

The Serbian Paradox: The Cost of Integration into the European Union

Preston Huennekens

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
Political Science

Yannis A. Stivachtis, Chair

Besnik Pula

Glenn R. Bugh

April 17, 2018

Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: Serbia, European Union, historical memory, nationalism, Balkan politics

The Serbian Paradox: The Cost of Integration into the European Union

Preston Huennekens

Abstract

This project addresses the Republic of Serbia's current accession negotiations with the European Union, and asks how the country's long and often turbulent history affects that dialogue. Using Filip Ejdus' concept of historical memory and Benedict Anderson's "imagined community" theory of nationalism, this paper discusses how Serbia has reached a critical moment in its history by pursuing European integration. This contradicts their historical pull towards their longtime ally Russia. What role does historical memory play in these negotiations, and is integration truly possible? Additionally, how is Serbia's powerful president, Aleksandar Vucic, using the Europeanization process to strengthen his hand domestically?

Abstract (General Audience)

This thesis addresses the Republic of Serbia's current accession negotiations with the European Union, and asks how the country's long and often turbulent history affects that dialogue. I argue that Serbia is at a crossroads in its history: on one hand, it wishes to join the European Union, but on the other is continually pulled to the east with their historical ally, Russia. I argue that President Aleksandar Vucic is using the EU negotiations to enhance his own power and that if the EU admits Serbia into the body they will be trading regional stability for Serbian democracy.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank my Committee members for their insight, suggestions, and patience throughout the duration of this project. I particularly want to thank Dr. Stivachtis for his encouragement and thought-provoking inquiries which drove the ultimate direction of this thesis. Finally, I want to thank my parents for their endless support and for making this opportunity possible.

Table of Contents

[Cover Page](#)

[Abstract](#) (iii)

[Introduction](#) (1)

[Chapter 1: Historical Memory](#) (17)

[Chapter 2: Political Effects of the Yugoslav Collapse](#) (37)

[Chapter 3: The Prospect of a European Serbia](#) (59)

[Chapter 4: Political Attitudes in Serbia](#) (75)

[Chapter 5: The Cost of Integration](#) (91)

[Chapter 6: The Serbian Paradox](#) (109)

[Conclusion](#) (136)

[Bibliography](#) (157)

Introduction

Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the extent to which historical memory continues to influence politics and political culture within the Republic of Serbia. The origins of this thesis come from a personal interest in nationalism and some of its dangerous political consequences.

I have always been fascinated by nationalisms unique ability to inspire and to destroy communities. Positive civic nationalism can inspire patriotism and a sense of common purpose among people from diverse backgrounds.

But ethnic nationalism, based on beliefs of superiority, an emphasis on “blood and soil”, separateness, and irredentism renders negative consequences. Minorities often become scapegoats for problems throughout society and become other-ed by those ruling in the majority. Apartheid policies, warfare, and genocide are potential consequences of societies influenced strongly by ideas of ethnic nationalism.

The self-destruction of Yugoslavia is used as an example of ethnic nationalism gone awry. By the end of the conflicts almost 140,000 people were dead and millions more found themselves displaced. It was the deadliest conflict in Europe since the end of World War II. The former Yugoslav republics still bear the scars of that tumultuous time.

The purpose of this thesis, then, involves adding to the understanding of the Yugoslav collapse and the future of the successor states. The topic of this thesis, Serbia, is particularly fascinating to me for a number of reasons. It is the largest state in the Balkans that has still not joined the European Union. Alongside Montenegro, it has the best chance of joining the EU as the next wave of expansion. At one time, Serbia was the strongest constituent republic of

Yugoslavia, and the actions of some Serb political and thought leaders contributed to the demise of Yugoslavia.

The scholar Filip Ejdus described a phenomena known as “historical memory” that I find relevant to any discussion of Serbia and the European Union. Ejdus hypothesizes that Serbia as a society has persevered through difficult periods using “time collapse” and “formative eventing.” These topics are addressed in Chapter 1 as crucial to understanding Serbia’s attempts to join the EU after a period of isolation from the European Community as an outsider and a pariah.

The purpose of this thesis is to bring a number of concepts into conversation with each other: namely, Serbian historical memory and the role it plays in current EU accession negotiations.

Importance of the Thesis

“The EU is watching the Balkans come undone” warns Balkan Insight contributor Jasmin Mujanovic, and “Serbia, in particular, is arguably the most problematic of the bunch, with its overt drift towards one-man rule under President Aleksandar Vucic.”¹

Today’s international politics are chaotic. The Western liberal order and its institutions find themselves challenged by a rebirth in authoritarianism, populism, and nationalism. Not even the West’s great states are immune to this phenomenon. The United States elected Donald Trump to the Presidency: a man whose ideology more closely resembles European right-wing populism than it does American conservatism. The United Kingdom voted to leave the EU following an aggressive campaign spearheaded by the populist United Kingdom Independence Party and its fiery leader Nigel Farage. France and the Netherlands survived election scares from

¹ Mujanovic, Jasmin. “The EU is Watching the Balkans Come Undone.” *Balkan Insight*. January 24, 2018. <https://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-eu-is-watching-the-balkans-come-undone-01-23-2018>

far-right candidates, and Germany's powerful Chancellor Angela Merkel has seen the far-right reinvigorated in her own country.

This thesis focuses narrowly on the politics of Serbia. Like other European nations, Serbia's politics have taken a turn to the right in recent years following the success of Vucic and his party, the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). Vucic and the SNS are best described as a populist, nationalist party that supports membership in the European Union. In recent elections, the SNS has largely monopolized this as its singular issue, insisting that they are the only party stable enough to guide Serbia through the tumultuous chapter process. Critics say that Vucic and the SNS are creating an illiberal and increasingly authoritarian state in the meantime.

This thesis will answer questions that, while constructed in the context of Serbia's position, are broadly applicable to countries in similar positions, including other Balkan states pursuing membership in the EU. This research is important because it highlights some shortcomings of the EU's current approach to a troubled state such as Serbia. The research casts doubt on the EU's ability to be an agent of genuine change in a region as tumultuous as the Balkans.

