NATO is a militant organization that is contrary to all democratic traditions.

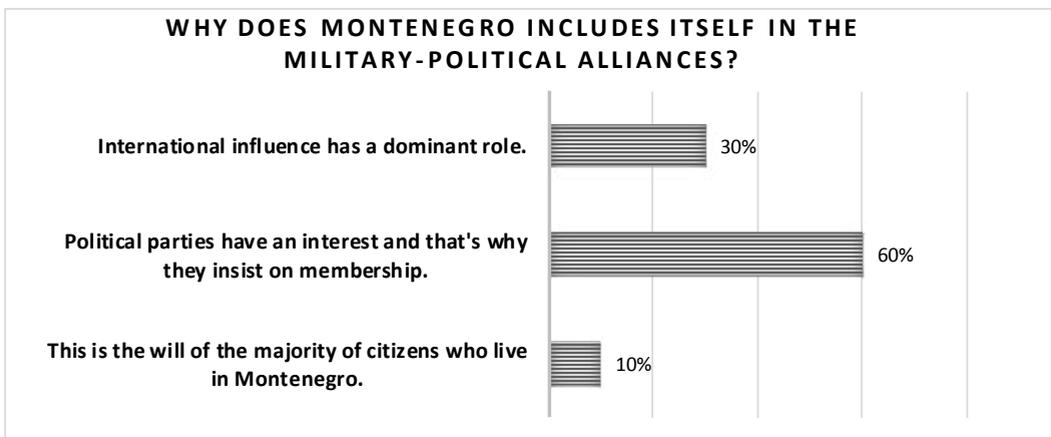


If we add that more than half of the respondents could not recognize the connection between integration in NATO with strengthening modern, democratic processes, it strongly confirms that one of the main messages of those who advocated the membership did not reach this population. The message on the strengthening of democratic, modern and European values is not the only one who remained outside the attention of young people. Models of communication with this population are obviously not very well placed with other positive affirmations of the value of the NATO alliance. Respondents who participated in our survey showed that in general they do not recognize thesis of greater security, the strengthening of administrative and judicial capacity, reduction of corruption and organized crime as well as the thesis of the strengthening of the economic potential of the country which is expected with the arrival of new foreign investors. Thus, a serious analysis claims the fact that young people cannot always understand the indisputable fact that membership in the strongest military alliance will bring greater security to the citizens of Montenegro. Only 27% of respondents in our survey believe that after the membership Montenegro will become a more secure and stable country, 41% didn't answer and 32% of them stated that the NATO membership will not provide greater security and stability for Montenegro. We have even worse trends in the remaining theses from advocates for membership. On the question of whether membership can influence the reduction of corruption and organized crime, we registered only 17% of affirmative answers and 42% response of those who believe that membership will not increase the chances in fighting these challenges. Neither has the third thesis, which was given from advocates of Montenegro's membership in NATO, like the strengthening of the Montenegrin economy, new investments and jobs, been accepted by this population of survey. Only every one in five respondents identified opportunity for foreign investors, job creation and reduction of unemployment. There is twice the number of those who believe that membership will not affect these processes, while almost half of them has no attitude on this issue. The only hypothesis that this population is recognized and accepted as the positive side of the membership is that it is the most important military and political association on the planet. This hypothesis was recognized by nearly half of respondents and they supported the view that by having Montenegro become a NATO member, it thus becomes a member of the community of the most developed and powerful countries.

