National and self-identity in metaphorical narratives

Kristina Gvozdenović

University of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro, tina.gvozdenovic111@gmail.com

Abstract

This research applies qualitative study and research interviews on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, drawing on the insights from Critical Metaphor Analysis and combining it with a theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The main aim of the research is showing the possibility of metaphorically constructed discourse to form reality and evoke certain moments of national identification on the example of Montenegro. The goal is to examine the ways participants experience, understand, and respond to metaphorical domains extracted from politicians' discourses, in the process of making sense of their social worlds. Investigated areas included perceptions of the unity image schema through the metaphorical mappings COUNTRY IS: A FAMILY, A CONTAINER, A PERSON, and ON A JOURNEY. With this micro-study, we came to understand that national identities are based on a set of relatively simple metaphorical images to which people respond based on shared experience and expectations, emphasizing that by micro-cognilinguistical grounding, national identities can be linked to lived, personal experience, and discursive interaction, collectively constructed by individuals.

KEYWORDS: Montenegro, conceptual metaphor theory, critical discourse analysis, national identity, self-identity

Introduction

The main aim of this research is to experience and utilize metaphors as one of the powerful tools through which the concept of a nation, imagining through narration, and narration of the nation will be approached. The study is following Anderson's (1991) asser-

tion that nations are "imagined communities," implying that those are conceptions in people's consciousness that nationalized political subjects perceive as discrete political entities.

It further applies research interviews (10 participants who have grown up and spent most of their lives in Montenegro), as a method for qualitative analysis, with the aim of examining the ways in which individuals experience, understand, and react to metaphorical domains, being previously extracted from politicians' speeches. Investigated areas include perceptions of the *unity* image schema[1] that is being metaphorically used by politicians in Montenegro.

Participants were given the possibility to choose among the conceptualization of four metaphorical domains of unity image schema—COUNTRY IS: A FAMILY, A CONTAINER, A PERSON, or ON A JOURNEY. In general, the objective of the study is to describe the function of four metaphorical domains as a symbol of unity for the Montenegrin political community. Along with it, the specific objectives of the research are to examine the ways in which participants accept, reject, and refigure such discourses and to uncover how metaphorical representations of politicians' unity can foster the process of devising or creating new 'imagined communities' among a set of individuals, ideas, and concepts, which helps establish a new sense of belonging and ultimately, propose the deconstructions of imposed metaphors.

Based on the theoretical background, this research firstly assumes that national identities imply a set of similar conceptions and perceptual metaphoric schemes that individuals would share, and second, that national identities can be discursively and metaphorically (re)produced, transformed, and (de)constructed. In that regard, the main question this work attempts to answer is whether conceptual metaphors have widespread effects on concepts that drive our social practices and that strengthen the social patterns of national and self-identities, ideologies, and nations, and furthermore, whether they can be identified also as the factors that can move people to action or reaction.

---

[1] Important to mention is that the power of conceptual metaphors appears on several levels of schematicity in an intertwined vertical hierarchy of *image schemas, domains, frames, and scenarios*—where lower levels (*scenarios*) are more specific versions of higher, more schematic levels. In this research, we will mostly use the terms image schemas and domains. Image schemas have a highly schematic nature, and range over the conceptual system, making a wide variety of concepts and experiences meaningful (Kövecses, 2020). Moreover, Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p. 5) explain that metaphor "is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." This is achieved through *mapping* (Musolff, 2012) concepts that are easily understood in more clear terms (source domain) onto abstract ideas which we aim to understand (target domain).

Theoretical background

The empirical part of this study is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), drawing on the insights from Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) and combining it with a theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with an aim of showing the possibility of metaphorically constructed discourse to form reality and evoke certain moments of identity.

CMT has its beginnings in Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors we live by* (2003). According to this theory, the conceptual metaphor is seen as a feature of not just everyday language but of thought and action, and it is rooted in our experience. Furthermore, CMA, introduced by Charteris-Black (2004, 2011), is an approach to the analysis of metaphors that aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use. Within political contexts, CMA can often be placed within the model of CDA. CDA is methodologically essential for this study as it focuses on studying the linguistic manifestations of ideology, social and general beliefs, hidden and transparent power, culture, and society in general. Such discourse can refer to action and cognition: that is, a powerful group can restrict the freedom of action of others but also affect their minds (van Dijk, 1993). Van Dijk (1993) states that power is mainly based on cognitive control, and is implemented, among other strategies, to change the opinion of others for own interests, for persuasion, or manipulation, which can be very subtle and could seem quite natural to both parties.

Metaphors, national identity, and ideology

To understand the multifaceted nature of national identity and the way it works, we need to consider the process by which the idea of a nation immigrates into human minds, outlining the way people internalize the abstract world of a nation to create an imaginary community and the feeling of belonging to it. We are being reminded of *our* national identities and the existence of *our* nation, as well as those of *others*, on a daily basis.[2] Having this in mind, this research connects the idea of national identity to the metaphor use, as identity refers to meaning, and meaning develops in context-dependent use, constructed and maintained by everyday discursive practices created by social structures, as seen from the perspective of CDA.

Metaphors can play a significant role in maintaining power, as part of symbols and rituals that are powerfully evocative. Charteris-Black (2005) argues that metaphor is vital to

---

[2] The theory of "banal nationalism" introduced by Billig (1995).

the language of leaders because it mediates between the conscious and rational basis of ideology and its unconscious mythical elements. It relies on unconscious emotional associations of words related to values that have a basis within cultural knowledge. Therefore, metaphor can be used as a tool for persuasion, activating both the conscious and unconscious resources of our usual ways of thinking, speaking, and acting, to further influence the intellectual and emotional response.