Theoretical Background and Contribution

This thesis is informed by elements of constructivist interpretations of nationalism. Filip Ejdus' *Memory of Empire and Entry into International Society: Views from the European Periphery* (2017) informs much of the background to this text, and I am heavily indebted to his conception of "Serbian historical memory." This thesis seeks to further expound Ejdus' conception of Serbian historical memory, and explain its influence on the EU accession process. This thesis also draws on a definition of nationalism taken from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*

The project has some English School considerations. These come in large part from the acceptance of basic English School tenets: the presence of an international society and that the reality of world anarchy. The presence of an international society is important to this work because I frequently point to Serbia's changing position within the society of states.

I believe that this project contributes mightily to the constructivist position on nationalism. This thesis, following Ejdus' work, argues that the various nationalisms present in the former Yugoslav states, and particularly Serbia, are socially constructed interpretations of important historical events. Serbian nationalism is a derivative of a historical memory. The Serbian intelligentsia of the late 19th and early 20th century crafted this imaginative narrative in order to justify claims to independent statehood separate from the Ottoman Empire. They appealed to the medieval, short-lived Serbian Empire which flourished under the rule of Dusan the Mighty and briefly challenged Byzantine hegemony in the Balkans.

Nationalism and historical memory are linked, and closely related. In his work on nationalism, Benedict Anderson writes that the nation is "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."²

His analysis into the origins of nationalism is complex, but only the basic premise is important for the work of this thesis. Ideas of nationhood and nationality are inherently constructed inventions of a community. The nation is "always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries,

² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983. 5-6.

for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings.”³

The invention of a national community is tied deeply to the establishment and furthering of a common historical memory. Historical memory acts as the glue that binds together the fraternity. Shared beliefs of an origin, common religion, linguistic tradition, etc. coalesce together into a historical memory. Nefarious political calculations can weaponize historical memory into poisonous strands of nationalism.

This project contributes to the broader conversation because it analyzes the effect that lasting historical memory has on a society and its people; in this case, the Serbs. This project will inform the theoretical considerations of historical memory by providing a thorough and detailed case study of a country that is profoundly influenced by it.

Research Question

How is Serbian historical memory affecting Serbia’s negotiations to join the European Union? That is the primary research question addressed in this thesis. A number of sub-questions also inform the conclusions found within this work. Some of those include: 1) What role does Serbia’s history play in influencing today’s leaders? 2) How does the EU, and EU states, view Serbia as it prepares to join the bloc? 3) How do Serbia’s political parties address the potential EU accession, and is their thinking influenced by historical memory? 4) What are the consequences of Serbia’s accession? 5) How can Serbia maintain its traditional relationship with the East while courting the West? And ultimately, 6) are Serbia’s chances for membership realistic, given the current political climate in Europe and within the country?

³ Ibid., 7.

Methodology and Sources

This research relies primarily on qualitative data with very little contributions from quantitative data. Qualitative data takes the form of interviews, books, scholarly articles, criminal proceedings from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, newspaper articles, and the statements and writings of Serbian politicians.

The only quantitative data that I will be using in any capacity are opinion polls, conducted within Serbia that measure attitudes towards the European Union, Kosovo, and other countries such as the United States and Russia. They offer a helpful insight into the general population's outlook on the political climate of the country. Unfortunately, all polls suffer from certain biases. Additionally, because of the poor state of media independence in Serbia, the polls conducted by local media may suffer from issues such as selection bias.

Some of the most helpful resources for this project were news sources from within Serbia, the Balkans, and Europe. American media rarely reports on the day-to-day happenings of Belgrade or Pristina. Because of that, I have consulted with European news sources such as BBC, *The Economist*, RadioFreeEurope, Balkan Insight, B92, Euractiv, etc. These sources produce regular, detailed journalism on Serbia that is lacking from American papers. It is particularly interesting to see the perspectives of sources that are accused of being under the control of Vucic and his interests.

A number of academic journals have informed this thesis, including *International Political Science Review*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *International Relations*, *East European Quarterly*, and *Electoral Studies*, to name a few. Journal articles give a rich and detailed historical foundation on which to build. However, given that this thesis addresses topics which are changing potentially every day, it can be difficult to find timely articles that reflect

events on the ground as they happen. It is my intention that with this thesis I will contribute to that gap in current research regarding Serbia.

The early chapters of this thesis rely heavily on well-established sources, reflecting the historical buildup that I rely on to exhibit the effects of the past on the present. The later chapters, which highlight current developments and predictions of events in the future, rely mostly on contemporary sources and reports.

Limitations of the Study

I identified some main limitations to my work that deserve attention and disclosure. The first limitation to this study is my inability to read or write in the Serbian language. This impedes my ability to read articles, newspapers, and other sources in the primary language of Serbia. Fortunately, many online sources produce their articles in both Serbian and English, and many Serbian scholars publish their work in English-language journals. But nonetheless, relying on translations of original works is never ideal, but unfortunately necessary given my lack of Serbian fluency.

A second limitation of this study is that it involves political events that change every day. Throughout the course of writing this thesis I often had to edit sections as facts on the ground changed. While I intend for this work to be as up-to-date as possible, there is always a chance that some facts may change as time goes on. However, unless major elements of Serbian or European politics change (e.g. SNS electoral disaster, Serbia withdrawal from EU negotiations, etc.) any day-to-day changes will be minor and easily corrected.

The third, and perhaps most important, limitation of this study is that I am an outsider researching a topic in which I have no direct connection to. I am not Serbian and have no immediate familial or cultural connection to the country on which I am writing. I have not

traveled to the Balkan peninsula and visited it in person, although I plan to do so in the future. I chose this topic because it interested me, but it would be inappropriate to pretend that I have firsthand experience with the people and politics of Serbia. This is addressed further below.