In contrast to the attitudes of those who affirmed the North Atlantic path of Montenegro, messages of those who opposed the membership were much more acceptable to the respondents in this survey. Participants in the survey had much more sympathetic and positive attitudes towards the statements that NATO membership is premature and a bad decision and that there is an alternative to such a military alliance. However, such a negative attitude towards NATO has not been accompanied by adequate explanations that would have a logical foundation. On the contrary, it is evident that most of these attitudes were formed based on partial information or inaccurate interpretations of certain segments of the military-political security. In the answers to the questions that sought additional clarification of certain attitudes, it can be clearly observed that the young participants of our survey, in a rather strange way formed their views about the military-political alliances. These responses, for the most part, cannot withstand the primary logical test, which indicates that the views of youth regarding this are formed through alternative means of communication within a social category. Therefore, the hypothesis that the majority of young people in Montenegro formed their own experience about military-political alliances through parallel models of communication seems completely reasonable. Responses that were given by the respondents also indicate that this population in the issues concerning the military-political alliances cannot exclude emotions and certain internal political or value judgments. More examples from the survey confirm this hypothesis directly. Otherwise, we could hardly expect that only 18% of the student population of the University of Montenegro provide an answer that NATO membership is a prerequisite of democratization of society and the way for membership in the European Union. Basic knowledge of the fundamental principles of the functioning of the European Union confirms the fact that not a single member of this community, which during the Cold War in any way belonged to the Soviet sphere of interest, did not enter the European Union until it hadn't become the NATO member first. This elementary fact, among the population that is the subject of our study, is known only by 18% of respondents. The attitude of 44% of respondents who believe that Montenegro should first become a member of the European Union and then the NATO alliance while the remaining 38% called for some form of military and political alliance with Russia sounds paradoxical. The initial hypothesis about the uncritical attitude of young people towards this issue is confirmed by the question why it would be good for Montenegro to enter some form of military-political alliance with Russia. One third of respondents said that it should be done because of the historical ties with Russia. On the other

hand, third of the respondents agreed with the thesis that the political and ethical values of Russia are much closer to the Montenegrin society, while the remaining third of respondents said that Russia has very good military weapons and that this fact should guarantee greater security of Montenegro. A certain affection of young people towards some form of military-political cooperation with Russia can somehow be justified by the historical context and the traditional perception of the public about Russia as the protector of Montenegro. However, we should not forget that those who participated in the survey are the students, academics who by nature of things should have distance from any myth-epic discourse. Instead, here we have a dominant uncritical attitude towards Russia and the acceptance of traditional epic discourse that Russia is perceived as the patron of traditional, patriarchal values. Because of this attitude, less than a third of respondents (31%) see Russia as an authoritarian country without democratic traditions and freedoms for any individual or group. On the other hand, answering the question why should some form of military-political cooperation with Russia be good for Montenegro, 33% of respondents believe that it is good because the political and ethical values of Russia are very close to Montenegrin citizens. The completely distorted perception of the role and position of Russia in the modern world is illustrated by the fact that 30% of respondents answered this question positively and confirmed the proposed answer that Russia has very good military weapons and that cooperation with that country will guarantee greater security. The answers to the question for which reason it is not good for Montenegro to become a member of NATO also fit in this narrative. Young people (35%) recognize as the greatest threat the possibility that with the membership Montenegro will lose its historic identity, while 32% of them claim that with that act they will ruin centuries-old friendly relations with Russia. The rest, 33% of them, recognize the danger of the possibility of terrorist attacks. And in this case it is showed that young people in the projections of the disadvantages of membership in NATO dominantly recognize some form of distancing or potential conflict with Russia and those values that this country personified. This clearly indicates that a significant number of young people, as well as some generations before them, continue to see in Russia a kind of a patron, who is allegedly a military superior and who is willing to defend some form of traditionalist values. An epic narrative in the answers to these questions raises a dilemma whether did the Montenegrin society in general rise above the traditionalist ideas of friends and enemies, and how realistically and critically they can see these challenges.

The answers of students problematize the subject of causal links between the political processes, the impact of international factors and the perception of young people about the military-political alliances. Based on their answers, it can be said with great certainty that young people think that these processes are strongly connected. Almost two thirds of respondents believe that membership is the sole interest of political parties and that the process of joining the military-political alliances is carried out because of their insisting. A significant number of respondents (30%) believe that some form of international factors is influencing this decision, but only one in ten believes that this is the will of the majority of citizens who live in Montenegro.



The largest proportion of respondents (64%) believes that political parties insist on the membership in certain military-political alliances because in this way they are ensuring the support of international structures. The rest (19%) believes that the political structures from the story of the political-military alliances are gaining the support from voters, while only 17% of them are prone to think that the political elite sincerely believes in these ideas and that is why they are affirming them. The individual perception of those who think that membership in NATO is good or not is particularly interesting. Specifically, respondents who answered our questions have a completely different attitude toward those who advocate the membership from those who oppose it. While on one hand they do not believe that there are political parties which sincerely advocate for Montenegro's membership in NATO, however, for those who oppose this decision they have more understanding, stating that they are the patriots. Only 17% of respondents believe that some political structures are sincerely and

