Unpacking The Genesis of the Ongoing Transitional Processes in Montenegro

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Opinion

All post-socialist/post-communist countries have faced a comprehensive change of their value systems across all pores of their societies, As the processes underlying these revolutionary changes, which are characterized by different flows, durations, and consequences, differ across transitional societies, they therefore must be analytically unpacked. In this brief article, we offer the guidelines for unpacking the transitional process in Montenegro by focusing on its economic, political, and cultural dimensions. The economic dimension of the transition in Montenegrin society has been dominated by the mass voucher privatization through which 'social' property (the past socialist vague form of property without a clear owner) has been transformed mostly into private ownership and somewhat into state ownership. The mixed success of the economic transition in Montenegro is beyond the scope this article. The political dimension of the transition in Montenegro is characterized by cosmetic changes constrained by the substantial inertia of the pre-transitional ideological restructuring. Due to the resulting incomplete ideological changes, the scope of the political transition in Montenegro has been low.

The cultural dimension of transition in Montenegro reflects a very slow change from the traditional communal (egalitarian) collectivism to the modern civic (competitive) individualism that would support entrepreneurial and democratic values. The traditional Montenegrin culture of egalitarian collectivism is sustained today by a high degree of interdependence influenced by the scarce resources in the sectors of tourism, energy and agriculture that drive the Montenegrin economy. Hence, the slow cultural transition from the traditional communal egalitarianism hinders competitiveness and contributes to the undesired stigmatization of successful entrepreneurs. The main purpose of this short article is to nudge researchers to uncover the latent factors that both enable and constrain the discord in the dynamics of the economic, political, and cultural aspects of the transition in Montenegro. While the economic transition has been evolving at a much higher rate due to mass privatization, the residual ideological and the long-established cultural values have remained 'sticky', thus impeding the overall transitional process. Evidently, the transitional efforts moving Montenegro toward market economy and democracy must be embedded into the traditional Montenegrin belief and value systems. However, this process of embedding will not be successful if the prescriptions for transition from other countries are merely copied into the Montenegrin context. Rather, a new value system that would facilitate the overall transition in Montenegro should be built on the remains of the old Montenegrin socio-cultural web of beliefs.

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