Criticism of “Ancient Roots” Hypothesis

Perhaps one of the most influential, if not controversial, books published in regard to Balkan politics was *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*. In it, author Robert Kaplan argues that the 1990s unraveling of the Balkans was chiefly the result of ancient ethnic hatred. This was an incendiary charge which was widely criticized at the time of its publication. Writing for *The National Interest*, Noel Malcom stated that:

The Bosnian war was not caused by ancient hatreds; it was caused by modern politicians, notably Mr. Milosevic and Dr. Karadzic, with the help of political controllers of Radio Television Belgrade. The politicians had to work very hard at their propaganda, political manipulation, misinformation, rumor-mongering and terrorizing in order to create active hatred where it did not exist before.⁴

However, Kaplan’s book was extremely influential in Western circles. It is widely acknowledged that President Bill Clinton both read the book and was deeply impacted by Kaplan’s argument, and “inferred from the book that the peoples of the region had never coexisted peacefully for very long.”⁵

The impact of Kaplan’s argument was so profound that many scholars have spent the better part of twenty years attacking it and attempting to debunk its claims. Since the collapse of Yugoslavia, almost every social, political, and economic argument imaginable has been made to explain why the country tore itself apart.

⁴ Malcom, Noel. “Seeing Ghosts.” *The National Interest* no. 32 (1993): 83-88.

⁵ Kaufman, Michael T. “The Dangers of Letting a President Read.” *The New York Times*. May 22, 1999. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/22/books/the-dangers-of-letting-a-president-read.html>

In a succinct review of literature surrounding the breakup of Yugoslavia, Dejan Jovic identifies seven of these major arguments present in academia: the economic argument, Kaplan's "ancient ethnic hatred" argument, the "nationalism" argument, the cultural argument, the "international politics" argument, the "role of personality" argument, and the "fall of empires" argument. He states that "with the exception of the ancient ethnic hatred argument, all approaches offer useful elements for explaining the reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia."⁶

Jovic correctly states that no single one of these arguments can explain the collapse of Yugoslavia. Indeed, he argues for a multi-factored subjective approach that incorporates points from all of the arguments, except for that of ethnic hatred. For the sake of illuminating my shortcomings in the subject, I wanted to highlight the arguments that I touch on in this thesis, with Jovic's comments, because I highlight the importance of historical memory and nationalism as a primary cause for the condition of the former Yugoslav republics in the present.

First - I do not incorporate any argument made in this thesis to that of "ancient ethnic hatred." I do not dispute that the Yugoslav wars descended into clearly ethno-national lines, however. Jovic states that "the elite successfully redirected them against the new 'others.' The Serb demonstrators were worried about the disintegration of the country, for which the 'others' (Slovenes, Croats, various international institutions, etc.) were made responsible. The Slovenian intellectual elite and media also argued that the 'others' were responsible for Greater-Serbian expansionist demands."⁷ This point is reinforced by the constructivist argument of nationalism produced by Anderson. Ethnic hatred did not come out of thin air; it was socially engineered as

⁶ Jovic, Dejan. "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches." *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 1 (2001): 101-120.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

conditions on the ground deteriorated and political elites doubled down on dangerous tools at their disposal.

Jovic presents the nationalism argument as “certainly more difficult to object to, which was widely present in academic debates on the disintegration of Yugoslavia... nationalist doctrines and actions caused ethnic tensions and the instability of the country.”⁸ But he places the blame of its power on the political makeup of Yugoslavia after the 1967 constitution which created six political nations that eventually became independent states. Within the weakening federation, loyalty towards the constituent nation was the most effect way to protest central rule from Belgrade, which sparked the secession crisis in both Slovenia and Croatia.

Jovic presents the cultural argument as “the diversities of the traditions and cultures of the Yugoslav nations (based on the ancient divisions between Eastern and Western Christianity, as well as between Christianity and Islam) played the major role in the failure to constitute a Yugoslav culture, nation, and state.”⁹ He states an important fact that reinforces the strength of the constructivist argument at play in this thesis: “(the cultural argument) certainly does recognize the importance of people’s beliefs, which were largely created by opinion-makers and ideologues.”¹⁰ The cultural argument, I believe, is in conversation with the idea of historical memory as a created and changing phenomenon that influences entire populations with the provoking of political elites.

Jovic discusses what he names the “role of personality” argument, which essentially boils down to the belief that Tito alone held Yugoslavia together, and that the entrance of Milosevic was enough to drive it to its collapse. Western authors in the past often argued in favor of a

⁸ Ibid., 104.

⁹ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰ Ibid., 108.

general “great man theory” for history, although it has fallen out of favor, and for good reason. A popular example of this is the way that the West often discusses World War II as a clash of great leaders (Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, Eisenhower, et al.) rather than a clash of ideologies. In describing the argument, Jovic signals “Yugoslavia did not exist or collapse because of one person only, even if its politics has often in the past been largely determined by the will of a single strong man.”¹¹

This argument is particularly important in the course of this thesis because of the focus placed upon President Vucic. Vucic, like Tito and Milosevic before him, is driving the country based on his personal will and the will of his party. My aim in this thesis is not to explain away Serbia’s state of affairs by laying the blame at any one individual’s feet. Instead, it is to show how historical memory has influenced and shaped those individuals, and how those individuals in turn shape Serbia’s trajectory within the context of European Union accession.

Jovic argues for a multi-factored subjective approach in explaining the collapse of Yugoslavia. Similarly, this thesis weaves together various concepts in the pursuit of understanding Serbia’s current trajectory. I do not believe that historical memory is informed by an “ethnic hatred” argument, but indeed my interpretation of it contains elements from the nationalist argument, the cultural argument, and the role of personality argument. There are scholars who debate the validity of these arguments, and I am aware of the criticism.