without ulterior motives pushing towards membership to NATO. On the other hand, they are recognizing in those who oppose the membership an enormous extent of the alleged sincerity. Respondents, for the political structures that oppose membership overwhelmingly (52%), say that they are doing this out of patriotism because Montenegro's place is not in the NATO alliance. The division into, conditionally speaking, patriots on one hand and those who are advocating for membership in NATO for other and not sincere intentions, clearly indicates that this population in large numbers cannot realistically examine all aspects of this process. This division is directly reflected in the attitude of young people toward civilization and cultural values that on one hand personify the North Atlantic Alliance and on the other Russia and Eastern countries. So to the question: Does Montenegro, according to its history, belong to "east" or "west, two thirds of respondents believed that Montenegro belongs to the east and these civilization and system values. Therefore it is not surprising why for this population Montenegro's membership represents something that goes beyond the context of the traditional experience of friends and enemies. Nearly half of respondents believe that NATO membership will negatively affect the identity and that with this membership Montenegro will lose its current identity. Every one in five respondent believes that this membership can positively affect the Montenegrin identity, because it will help Montenegro become a modern, democratic and European country.

CONCLUSION:

The conducted research and the later analysis of results offered enough arguments that may indicate that young people in Montenegro do not have fully rational relationship towards the contemplation of the military-political issues. Research has provided sufficient arguments to the claim that official attitudes of those structures, who advocated Montenegro's membership in NATO, have not been brought closer to young people. These attitudes not only that they are not approximate enough, but young people have a degree of repulsion towards them, even in cases when they are offering specific, practical and verifiable solutions. On the other hand, the attitudes of those who are against Montenegro's membership in NATO are very acceptable, even in cases when they cannot withstand an elementary

criticism. Research has therefore given rise to the hypothesis that this population, as well as some generations before them, are ready to see in Russia and the system that it personifies, the patron, who is allegedly militarily superior and who is willing to defend some form of traditionalist values. A clear traditionalist and epic narrative of the largest number of respondents on these issues raises a dilemma whether did the Montenegrin society in general rise above the traditionalist ideas on friends and enemies, and how realistic and critical can they see these challenges.

In individual segments, this research has shown that the campaign from the advocates and the opponents to the Montenegro's membership in NATO had strong elements of populism. Thus, very few respondents have identified generally accepted verifiable attitudes, on the other hand they recognize and accept ratings and attitudes that cannot withstand a basic logical criticism. It seems irrational that more than a half of the respondents do not see any positive side of Montenegrin membership in the North Atlantic alliance. What's more, nearly half of respondents believe that NATO membership will negatively affect the identity and that with this membership Montenegro will lose its current identity. Only every one in five respondent believes that this membership can positively affect the Montenegrin identity, because it will help Montenegro become a modern, democratic and European country. Respondents who participated in this survey showed that in general they do not recognize that this membership can positively affect the international standing of the country, its security, reduction of corruption and organized crime, strengthening the economic potential and the expected arrival of new foreign investors.

In contrast to the attitudes of those who affirmed the North Atlantic path of Montenegro, the opponents' messages were much more pleasant to the group that participated in this survey. Participants of this survey had much more sympathy and positive attitudes towards the statements that NATO membership is premature and a bad decision and that there was an alternative to such a military alliance. One of the basic principles of EU enlargement, which states that all former socialist countries must first become members of NATO and then the EU, was only recognized by 18% of the student population of the University of Montenegro. Instead, there is a dominant and uncritical attitude towards Russia and the acceptance of the traditional epic discourse that Russia is presented as a patron of traditional and patriarchal values. The uncritical attitude towards these values is shown by the fact that one third of

respondents do not perceive Russia as an autocratic country, without democratic traditions. The most graphic confirmation of this perception is the experience of those who support or oppose membership. Only 17% of respondents believe that those political structures which support the membership are doing that sincerely and from the belief that it is good for the country and citizens. Contrary to that, 52% of respondents believe that those who oppose the membership are doing that sincerely and for patriotic reasons. All of the results clearly show that there are alternative models of communication with young people in our society. In addition, there are sufficient arguments that claim that young people are uncritically accepting some traditional values on which they are projecting their actions in the present.

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