Since metaphor is the literal language of the soul (Woodman, 1997), metaphors play an important role in framing the outside world or in creating utopian images of what the world should be like. Metaphors are strong elements of political style that have a subjective and often polemical view of reality in common with ideology (Gay, 1992, in De Landtsheer, 2009). The present paper reduces the use of the term "ideology" to two areas: to ideology that can be described as the basis of group beliefs, i.e., beliefs shared by certain social groups, and to the use of language is a direct way of understanding ideology.

In addition, we should bear in mind what Eagleton (2007) explains: ideology is a matter of discourse, not language; it is about the actual use of language between certain human subjects to produce specific effects. Thus, ideological patterns "arise when text producers choose one set of metaphors over some other, alternative ones" (Hart 2010, p. 127). Furthermore, as Verrschueren (2012, p. 12) points out, the coincidence of metaphors with normality and with invisibility is exactly what makes ideology powerful. Therefore, CM analysis proves to be a powerful tool for discovering an even deeper level of meanings at which the relationships between language, mind, experience, and ideology become defined. From this point of view, we can see metaphor as a linguistic, conceptual, sociocultural, ideological, neuro-, and bodily phenomenon that exists on all these different levels at the same time.

Furthermore, nation and nationhood are social facts in so far as the inhabitants of an area believe in the existence of that imagined community. The nation depends on ideological justification: it must be *imagined* by its members in order to exist. The research connects this further to a theory of banal, everyday nationalism (Billig, 1995), as an ideology that is proposing a metaphorical kinship, or *unity* that makes us believe that we have something profoundly in common with a great number of people whom we will never know or meet personally, by imagining through narration, the metaphorical nation, and the metaphorical narration of the nation. As Anderson says (1991), it is perhaps more appropriate to connect nationalism to such phenomena as kinship (and unity) than to ideologies such as fascism, for example, drawing attention to the emotional aspects of

nationhood. In other words, the validity of the nation and thereby national identity must continuously be verified through the everyday practice of the members of its target group for the ideology to retain its legitimacy. This banal nationalism (Billig, 1996)—the emotional power—can be explained as arising from the idea of nationalism being able to offer a community in which individuals can find a sense of identity, security, and authority, associated with discursive construction of national identity.

Study setting and design

Ten interview sessions were conducted in different settings between December 2021 and January 2022. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. We focused on the group aged 25–35 years old, native Montenegrin speakers, chosen on a voluntary basis: six male and four female participants. Each interview lasted 40–70 minutes, which is a significant time frame that allowed in-depth discussions; the initial interviews were transcribed completely and will be partially shown in this research.

While recruiting, we explained that the idea behind the research was to talk about the unity that determines the country, the nation, the citizenship,[3] and that the invitation requires talkative participants who can use their imaginations quickly. The design of the interviews followed a structured format with specific open-ended questions for each participant, to ensure thematic saturation.

Data collection and analysis

All interviews were recorded after receiving permission from participants at the time of recruitment. The interviews were conducted in Montenegrin, and transcriptions were then partly translated into English for the purpose of this research paper.

An interview started with participants giving sociodemographic details about themselves and responding with three words that would be their first associations with "Crna Gora" (Montenegro) and its derivates.

The second part of this research touches on the story of political discourse within metaphorical domains. This part performs some sort of deconstruction of found domains through experience, which can be thought of as the process by which the power

---

[3] In discourse by politicians, the borderlines between the country, state, and nation are often misty: proper names such as Crna Gora (Montenegro) may refer to a country, state, and nation. In this work, a clear border between states, countries, and nations is not important because all three largely relate to the same metaphor system. In the translation, when necessary, we decided to use the notion of COUNTRY, where the country can be used to mean the same thing as the state or nation.

of conceptual metaphors is uncovered, reversed, and displaced. In this part, participants also talked about the emotions and reasons why politicians use these metaphors—based on their own feelings while talking about politicians' metaphorical discourse or based on for what they would think those metaphors may be used.

The third part of the interview is the moment when the participants would attempt to construct their own metaphors using imagination within the *unity* domain that they were previously deconstructing.

In the fourth part, we return to associations from the beginning, looking into more detailed explanations about them. The moment of retrospection was introduced to offer a sense of recognition that their own associations could be a form of metaphor, considering feelings or other effects that the conversation might have evoked.

Results

Part I: Associations about "Crna Gora"

In the first part of the research, participants were asked to give three associations about "Crna Gora" and its derivates. The question about associations is important because, as McVeigh (1996, p. 6) explains, our mental worlds are products of sociocultural processes based on the mutual exchange of physical and cultural, things and values, using analogies from the tangible and perceptible (concrete) world to describe and define abstract events. Our minds are then fundamentally metaphorical: products of ways of thinking that borrow things from the world, including our own experiences.

In the last part of the interview we asked the participants to go back to these associations which are then seen as moments of intimacy in their minds. After careful examination of the answers, we obtained an interesting result: half of the participants constructed a new metaphor CRNA GORA[4] (and its derivates) IS STONE.[5] However, all five participants had different words for building this mapping: stone, karst, nature, hardness, and firmness. On one side, this conceptual metaphor is a metaphor for the participants' relationship with the country, its landscape, karst terrain, as in the images of Participants III, VI and VII.

---

[4] In the very last part of the interview process, we asked participants if they have the same associations with *Montenegro* and its derivates, as they have with Crna Gora. It was interesting to find out that for most participants (7), associations with Montenegro would be different. That's why we leave the country's name untranslated.

[5] Eight out of ten participants also associated some other natural characteristics of the environment with Crna Gora.