Balkanism

Bulgarian academic Maria Todorova coined the phrase “Balkanism” in her book *Imagining the Balkans*. In this text she applies Edward Said’s orientalism framework to the Balkans, and traces how the West has “seen” the Balkans and set the people of the peninsula

¹¹ Ibid., 112.

aside as an Other. Western Europeans began seeing the Balkans as a backwards place as more and more travelers headed towards the Ottoman Empire. Travel journals, particularly those written by the British, exhibit the beginnings of the prejudices harbored against the people of the Balkans.

In Todorova's conclusion, she lists a number of grievances towards the Western academy's portrayal of the Balkans as a whole. "Except for the Serbs, the Battle of Kosovo does not mean much for the rest of the Balkan nations who have had their own and quite different Kosovos."¹² And she is mostly correct. In the immediate sense, why would Bulgaria (her home country) or Macedonia care about what Kosovo means to the Serbian state and people? The only answer to that question is that it has influenced events in the abstract. That fourteenth century battle matters because it set in motion events that drove one of the Balkans' largest and more powerful states, Serbia, to actions that affected its neighbors. While the Battle of Kosovo does not mean anything in terms of historical memory for a country such as Bulgaria, there are secondary effects from the Serbian reaction to its own historical memory that certainly impacted the country in ways not easily measurable.

The most stinging criticism of Balkanism is pointed out by Todorova by recognizing the different ways of explaining problems from the Western perspective. "It would do much better if the Yugoslav, not Balkan, crisis ceased to be explained in terms of Balkan ghosts, ancient Balkan enmities, primordial Balkan cultural patterns and proverbial Balkan turmoil, and instead was approached with the same rational criteria that the West reserves for itself."¹³

¹² Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 186.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 186.

In this thesis, I have done my best to avoid explaining away Serbia's current station by chalking it up to "primordial Balkan cultural patterns" or "ancient Balkan enmities," although the historical memory argument can be accused of continuing these academic stereotypes. I argue that historical memory is innately connected to a constructivist framework in line with Anderson's imagined community hypothesis of nationalism. This thesis subject addresses Serbia because of their unique history and current negotiations with the European Union, but most countries and their residents possess a kind of historical memory based on a constructed interpretation of national events. Regardless, I am aware of these criticisms, and list them as a potential limitation to my work herein.

I write this thesis with an outsider's perspective, but despite these limitations I believe that I offer a number of helpful insights that will contribute to further studies of the current political climate in Serbia and within the European Union.

Structure

Broadly, the thesis is divided into two sections. The first addresses the theoretical background of the thesis and the history of Serbia. This contributes to the research question by explaining the physical events that contributed to the rise of historical memory in Serbia and how those formative events influenced current political attitudes within the country. The second section addresses contemporary politics in Serbia and Europe. The chapters in this section use the historical and theoretical as a starting point to fully answer the research questions.

Chapter 1: Historical Memory

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the concept of historical memory into a discussion of Serbia's continued efforts to join the European Union. This chapter addresses a number of topics, and all are pertinent towards answering the question of this thesis. First, this

chapter introduces the theoretical background assumption presented by Filip Ejdus and other authors.

Then, this chapter provides a short summary of the complex early Serbian history that informs Serbian cultural memory. This cultural memory plays a profound role in Serbia's modern political landscape.

Chapter 2: Political Effects of the Yugoslav Collapse

This chapter analyzes the political fallout in Serbia following the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia. The dissolution of the League of Communists in 1990 led to a power vacuum that gave rise to various nationalist movements within the federation. Nationalist politicians rose to prominence in Serbia and Croatia, and Bosnian politics fractured into ethnic factions that completely boxed out any remaining cosmopolitan, Yugoslavist parties. This chapter will lay out the history behind these decisions, and show that not only historical memory (medieval, pre-Ottoman Serbia) absorbed the events of the 1990s as well. Just as Serbia's historical memory influences the decisions of its policymakers, so also does the more contemporary relational history with modern Western Europe.

Chapter 3: The Prospect of a European Serbia

This chapter addresses how Europe "sees" Serbia. That is – how the European Union as a unique institution and as a collection of individual member-states perceive the Serbian accession process culturally and politically. The most appropriate way to answer that question is to look through the lens of Serbia's progress in joining the Union. There are 35 chapters that Serbia must open and close in order to become a full member in the Union. Even the act of opening a chapter requires great difficulty on the part of Serbia's leaders. The subsequent sections of this chapter

will detail the closed, opened, and remaining chapters all the while drawing attention to Europe's relationship with Serbia, as well as the future of the European Union.

Chapter 4: Political Attitudes in Serbia

This chapter will highlight the most important political actors in Serbia today and illustrate how the question of European membership is still hotly debated in the country. Interestingly, this outline will show how Vucic, a former nationalist, has incorporated pro-European politics into his political party: How will his marriage of soft nationalism and pro-European politics work? And, can it withstand the arduous accession process?

Chapter 5: The Cost of Integration

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a concept crucial to this thesis, which will in turn answer the fundamental question posed by this project. How has Serbia's EU accession process further empowered Vucic? How has historical memory affected Serbia's accession negotiations? And finally, how will Serbia's membership in the EU affect the union as a whole?

The subsequent three sections address each of these questions in their entirety, utilizing the research presented throughout the previous chapters. Each of these questions is crucial in considering the effects of Serbia's accession to the European Union.

Chapter 6: The Serbian Paradox

This chapter aims to address two specific topics: first, the extent to which Serbia's history shaped the rise of Vucic and created the conditions for him to occupy the position of power that he now holds, and second, answering why Serbia desires membership in the EU despite its cultural and historic ties to the East.

Conclusion

The conclusion will reiterate the argument made throughout the work and raise further questions that could be answered by additional research in the subject area. I will present broad predictions for the future of Serbia as part of my concluding remarks.

Chapter 1: Historical Memory

Introduction

On a January morning in 2017 a Russian-built train departed from Belgrade for Mitrovica, a small town about 260 miles away in northern Kosovo. It was the first train to travel between the two cities since the end of the Kosovo War eighteen years ago.¹⁴ The train carried the phrase “Kosovo is Serbia” in twenty languages, painted as the Serbian flag, and contained Orthodox Christian paintings and other Serbian images. The leaders of both Serbia and Kosovo immediately pointed the finger at one another and tensions flared in a region that has remained on edge since Kosovo’s 2008 declaration of independence. Then-Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic suggested that Kosovo’s reaction indicated they wanted to wage war against Serbia.¹⁵

Such an act could surely be an exercise of political theater, and certainly that factored into the decision to send the train in the first place. But to overlook the host of other issues at play would ignore important historical-political connotations. Those connotations concern the role of historical memory which permeates throughout Serbian culture and politics. The purpose of this chapter is to explain what Serbian historical memory is and to analyze the historical events that led to its formation.

Historical Memory

University of Bristol researcher Filip Ejdus wrote that “the memories of suzerainty

¹⁴ “Serbian Nationalist Train Halts at Border with Kosovo.” *The New York Times*. January 14, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/14/world/europe/kosovo-serbia-train.html>

¹⁵ Sekularac, Ivana. “Serbia says Kosovo wants war as neighbors row over Serb nationalist train.” *Reuters*. January 15, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-kosovo/serbia-says-kosovo-wants-war-as-neighbors-row-over-serb-nationalist-train-idUSKBN14Z0NS>

complicated Serbia's entry and came with an ethno-centric understanding of politics."¹⁶ His work addresses the idea of historical memory and how that memory influenced their standing with the rest of Europe.

Serbia's history is a patchwork of alternating phases of independence and domination by other major powers. Indeed, Serbia's position in Europe began as a relatively powerful, independent kingdom in the 14th century under Stefan Dusan. It entered the 21st century as a pariah within the international community, shunned and friendless following the Kosovo War. This isolation became further entrenched in Serbian society. It divided politicians and the public alike on how to proceed into the future.

Serbia is, in many ways, held back by its collective memory. This memory pertained to the medieval Serbian state that existed for centuries, belonging both culturally and politically to the Byzantine system of states, experienced its Golden Age in the fourteenth century and then came to an abrupt end. The idea internal to these memories was indeed that politics is about positioning oneself at the center.

This kind of memory, argues Iver B. Neumann, is the chronological aspect of identity which shapes the decision-making of states as they enter into the international system. Serbia currently exists on the periphery of the European center because it merely borders the core that has defined what it means to be European in the late 20th and early 21st centuries – the European Union.

Neumann identifies this phenomenon in his introduction to *Memories of Empire and Entry into the International System*. He writes that states entering a new system generally do not behave the way that "newcomers" do in social environment. Rather than "keeping their head

¹⁶ Ejdus, Filip. "The long shadow of Byzantium over Serbia's entry into international society." *International Relations* 28 no. 4 (2014): 461-468.

down when entering the system” they act “according to a different logic, which partially grew out of those norms and those practices that they carried with them in memory from their previous setting with a suzerain system.”¹⁷

In the case of Serbia, that suzerain system was the period of Ottoman rule from 1459 until roughly 1817. Under the rule of the Sultans, Serbia functioned as an outlier whose tribute flowed to the center – the Ottoman Empire. Within this system, the Serbian Orthodox Church kept alive the memory of Serbia’s nationhood, painting the heroic Serbian Christians fighting a desperate war against the Muslim invaders from Anatolia.¹⁸

Ejdus argues that the memory of this time influenced Serbian state builders in the 19th and 20th centuries. When the early state builders of Serbia were trying to make sense for “who they were and what they wanted”¹⁹ they envisioned the glorious past that had been romantically described by powerful cultural institutions (i.e. the Church) that stood firmly against the Ottoman feudal lords. There existed in the minds of the early statebuilders a collective memory of a Great Serbian Empire. This memory is what they evoked when they began constructing post-Ottoman Serbia.

Formative Events in Serbian History

Ejdus argues that the memory of this time influenced Serbian state builders in the 19th and 20th centuries. When the early state builders of Serbia were trying to make sense for “who they were and what they wanted”²⁰ they envisioned the glorious past that had been romantically described by powerful cultural institutions (i.e. the Church) that stood firmly against the Ottoman

¹⁷ Ejdus, Filip. *Memories of Empire and Entry into the International System*. Taylor and Francis, 2017. ii-iii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

feudal lords. There existed in the minds of the early statebuilders a collective memory of a Great Serbian Empire. This memory is what they evoked when they began constructing post-Ottoman Serbia.

This phenomenon continued to influence leaders in Serbian politics well beyond the 19th century. Ejodus cites Patrick Thaddeus Jackson's concept of "formative eventing" to describe the historical memory that followed Serbia into the 20th and 21st centuries. Formative eventing is the "process whereby the contours of formative events in a nation's history are produced and reproduced by its political elites in order to serve their present conditions."²¹ Serbia has, throughout its history, engaged in formative eventing following times of great national distress.

Formative eventing can contribute to the building of ethnic nationalism. This is not a problem that has only affected Serbians. Croats used their own formative event, the short-lived Kingdom of Croatia (925-1102) to influence their own nationalism, juxtaposed to that of the Serbs.²² For the latter, there have been the broad periods which underwent historical eventing. These periods contribute to the whole of the specific "memory."

The Battle of Kosovo

The Ottoman Empire had encroached into the Balkan peninsula under the command of Sultan Murad I and directly threatened Serbia and Bosnia. The armies met in Kosovo. The Serbs were led by a group of nobles headed by Prince Lazar, who would go on to "become the much-mythologized and Christ-like tsar of the epic songs."²³

²¹ Ibid., 124.

²² Duraskovic, Stevo. "Nation-building in Franjo Tudjman's Political Writings." *Croatian Political Science Review* 51 no. 5 (2014): 58-79.