Participant III (personal conversation, January 2022) constructed the metaphor CRNA GORA IS STONE by using the association "stone" and explaining that:

> it is related to both the character and the karst areas. Somehow, it's a very strong picture for me. Both negative and positive, even when it is related to character. And again, the anger and pride appear, because it is unbelievable that it is just that stone, that you can't do anything with, but that somehow someone still manages to live there.

During the interview, Participant VI constructed the same metaphor while giving the "karst" as an association:

> when I drive through Platije Canyon and see the karst (rocky) landscape, I am delighted. And then there is also *krš* or *kršno* or *kršna* (karst, rocky, stone, mountainous, robust, visibly strong—of a person), that again binds me to people like mountaineers. And "karst" as something harder in character, for me personally positive…" (Participant VI, personal conversation, January 2022)

Participant VII constructed it by mapping it with the "nature":

> nature is related to our character as well, especially to that old part of Montenegro, those karst, stony areas that were poor… In general, the Balkans were poorly accessible, and that nature influenced people's character. There is an association with karst and stone, with some kind of rigidity, both as negative and as positive. Karst and stone as steadfast,[6][5] strong, a symbol of strength and heroism, and then karst and stone as poverty, misery, anxiety, difficulty, poor progress. (Participant VII, personal conversation, January 2022)

Furthermore, all five images relate to the mentality with a positive meaning. Participant I offered the association "hardness," explaining that:

> It would be related to the feeling itself, how you feel the country—as physically hard, like a mountain, like a stone, and then everything is hard, communication is hard, relationships are hard, family is hard, conversations, everything—it is not soft, not fluid, not downy. But it is also strong.… Which can be good sometimes. (Participant I, personal conversation, December 2021)

Moreover, Participant II associated Crna Gora with the word "firmness," explaining that it is related to karst, and stone, emphasizing how strong people are. I think of karst and

---

[6] We decided to translate the word "stameno" that Participant VII and Participant II use as "steadfast" but it can bear the meaning of all those words together: steadfast, unchanging, unwavering, consistent, principled, fixed, steady, stable, stony, confident, fortified.

steadfast. Positive, not connected to rigidity in behavior or thinking, but to physical (appearance), stony, and the fact that the physical appearance of Montenegrins as physically strong people stood out (Participant II, personal conversation, December 2021).

A stone in the Montenegrin landscape is an effective symbol because it endures regardless of weathering and violent upheavals. A stone is unbreakable, it maintains its integrity as something that is hard, powerful, and strong, and as a metaphor, it is aimed at strengthening character and morality. Thus, all five participants gave us a positive meaning within the conceptual metaphors STONE IS MORAL-CHARACTER SOLIDITY, HARDNESS/FIRMNESS OF THE STONE IS GOOD.

On the other side, from those five interpretations, Participants I, III, and VII also gave us a negative picture of that conceptual metaphor: HARDNESS/TOUGHNESS OF THE STONE IS BAD, where the metaphorical mapping with the stone and the adjectives derived from it are now connected with roughness and ruthlessness, with strong geographical characteristics. Stony and karst terrain structures in some parts of Montenegro showed the harsh living conditions that in a way shape the mentality of the people living in that terrain.

Part II: Deconstructing metaphors in politicians' rhetoric

In the second part of the interview analysis, we preview how participants thought that politicians currently use mappings within four metaphorical domains. The FAMILY domain was chosen by four participants; PERSONIFICATION by three; JOURNEY domain by two; and CONTAINER by one participant.

The mappings within the FAMILY domain, suggested by Participants II, III, V and VIII, describe political rhetoric as seeing Montenegro as a metaphor that brings together the notions of security, solidarity, giving idea of the hierarchical and patriarchal culture of Montenegro. In the results obtained, there is a universalizing political discourse idea that valorizes the traditional family as a moral condition for the possibility of national political coherence. Common to all four answers is conceptualization THE COUNTRY IS A MOTHER, further implying the existence of children—only sons. The mother's role is the only positive female role in participants' interpretation of the discourse of politicians. Apart from it, we also find a step-motherly role, as negativity: treating children unequally, making the woman's role in this context morally wrong. Female family roles are ending here.

Through the analyzed discourse, we also found metaphors that show the fraternal relations between neighboring countries, minority groups or conflicted, divided society, but we could not find a notion connected to sisters. Furthermore, there are also moments of glorification of men; grandfathers are connected to heroic, moral principles, to historical figures or actions, to old myths about Montenegrins.

One more interesting mention by the Participant VIII was mapping THE COUNTRY IS PRĆIJA, as one of rare things alluding to a woman in political context. *Prćija* is the dowry that the widow brings to a new marriage. As Tomović-Šundić and Gvozdenović (2020) state, prćija is usually used in an offensive context because remarriage is seen as a transgression of traditional femininity, it is related to loyalty and devotion to previous husband—exposing women to the social norm of being loyal to one man. Its metaphorical meaning goes with the stigma of widowhood and is related to traditional notions of family in Montenegrin society.

As expected, the most important part of the body to all participants who chose the domain of PERSONIFICATION is the head, metonymically often used instead of the brain. In Montenegrin culture, language perceives the head as the most important part of the human body because it contains the brain, thought, mind, intellect, memory, imagination, consciousness, reason, intelligence, thinking, reasoning, and analysis, but also the main senses and front part of the digestive and respiratory systems.

What we would like to further extract, as common to all three participants (IV, VI, and X), is the image of country as a male figure, where Participants IV and VI further connected the image to virdžina (sworn virgin), an encouraged social inversion of gender, disappeared by now as a living social group.[7] This was a biological woman who took a vow of chastity, chosen by herself or predestined by family, to socially lives as a man, if the head of a household had no male heir. In the perception of politicians, then THE COUNTRY IS A SWORN VIRGIN (with a BIG BELLY), where it is not important to hide sex but rather to hide a social anomaly, the lack of the necessary male figure. This suggests that there is a level of the social component in conceptual metaphors, which includes gender experiences, concepts that are an integral part of us living in a society that allocates social powers based on that (POWERFUL IS MALE, COUNTRY IS POWERFUL, COUNTRY IS MALE).