²³ Matthias, John. "The Battle of Kosovo: Serbian Epic Poems." Internet Library of Serb Culture. 1987.
https://web.archive.org/web/20141104103214/http://www.rastko.org.rs/knjizevnost/usmena/battle_of_kosovo.html

There are few, if any, definitive contemporary accounts exist of the battle. The Serbian poems that recounted the event describe a cataclysmic affair in which both Lazar and Murad were slain, alongside the majority of both armies. The Serb reserves were completely exhausted, and thus the Ottomans eventually entered the region and would remain there until their expulsion in the 19th century.

Under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire, Serbian culture, language and customs were preserved by the Orthodox Church who resisted integration and assimilation, unlike other Balkan peoples such as the Bosniaks, who adopted Islam from the Ottomans.²⁴

The Battle of Kosovo became important to Serbian thought leaders because of the preservation of its memory through epic poems, songs, and stories, largely produced by the Church. As I explain further in this work, the Church continues to represent itself as the fiercest defender of Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo and certainly influenced nationalists of the last two centuries.

The Battle of Kosovo is important because it came to represent the end of a free and independent Serbian polity in the middle ages. Serbs from 1389 onward were constantly reminded of what was "lost" following the battle. The battle's significance to Serbian historical memory cannot be stressed enough – it remains Serbia's most important national myth.

Serbian Independence

The first period was that of Serbia's struggle for independence against the Ottoman empire. Steven Sowards remarks that "in 1804 there was no Serbian polity, only memory of the medieval Serbia kept alive through epic poems like those about the Battle of Kosovo."²⁵ These

²⁴ Toal, Gerard and Carl T. Dahlman. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal*. Oxford University Press, 2011. 51.

²⁵ Sowards, Steven W. "Lecture 5: The Serbian Revolution and the Serbian State." *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History*. May 1996. <http://staff.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture5.html>

early inklings of memory coalesced then into a common group identity - a fraternity, in Anderson's words. In support of Anderson's imagined community narrative, Sowards identifies that "the average Serb had no notion of 'nationality' in the modern sense, but despite 400 years of Turkish rule, Serbian society was still alive and distinct from Ottoman Turkish society."²⁶

These differences soon came to rest on the societal schism of religion. "Under the millet system, Christian Orthodox Serbs were clearly not Muslim Ottoman Turks, as evidenced by their subservient status in matters of law, taxes, and privileges."²⁷ Early leaders found inspiration and friendship in the model of Russia, who shared their Slavic Orthodoxy and who represented a serious rebuke of their Turk rulers.

The two main Serbian intellectuals who formulated an idea of a Serbian community at this time were Dositej Obradovic and Vuk Karadzic. The former created a litany of Serb-language poems, stories, and literature that romanticized Serbia's independent medieval kingdom. The latter collected and published Serbian epic poetry, work that helped to build Serbian awareness of a common identity based in shared customs and shared history. This kind of linguistic and cultural self-awareness was a central feature of German nationalism in this period, and Serbian intellectuals now applied the same ideas to the Balkans.²⁸

Both men contributed to Serbian historical memory through their writing, and particularly by writing about the medieval Serbian experience. This did not mean to spark the events that led to Serbian independence from the Ottoman Empire, but did inspire the work of the men who did eventually bring arms against the Ottomans. It would come to inspire generations after them, as well.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Founding of Yugoslavia

When World War I began, most of the future constituencies of Yugoslavia belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Only Serbia, in 1914, was independent of any major power. Their growing rivalry with the Austro-Hungarian Empire was one of the prevailing issues that contributed to the First World War.

Following the destruction of the war and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Serbia found itself surrounded by newly independent peoples, including other Serbs. Within these communities there existed two contrasting movements. The first were the Serbian nationalists, who desired a large Serbian state with the newly absorbed territory. The second were Yugoslavists, or Pan-Slavists, who advocated for the consolidation of the South Slavs into a single state but without the overwhelming dominance of any one ethnic group.

In the end, both factions received some of what they were each advocating for. Following the end of World War I, the Yugoslavists united Croats, Slovenians, Serbians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims, Kosovar Albanians, and hundreds of smaller ethnic groups into a large conglomerate state. Initially named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, it officially became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.

The Serb nationalists clearly received the most concessions from the arrangement. Although the kingdom was nominally Pan-Slavic, all institutions were immediately dominated by Serbian entities, mainly because their state institutions were already established because of their pre-war independence, a luxury the other constituents of Yugoslavia did not share. The first king was Peter I of the Karadordevic dynasty; the previously Serbian royal family. The capital of the kingdom became Belgrade, the capital of Serbia since 1841.²⁹

²⁹ "Important Years in City History." Belgrade Official Website. Accessed March 1, 2018. <http://www.beograd.rs/index.php?lang=cir&kat=beoinfo&sub=201239%3f>

Historical memory was very important in this period because it reinforced the notion of Serbian centrality within the state. As Ejdus describes, the concept of centrality was important to the Serbians who for centuries perceived themselves as operating in the periphery of power, the center being Istanbul. Within Yugoslavia, Serb nationalists were determined to make Serbia the center of the new Yugoslav kingdom.

These sentiments, rightly, spurred alarm among the other constituent people in the new kingdom. Croats, Slovenes, et al did not want to live in a Serb-dominated entity, yet they increasingly found that they did. These divisions slowly revealed themselves in the interwar years.

World War II

The Axis powers invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941 and quickly overran the country. Established in its place was the puppet-state Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and the directly-administered National Salvation government of Serbia. The NDH was led by Ante Pavelic, a fascist and Croatian nationalist who had fled from Yugoslavia to Italy following the establishment of the royal dictatorship. He returned when the Axis powers overran Yugoslavia, and the occupiers were pleased enough to install Pavelic as leader of the new puppet state.

Importantly, many Croats were pleased with Pavelic and his Ustase ideology. “Judging from how they greeted the German army in Zagreb and elsewhere, and from various other evidence, most of the Croatian population were pleased by the defeat of Yugoslavia and the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia.”³⁰ Pavelic’s movement was certainly a reaction to the Serbian centrality of the Yugoslav state.

³⁰ Goldstein, Ivo. “Ante Pavelić, Charisma and National Mission in Wartime Croatia.” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7, no. 2 (2006): 225-234.

The Ustase “advocated the Croatian right to all territories that had belonged to Croatia or which had been inhabited by Croats in the past, and called for the unconditional rejection of any common state with other Yugoslav peoples. From the outset the Ustase roused people against the Serbs.”³¹ The importance of the Ustase hatred, and eventual genocide, of Serbs cannot be highlighted enough because it fueled and informed a new chapter in Serbian collective and historical memory that would become vitally important to the wars of the 1990s.

The genocide of Serbs (and many others) perpetrated by the NDH continues to influence how Serbs and Croats understand themselves and their neighbors. The memory of the Ustase’s oppression and of the horrors of the Jasenovac extermination camp led to the justification of reactionary nationalist elements among the Serbian population (especially the Chetniks) and contributed to a mutual and lasting deep distrust. When Yugoslavia was patched together by Tito’s communist Partisans, he embarked on a mission of erasing ethnic differences through “brotherhood and unity.” Unfortunately, brotherhood and unity would not eradicate the beliefs that historical and collective memory had cemented in people’s psyche.

Milosevic Era and End of Yugoslavia

Slobodan Milosevic began his career as a mild communist party official. As Yugoslavia began to unravel in the late 1980s, Milosevic adopted the banner of Serbian nationalism and adopted aggressive stances towards Kosovo, stripping it of its autonomous rule in 1990 in a move that was strongly influenced by historical memory’s understanding of Kosovo as a part of Serbia, rather than a polity in its own right.

Milosevic, whether he intended to or not, weaponized historical memory to whip up anger and resentment against non-Serbs within Serbia and Serb-majority areas. He also returned

³¹ Ibid., 225.

brought a renewed focus towards maintaining centrality within the Yugoslav system. Slovenia and Croatia eventually seceded from Yugoslavia as a result of Serbia's increasing domination of the federal presidency.

The weaponization of Serbian historical memory, in the corrupted form of nationalism, led to the unraveling of Socialist Yugoslavia. The atrocities committed by soldiers and paramilitary outfits of Bosnia's Republika Srpska were justified largely through a desire to unite all Serbs into a single state, regardless of the presence of Bosniaks and Croats.

The Yugoslav Wars, like World War II, added a new chapter to the historical memory of Serbia. To this day, many Serbs (including politicians) either play down the atrocities of the wars or insist that they did not occur.

An entire generation of Serbs grew up with this additional chapter of historical memory in their collective consciousness. This new chapter did not include a collective sense of guilt, such as that of Germany post-World War II. There was instead a collective sense that Serbia had been wronged by the West, particularly NATO and the United States, for wars that they did not see themselves responsible for starting.

The results of the Yugoslav Wars added an entirely new set of collective memories to the overall Serbian historical experience. As the most recent event to undergo formative eventing in within the spectrum of historical memory, it is often what influences politicians and cultural leaders in the former Yugoslav republics in the present day. In Serbia, especially, many issues and foreign policy entanglements are somehow framed within the context of the post-breakup experience, which includes the wars and the fall of Milosevic.

Present-Day

One of the objectives of this thesis is to exhibit how historical memory permeates throughout Serbian politics and culture in the present. Aleksandar Vucic is certainly influenced by historical memory and wields it as a tool to accumulate personal political power. Other ministers within the government, such as foreign minister Ivica Dacic, are also heavily influenced by Serbian historical memory and carry it with them into their day-to-day dealings.

Serbia's historical memory has undergone significant changes from its first incarnation which drove Serbian independence from the Ottoman Empire. The beginnings of Serbian nationalism and the birth of the importance of centrality came into being with the creation of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. A new chapter was added during World War II following the barbarities of the NDH and Nazis that imbued within Serbs a further belief in ethnic entrenchment. Finally, the Yugoslav Wars added a new set of more modern memories that many Serbians still have to address. All of these events contributed to the collective Serbian memory of today.

The Ideal of Dusan's Empire

The foundation of Serbian collective memory, and the one its state-builders envisioned, lies in the history of the earliest independent Serbian society. The people who would become the Serbs settled in the Balkans by the beginning of the 8th century CE under the rule of the Byzantines. During this time, the Byzantine system influenced the Serb people, who were useful to Constantinople as a frontier against the independent people north of the Balkans.

Ejdus points to this arrangement as key to Serbia's political consciousness following their emancipation from the Ottoman Empire. Rather than continuing with the customs, norms, and attitudes of that period, the Serbian state-builders reached back in time to the era of Byzantine

control in which political power dominated by being the “center” of power. Byzantium ensured that it remained dominant over peripheral powers through a combination of diplomacy and selective confrontations that kept peripheral entities fighting each other rather than challenging the center.

This began to change with the rule of Stefan Prvovencani, who was crowned King of Serbia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia in 1217.³² His rule ushered in the beginning of the Nemanjic dynasty. The subsequent section expands upon the role of the Church's role in the creation of Serbian identity.

Certainly, the most formative period of this Serbian Golden Age was the rule of Stefan Dusan “The Mighty” who ruled from 1331-1355. During his reign, Stefan Dusan incorporated huge swaths of additional territory into the Serbian Empire, including Albania, Montenegro, and the eastern regions of Bosnia. Placing his capital in the city of Prizren in modern Kosovo,³³ Stefan Dusan modeled his own titles and styles after that of Byzantine rulers, and contemplated plans to attack Constantinople and replace Byzantium as the seat of Eastern power with a Serbian-Greek entity. These dreams were not realized as Stefan Dusan died prematurely in 1355 at the age of 47.

The short-lived reign of Stefan Dusan saw the Serbian Empire grow from a small kingdom to a powerful state with designs to challenge the supremacy of Byzantium.

The belief of occupying the center as opposed to the periphery was a foundational belief that drove Stefan Dusan’s conquests at the expense of Byzantium. This belief in the importance of the centrality of power would lead to Serbia’s attempts to dominate the creation of

³² Lampe, John. “Serbia.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. September 13, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Serbia>.