A body with a big belly is another common mapping among all three participants that represents citizens ("as the ideal of wealth," by Participant X), citizens ("as greed, but

---

[7] The last sworn virgin in Montenegro died in 2016.

we are hungry," by Participant VI), state apparatus ("fat, heavy, full-fed, but it is impossible to function with it," by Participant IV). Popular imagery associated the big-bellied man with excessive food consumption made possible by wealth, a sign of abundant wealth and good living. The big belly in those examples relates also to greed but also to a burden.

Regarding the next domain, Participants I and VII gave us almost the same metaphorical conceptions of current politicians' representations of the country through JOURNEY: the country continues the motion in a spiral or in the form of a circle, through time (TIME IS SPACE). Both the circle and the spiral are symbolic metaphors for a never-ending journey. Both participants further identified key characteristics of JOURNEY metaphors: belief, desire, and imagination of a valuable but uncertain, even fake outcome; therefore, JOURNEY IS ACHIEVING A FAKE GOAL. For both participants, the FUTURE IS represented as GOAL, something better than today, as a hope and as an idea that creates opportunities, instilling a sense of expectation, trying to empower, creating an impression of togetherness and the illusion of mutual victory and success. This goal is something false for Participant I and something that manages to be constantly elusive for Participant VII.

Participant IX's understanding of politicians' country image within the CONTAINER domain is as an Airbnb short-term rental, as a closed space, extremely tight, tense (as the house is, after all, for many of us).[8] The participant's metaphorical concept shifts from the inhabitants inside the house to the construction of the house, followed by different social, hierarchical patterns and the purpose of the building parts.

By applying the CMA, introduced by Charteris-Black (2004, 2011), which is explained as being an approach to the analysis of metaphors that aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use, we can additionally see that the danger of metaphors of unity lies in the fact that domains hide the internal diversity of the country; specifically, they justify the claim that there is always a prevailing unifying national interest that is often pursued at the expense of powerless minorities. There is, therefore, a danger that under the auspices of the state or nation, certain people will be affected, to the detriment of minorities. In all representations of political metaphors, minorities are absent from the unity: in FAMILY metaphors, minorities are represented as quarreling

---

[8] The metaphorical idea of A COUNTRY IS A HOME has been deeply controversial for feminists, as it can be also associated with destruction, violence, and can be a place where the promise of security is betrayed by family. Thornton (1995, p. 9-11, in Davies, 2014) explains that for women, the private world of the home has often been difficult, dangerous, or problematic, a primary site of oppression—the place where inequality exists, where women are subjected to the many forms of private power of husbands and father, and where women are expected to perform undervalued and repetitive tasks.

brothers; in PERSONIFICATION, minority groups are either the part of the body that hurts (ovaries), or they are there only as an ornament (jewelry, hat). Within the metaphors of JOURNEY, minorities are represented as some stations that are just passed along the way but sometimes there is no time to stop, and within the CONTAINER (i.e., HOUSE) there never any room for some of minority groups.

At the end, through the answers from this chapter we see that the politicians' conceptual metaphors of unity are seen as being focused on creating political and state power, as organic and mechanical wholes, or as more complex and articulated relationships, depicting citizens as vertically mediated by the state.

Part II 1: The power of metaphors

When we talk about emotions, we are guided by the idea shown through experimentation (Westen, 1999) that emotions can be unconscious; this is essential to note given the common assumption that emotions are things we can consciously feel. The main part of this research, thus, was applying CDA while talking about metaphorical domains in politicians' rhetoric, further deconstructing their mappings, to find hidden emotional and other powers.

In the following, we will give an overview of answers about why politicians would use those metaphors reported or inferred by participants who chose the FAMILY domain. When explaining the power of metaphors, Participant II and Participant V specifically mentioned the mother figure as a powerful metaphor that plays an important role in imagining, related to belonging, caring, unconditional love, and similar. According to Participant II, metaphors are being used "because they provoke. They make an association with a mother.... and then, they are evoking sense of duty, or feeling of betrayal.... Definitely, it is kind of moral metaphor" (Participant II, personal conversation, December 2021), while Participant V explains that metaphors are:

> used to affect the subconscious and … it requires loyalty, responsibility, sacrifice, some debt that must be paid because it is our mother who raised us, we have an obligation, duty to give in return. So, it is mostly used in this way, as a kind of emotional blackmail… When it is said, "Majka naša, Crna Gora"[9] somehow it strengthens national identity, a sense of belonging and nationalism, because there is only one mother… (Participant V, personal conversation, January 2022)

---

[9] Our mother, Montenegro.

The rest of participants (III and VIII) mention family as a metaphor that appeals to the experience and feelings of most of the individuals, further referring to specific experiences with parenting within a nuclear (and potentially extended) family, whether positive or negative. Participant III explains that it seems that the family metaphor:

> leads us to some aggressive behavior, that is certainly anger, but we experience it as some kind of pride.… I think they also trigger love, on some level, even if you don't want it.… They also evoke a kind of excitement … Security. Reconciliation. Also, sadness. In the sense that things are quite simple, but we complicate them. (Participant III, personal conversation, January 2022)

Participant VIII gives an explanation that "nothing else has such a strong potential to provoke an emotional reaction as a story about family.… So, it is a very fertile ground to make an emotional impact … it is easier to manipulate" (Participant VIII, personal conversation, January 2022).

Furthermore, Charteris-Black (2004) explains that ideas about the national family are convincing because the family symbolizes the source of security, and the desire to protect the family is the foundation of moral systems, as observed by Participant II, and therefore contributes to the impression that a politician has real intentions.

In the next group of PERSONIFIED metaphors, reported or inferred by Participant VI, is the power of metaphors to simplify "because … you compare it to something you always have, it's simple and then it can produce effects … mapping with something that is more familiar, and therefore, easier to sympathize with" (Participant VI, personal conversation, January 2022). Additionally, in the interpretations of Participant IV and Participant X, metaphors give us fiction, illusion, they create a false purpose of existence, fictive homogeneity, solidarity, and pride.

Participant IV gives an explanation that it is an illusion, and that politicians use metaphors of personification "so they can rule. Those metaphors evoke exactly what the heart is—a false history.… Complete abuse of emotion and manipulation, they (metaphors) create a false purpose of existence." (Participant IV, personal conversation, January 2022). Participant X says that:

> metaphors are useful for creating the fiction of homogeneity, that we belong, that we are part of something. What does it mean to be a citizen? Essentially, it does not mean anything. You must establish some symbolic value to connect all these people, and often body metaphors are used as such.… They generally create a sense of solidarity … perhaps even pride when it comes to historical heritage,

dignity, unity. To be motivated tomorrow to act in someone's interest. (Participant X, personal conversation, January 2022)

When talking about the power behind JOURNEY metaphors, Participant I referred to a simplified goal, which we also find in the mentioned domain of PERSONIFICATION: "Metaphors offered by politicians are very meaningful, but they have a goal that is impossible, they have a projection of the future that is very simplified and therefore inaccurate." (Participant I, personal conversation, December 2021).

Participant VII reported or inferred that:

> in the beginning, they might have been evoking some excitement and joy, some happiness—we're going towards something better—but now it's already betrayal, disappointment, apathy—we will never arrive, so it is definitely a metaphor as a means of manipulation, or persuasion, but also as the only thing left to politicians—to talk about the journey, because what else is there for you to hope for. (Participant VII, personal conversation, January 2022)

In the interpretation of the Participant IX, CONTAINER metaphors, more precisely HOUSE metaphors, have the power to evoke a feeling of taking care of it for personal identity "and since you feel responsibility towards yourself, then you feel responsibility towards the community and the like … that's exactly the sense of security you would have" (Participant IX, personal conversation, January 2022).

All the replies obtained in this part go well with the theoretical part, stating that metaphor can be used as a tool for persuasion or manipulation—which can be very subtle, relying on unconscious emotional associations of words related to values that have a basis within cultural knowledge.

PART III: Constructing new metaphor through unity image schema

In the last part of the interview analysis, this research will preview how participants constructed new meanings within the same domains they were previously deconstructing, with the aim of showing the importance of being aware of possible alternative conceptualizations when using metaphorical mappings, and the need to refrain from relying on initial intuitions that seem to have rational similarities.

Within the domain of FAMILY metaphors, Participant II still holds the image of COUNTRY IS A MOTHER, with its meaning being tied to the responsibility towards nature and towards society, but literally untied from the relational noun "children":

While a baby is in its mother's womb, two of them are connected through the umbilical cord. But as soon as the baby is born, the umbilical cord is cut, and the baby somehow continues its own way. The country is still a mother, but in the end, it would mean separation … you get an independent person who is no longer tied to borders. It would make sense if you were getting out of that kind of identification with your mother, with your parent, and you leave. You are no longer tied to a country, you become independent. (Participant II, personal conversation, December 2021).

The image of the traditional nuclear family is disappearing in the new imaginations of Participant III and Participant VIII. Participant III (personal conversation, January 2022) explains:

The traditional family is dying. We need to start looking at what the family in the future really is.… The second thing would be the other roles of the extended family, that's very interesting to me. Many have strong roles of aunts in their life, and their roles do not exist at all in the discourses of politicians. Because we don't know what kind of emotion they can evoke…. And grandparents. It is unbelievable to me that their roles are used only in the sense of the warrior tradition, when, in essence, both grandparents, as it has been determined on a psychological level as well, play an important role for children's growth … in that conceptualization, COUNTRY would be a FAMILY. Country is not a mother, because somehow, we are all part of it, not inside it.

Both Participant III and Participant VIII are suggesting different, new roles of FAMILY by extending its meaning, expending the space of support:

in fact, the patriarchy should be dismantled, so we could have better families and, therefore, better countries…. in the sense of understanding, and a more horizontal structure of the family, where in the first place must be put what is so invisible in patriarchy and that is reproductive work, the work of reproducing the community…. I think we should all be stepmothers […] in the sense that we have children we didn't give birth to […] because it expands the space of support…. I think of all … strong female figures in the lives of other women, who are present through a mentoring role. They make huge support and make a huge difference. (Participant VIII, personal conversation, January 2022)

In the picture that Participant V paints, the roles in the FAMILY conceptualization are switching:

It would be much more logical to me that citizens are a father, a nation is a mother, and that country is a child. Because citizenship and nation are both necessary for the country to exist. There is no hierarchy in that image. It is logical that a country would depend on the nation and the citizens, instead of the other way around. That citizens, citizenship, and nation are not an integral part of the country but that the country derives from them. (Participant V, personal conversation, January 2022).

Within the domain of PERSONIFICATION, the image of the body is changing in the imagination of Participant VI, she is no longer a sworn virgin, COUNTRY IS now A WOMAN who does not hide it, who can give birth to herself:

The heart would be the citizens, the head would be the political institutions, the legs would be the courts, the cheek would be the parliament. We would be a healthy woman in her 30s, who is as tall and beautiful as a Montenegrin woman is…. That female body would be proud of our ovaries. She could get pregnant. From the same as before, but this time she would not be scared, but we would know that people do not attack us, but that we just need to exist…. So, when she gets pregnant, a new Montenegro is born. The old dies by giving birth to a new one. (Participant VI, personal conversation, January 2022)

Participant IV also rejects the imagine of COUNTRY IS A SWORN VIRGIN and mixes the new, androgynous body and CONTAINER metaphor (fortress): ANDROGYNOUS BODY IS A CONTAINER, COUNTRY IS GENDERLESS:

Montenegro is de facto, geographically unique because it has survived throughout history as a kind of entrancing … or karst fortress. Montenegro is one fortress of mountains. It was always isolated. The body would be that natural beauty, the head would be exemplary, the highest as it can get. The heart again would be something that may be fictitious, it is from where Montenegro was taking some kind of archetype from the collective unconscious. And that is our interpretation of something called chivalry and heroism…. Citizens are both hands and feet, they govern that body…. In that ideal body, politicians would be a kind of thing that comes out … that are constantly changing …there is no hump, no heavy stomach, in that androgynous body. (Participant IV, personal conversation, January 2022)

Furthermore, Participant X also gives us a body without sexual and gender identification, COUNTRY IS again GENDERLESS:

that body is some third gender…. Maybe like an android, but it can have some character features, it is an honest and virtuous android, only without gender, or sexual identification. The head is still the main part. I would say that the brain is important here, but at the same time the cheek may be just as important, in terms of some cultural values, but they are no longer based on historical heritage or some previous achievements of the 19th century but on some neutral concepts not related to the specific Montenegrin historical heritage, rather ideas of the Enlightenment, liberalism, etc.…The brain, i.e. the mind, must be citizens as an essential action … politicians are hands, they serve the interests of citizens, they feed mouth. And the stomach could be an economy… After all, it is regulated by the mind, the ratio, it is not presented as just a grotesque satisfaction of interests…. I reckon here that the citizens are a mass that would be the mind, which can prevail the ratio, so that they would be self-aware of the importance, and would not differentiate minorities in any sense. (Participant X, personal conversation, January 2022)

It is interesting to note that the central aspect of male-female body experience, and social powers based on the gender experience that we found in the second part of the research (POWERFUL IS MALE, COUNTRY IS POWERFUL, COUNTRY IS MALE) are being excluded in this part; COUNTRY IS FEMALE and powerful as is COUNTRY IS GENDERLESS.

The image of Participant I within the JOURNEY domain changes in the form of JOURNEY AS MOVEMENT THROUGH TIME, a process that is in constant motion and, therefore, can change. The metaphor is without the ultimate goal, but there can be a reason that can give other options than one and only way. Spatial dimensions are being to be erased, and temporal dimensions are what the Participant I is giving focus to: COUNTRY IS MOVING AND CHANGING THROUGH TIME:

I would like the nation to be thought of this way, as something that is changeable over time, or through some process. As something that is being formed and … something that would change depending on where and when you stop…. the goal that politicians offer is always false. But for example, if the goal is a bridge, you can get an opportunity to imagine maybe another path if you build a bridge, and then that would not be false to me. If the goal is the construction of the road itself, or constant construction, you build as you go … then that can also be the reason. Not a goal but the reason. It is important that there is a different possibility. That it is fine if you're not on that path…. I find journey interesting in terms of

motion, movement, process, and if we look at a nation as something that is not stable, then those current frameworks are what determine it at the moment, but if it is in constant motion, then those frameworks change. If country is time and not space, if it is not a geographical determinant but if it happens in time, then I think it is more interesting, because then what is Montenegro and its derivatives changes all the time, literally it changes as you talk. (Participant I, personal conversation, December 2021

Participant VII changes the image towards linear movement upright, again without an ultimate goal, but MOTION AS MOVEMENT is important, as well as arrival at certain stations. The image of a JOURNEY is blending with the domain of HOUSE: while on the JOURNEY, we are taking care of our HOUSE:

I would set that path10 linearly, with certain stations, milestones, and it would go upright. I would not set the ultimate goal of that journey, but I would trace it simply as a "path of success" .… And while we are on that path as citizens of this country, we take care of everyone who is on our horse or in the bus, we feed everyone, we take care of nature, so we, therefore, take care of our house…. By building this road, I would like to raise or change the collective awareness of the importance of that road, the importance of systems, procedures and norms when building the road, and when driving on that road, or when walking on that road…. The country would be that physical path but the country together with the means of transport and the citizens. It's just that this whole construction is the country. (Participant VII, personal conversation, January 2022)

Mappings offered by Participant VII are switching between COUNTRY IS PATH, SPEED TRAIN, and CITIZENS. By mentioning that the country encompasses all, including the means of transport where:

The vehicle would be an electric high-speed train…. Politicians would be in the first wagon, certainly in the leading one .… Citizens would be there in other wagons … and nature would remain completely untouched by the passage of that train.

Although the hierarchy is still visible, but with citizens being all on the same level, we perceived that time is not very important, but that the train is electric, which is saving the nature, scenery, and landscape.

---

10 In Montenegrin "put" which Participant VII uses, can mean journey, path, road. We will use all translations here, adapting it for English context.

Furthermore, both Participants I and VII mention the building process as something important NATION IS A CONSTRUCTION PROCESS, and CITIZENS ARE ITS BUILDERS. The nation and country are being seen as a result of people's development and their movement, which does not depend on heroic ancestors or historical segment as a positive referent without which there is no future.

Participant IX also changes the previous picture from a completely closed, tight Airbnb CONTAINER metaphor, with walls that are separating, offering the image of some form of acropolis, a less closed concept, with open walls; items inside the container are protected from external forces, but they are not restricted in movement; the border is not an obstacle (this interpretation confirms the conceptualization of WALL IS AN UNDESIRABLE LIMITATIVE ENTITY):

> I think that the attitude towards that house should be different, in the sense that we all invest in that house, we clean that yard, we repair pipes and the like, because it is our house that will remain for our children and their children… I think that politicians should have absolutely the same status as us because it is not more their country than it is ours, only they get a little more responsibility … to take better care of the organization within that house…. We would have an open door policy but only for polite guests. Somehow, I can't imagine that house being completely closed, but rather like some kind of acropolis. The house is somehow too closed term for me. But I imagine it like some space that we were given to arrange, organize and the like. (Participant IX, personal conversation, January 2022)

It is a space with the inviolable rule of law as foundations and strong economy as pillars, as crucial parts of a construction. The participant also mentions the other parts inside the house (e.g., cleaning of the space, collective pipe repair), and the imagination is, therefore, a set of relations between things inside,

We can conclude that each participant accepted the idea of changing the image they were previously deconstructing and constructing their own form of unity within the same domain. It is important to mention is that unlike in politicians' interpretations, in each new imagination, the minority groups were a part of the extended, more horizontal unity.

Both Part II and Part III helped us identify metaphors as the factors that move people to action or reaction: in this case, action or reaction in a context of deconstructing the previous and offering new meanings.

Discussion

Although it was very small research study, through Part I and its retrospection at the end of the research, we obtained the interesting finding that participants manage to share a set of similar conceptions and perceptual schemes, and that half of them unknowingly built new metaphorical mappings, not to universal ones (conventional metaphors that are representing a universal experience) but rather cultural variations that have arisen from a traditional, cultural, geographical conditions: CRNA GORA IS A STONE. In this group of non-universal metaphors, some participants of this research mentioned two more, arising from cultural or patriarchal dimensions: THE COUNTRY IS A SWORN VIRGIN, and THE COUNTRY IS PRĆIJA.

The findings additionally revealed that the participants in this study could deconstruct political metaphors in Part II and could further talk about affective dimensions of these metaphors in Part II 1, which were mostly represented as very strong and powerful. This part also showed that participants think about politicians' metaphors and conceptualizations as being focused on creating political and state power, implying mostly hierarchical order, and the arousal of emotions that are appropriate to the way people react to the underlying feelings associated with loyalty to family and home, hope for the future that is better than the present, protection, and wholeness within the boundaries, with the exclusion of minority groups and further, allocating social powers grounded in gender experience.

Based on these images, we can propose the definition of metaphorical unity in political rhetoric as an exercise of inclusion and exclusion—the end product is separated forces united against each other, connecting it further to being a microscopic instance of banal nationalism: trading national identities through metaphorical narrations of the nation. The answers from this part helped us confirm one of the theoretical statements connected to the theory of CDA: that metaphors can play a significant role in maintaining power, as part of symbols and rituals that are strongly evocative.

In Part III, the results showed that participants could accept the metaphorical domain and could include imagination to propose ideals: new image that becomes real to the extent to which we identify with it emotionally. Here, metaphorical images are being switched to more horizontal *unity*, with inclusion, diverse groups recognition. This part, therefore, served to reinforce new perceptions, in relation to those premises that were previously neglected, unwanted, or considered irrelevant, identifying metaphors also as the factors that move people to action or reaction, as already explained: action or reaction in a context of deconstructing metaphors and offering new meanings.

With this micro-study, we came to understand that discursive interaction on the power of metaphors we live by, is powerful in uncovering emotions and other powers hidden behind metaphors. It is particularly important for (re)producing, transforming, or even (de)constructing national, social but also individual reality. The analysis of Part II additionally showed that much of the interpretation of politicians' metaphors is related to the central aspect of gender experience, which participants mostly tried to avoid in their own, new metaphorical imaginations. Therefore, metaphorical discourse in Part II is also represented as the bearer of social practices of doing gender, as part of politicians' constructions of national identity.

Our data indicated that discourses about national identity and ideologies depend on social micro-functions, such as conceptual metaphors; the paper, therefore, confirmed the primary assumption that metaphors in political discourse analysis have widespread effects on concepts that drive our social practices and that strengthen the social patterns of national and self-identity, ideology, and nation.

This paper further showed that national ideologies are based on a set of relatively simple metaphors and images that unite but also divide, concluding that the notion of *unity* created by metaphorical images in political rhetoric can be one of the reflection ways or one of the dimensions of everyday *banal nationalism* introduced by Michael Billig (1995). The analyzed metaphors have value in establishing collective consciousness and strengthening the sense of belonging. Since it is the initiator of the public debate, a politician provides a certain view of the world by offering a certain framework of that view. In that sense, the audience is engaged in observing a certain view of the world, deciding whether to enter that framework. By receiving information, the people participate in a dialogical negotiation of meaning. In such an approach to understanding language, the question of power and ideology arises. The analysis helped us understand that ideology is powerful because it fulfills emotional functions for individuals. People feel their ideology deeply and sincerely through an emotional experience that helps them understand the world and shared social beliefs, just as their feelings lead to ideological choices. It is recursively connected with emotions: that is why conceptual metaphors are very important in ideological shaping, and CMA and CDA in its interpretation.

Conclusion

As explained, the theory of conceptual metaphors suggests that experience is important for conceptualization. The idea of national identity is also linked to a personal experience: national identity is a discourse, or set of interrelated discourses, that shapes indi-

vidual experiences. This paper showed that national identities are based on a set of relatively simple conceptual metaphors and narratives to which people respond based on shared experience and expectations, emphasizing that by micro-cogni-linguistical grounding, national identities can be linked to lived self-experience, to imagining through narration, the metaphorical nation, and the metaphorical narration of the nation.

Based on the answers obtained through the interviews, we can conclude that the participants included a set of similar conceptions and shared several perceptual metaphoric schemes. Their answers further lead us to confirm that national identities can be discursively and metaphorically (re)produced, transformed and (de)constructed. By deconstructing the narrations of the politicians, the participants were establishing a new sense of belonging, while creating and offering new imagined communities, showing us the power of metaphors to naturalize the narration of national and its forms of collective and individual expression. Additionally, it is shown that, while conceptual metaphors help us see and understand our own experience, they can also make us unperceptive of analogies that we accept without further exploration.

In the end, we can conclude that national and self-identity can be a product of metaphorical discourse, which means that the conceptual metaphors have widespread effects on concepts that drive our social practices and that strengthen the social patterns, which was the main question this research was attempting to answer. The choice of language is part of the construction of national identity because language is a tool by which we manifest "who we are": giving definitions of ourselves and others, defining reality in part through our language and language behavior. That being said, it is a *nation* that, in fact, turns social relations into a metaphor as one of the necessary methods to devise a common name between the intimate and the abstract national world. Such a method must also be a remedy for the artificial dichotomy by exploring nationality as a process by which people from all social layers redefine the notions of space, time, and relations (Confino, 1993).

Certainly, there are several limitations in the current study. First, metaphors have become so pervasive in political rhetoric that they may become cliched expressions (Cluley, 2013) that are only superficial articulations of experience. The second limitation is the small number of participants that we included in this study. However, the findings of this research offer new, potentially useful information and interview design that can be further used on a larger group and possibly give more significant results.

References

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*. Verso.

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. Sage.

Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Charteris-Black, J. (2005). *Politicians and rhetoric: The persuasive power of metaphor*. Palgrave-MacMillan

Cluley, G. (2013). What makes a management buzzword buzz?. *Organization Studies, 34*(1), 33-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/017084061246

Confino, A. (1993). The nation as a local metaphor: Heimat, national memory and the German Empire, 1871-1918. *History and Memory, 5*(1), 42-86. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25618642

De Landtsheer, Ch. (2009). Collecting political meaning from the count of metaphor. In A. Musolff & J. Zinken (eds.), *Metaphor and discourse* (pp. 59-78). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230594647_5

Eagleton, T. (2007). *Ideology: An introduction*. Verso

Hart, C. (2010). Critical discourse analysis and cognitive science: New perspectives on immigration discourse. Springer.

Kövecses, Z. (2020). Domains, schemas, frames, or spaces?. In Z. Kövecses (ed.), *Extended conceptual metaphor theory* (pp. 50-92), Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108859127.005

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. The University of Chicago press.

McVeigh, B. (1996). Standing stomachs, clamoring chests, and cooling livers: Metaphors in the psychological lexicon of Japanese. *Journal of* Pragmatics *26*(1), 25-50. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(95)00034-8

Musolff, A. (2012). The study of metaphor as part of critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies, 9*(3), 301-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2012.688300

Thornton, M. (1995). The cartography of public and private. In M. Thorton (ed.), *Public and private: Feminist legal debates* (pp. 2-16). Oxford University Press.

Tomović-Šundić, S., Gvozdenović, K. (2020). Conceptual metaphors in political discourse: State is woman – Woman is construction. *The Asian conference on language 2020: Official conference proceedings* (pp. 53-66). The International Academic Forum.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). *Principles of critical discourse analysis*. University of Amsterdam.

Verschueren, J. (2012). *Ideology in language use: Pragmatical guidelines for empirical research*. Cambridge University Press.

Westen, D. (1999, June 13). *The scientific status of unconscious processes* [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Rapaport-Klein Study Group. http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/westen99.htm

Woodman, R. (1997). Metaphor and the language of revelation. *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies*, 8(1), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.31581/jbs-8.1.496(1997)

Povzetek

Raziskava uporablja kvalitativno študijo in poglobljene intervjuje, da bi preverila teorijo konceptualne metafore, pri čemer črpa iz spoznanj kritične metafore, ki jih združuje s teoretičnim okvirom analize kritičnega diskurza. Osnovni namen je pokazati možnost metaforično oblikovanega diskurza za oblikovanje realnosti in priklica določenega trenutka nacionalne identifikacije na primers Črne Gore. Cilj je preučiti načine, kako intervjuvanci doživljajo, razumejo in se odzivajo na metaforične domene, izvlečene iz diskurza politikov, v procesu osmišljanja njihovih družbenih svetov. Raziskana področja so vključevala percepcije sheme enotne slike z metaforičnimi preslikavami DRŽAVA JE: DRUŽINA, REZERVOAR, OSEBA in NA POTOVANJU. S to mikroštudijo smo ugotovili, da nacionalne identitete lahko temeljijo na nizu sorazmerno preprostih metaforičnih podob, na katere se ljudje odzivajo na podlagi skupnih izkušenj in pričakovanj. Poudarili smo, da je z mikro-kognitivno-jezikovno podlago mogoče nacionalne identitete povezati z doživeto, osebno izkušnjo in diskurzivno interakcijo, ki jo kolektivno konstruirajo posamezniki.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Črna Gora, teorija konceptualnih metafor, analiza kritičnega diskurza, nacionalna identiteta, samoidentiteta

CORRESPONDENCE: KRISTINA GVOZDENOVIĆ, Faculty of Political Science, University of Montenegro, 13. jula. 2, 81000 Podgorica, Montenegro. E-mail: tina.gvozdenovic111@gmail.com.