³³ Mitrovich, Mirco M. “Serbian Participation in European History and Civilization from Early Times to 1389.” *East European Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1975): 135-151.

Yugoslavia, which to an extent, they succeeded at doing. Creating a Serb-dominated Yugoslav state became the goal of intellectuals and state-builders who determined that a Serbian state powerful enough to subjugate the other Balkan states was not a realistic possibility.

The collective Serbian memory of short-lived medieval greatness created a desire to work with the Slovenes and Croats to unify the south Slavic peoples, but only under the domination of a Serbian monarchy, in the Serbian capital, with a Serbian-dominated military class. This was necessary because Serbian collective memory required the early state-builders not to cede their perceived centrality to groups who could not trace back their own collective history to great empires, as the Serbians claimed they could.

In 1844, a Serbian government minister named Ilija Garasnin created a document that espoused the need to recreate a powerful Serbian state that resembled the medieval empire of Stefan Dusan. Garasnin crafted the *Nacertanije* which identified areas of concern for the Serbian state. First among them was the heavy Catholic Austrian presence that strangled their trade.³⁴ However, the most important part of Garasnin's *Nacertanije* was the endorsement of the idea of Greater Serbia – with a straightforward plan to unite all Serbs in the Balkans under one neo-imperial state.

The legacy of Stefan's empire did not die with the re-establishment of Yugoslavia as a socialist state following World War II. Despite Marshal Tito's attempts to dispel ethnic nationalism with broad appeals to socialist brotherhood and unity, following his death nationalism re-emerged as the dominant focus of each of the constituent republics. Serbia began to embrace its historic "role" as the center of Yugoslavia, an idea originally set forth in the *nacertanije*.

³⁴ Lampe, John. "Serbia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. September 13, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Serbia>.

The legacy of Dusan's empire is important for Serbian memory because of its role in ensuring the "centrality" of Serbia in the Balkans. It also feeds into beliefs of historical legitimacy and identity. This was a concern that the Serbs inherited from the Byzantine system, as argued by Filip Ejdus.

The founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes following the end of World War I reflected two separate visions prevalent in the Balkan peninsula. One was Yugoslavism – essentially the desire to unite all South Slavs into one country. This was countered, in Serbia, by designs of restoring Dusan's empire and creating a large, Serb-dominated Balkan state. When the state came into being in 1919, one of the two main parties was the People's Radical Party. Pieter Troch characterized the party: "its national ideology remained Serb-centered, because it was clear for the Radicals that the Serbian people deserved to take a leading role within the Yugoslav state since Serbs had put most efforts in the unification of the South Slav tribes."³⁵

Before the establishment of the royal dictatorship in 1929, the Radicals were part of 21 of 24 parliamentary governments and dominated parliamentary politics. This was in contrast to the Yugoslav Democratic Party (JDS) who advocated for Yugoslavism, believing that conflicting national identities would be supplanted in short time by a Yugoslav identity. However, it soon became clear to non-Serb elites within Yugoslavia that this was not a powerful counterweight to the designs of the Radicals. Highlighting this fact, Troch concludes that

Whereas at the beginning of the 1920s a great majority of the political and cultural elites did favor the Yugoslav national idea and were willing to participate in negotiations over the concrete definition of Yugoslav national identity, by the end of the parliamentary period the viability of the Yugoslav national idea had seriously decreased in the eyes of competing non-Serbian elites.

³⁵ Troch, Pieter. "Yugoslavism between world wars: indecisive nation building." *Nationalities Papers* 38 no. 2 (2010) 227-244.

The early Kingdom of Yugoslavia (as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) bridged Dusan's Empire to that of communist Yugoslavia. Although the Kingdom existed only in the interwar years of 1919 and 1941, its presence brought about the flourishing of a renewed interest in the centrality of Serbian dominance in the Balkans. The Croatian Ustase movement was an extreme reaction to the perceived Serbian dominance of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

When Tito began crafting communist Yugoslavia following the conclusion of World War II, he did so with great awareness of the lingering legacy of competing nationalities. Unfortunately, Tito and the communists thought that communist ideology and the "Brotherhood and Unity" program would inevitably replace ethnic identity. Like Yugoslavism, communism too failed to replace deeply-held ethnic identities. Such is the power of historical memory.

The resurrection of Dusan's Empire influenced the "Greater Serbia" project that fueled nationalists of the late 20th century. Today, some of them still hold parliamentary seats in the National Assembly. Political parties such as the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and the Dveri Movement list the establishment of a Greater Serbia project as official ideology. Current President Aleksandar Vucic spoke fondly of the idea of Greater Serbia before reforming himself as an EU-centric politician.³⁶

The Dusan legacy contributes to the East-West dilemma that Serbia faces because many architects of 20th century Serbian nationalism envisioned the Dusan-era empire to represent the independence of Serbian culture from that of other Balkan peoples. The period of Dusan's rule is a shining example to many Serbs of their cultural independence. It is a source of pride as much as it is fodder for extreme nationalist imagination. That imagination continues to fester in the minds of today's politicians, cultural figures, and society.

³⁶ Delauney, Guy. "Serbia elections: Radical Seselj back in parliament." *BBC News*. April 25, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36128489>

The Slavic-Orthodox Connection

Serbia's unique position among its Balkan neighbors has always been its historical use of the Cyrillic alphabet and adherence to Eastern Orthodox Christianity, both of which it inherited from the Byzantine Empire. Even today, Orthodox memory defines the Serbian cultural identity. Officials in Serbia and other former Yugoslav republics continue to spar over aspects of this identity – such as in 2016 when Serbia vehemently criticized a Croatian decision to remove Serbian as an official minority language in the town of Vukovar.³⁷

Religion divides the Balkans and accounts for many of the cultural differences between the different ethnicities. Numerous conflicts have broken out between the people of the western Balkans among ethnically religious lines, evidenced best by the atrocities committed during World War II as well as during the Yugoslav collapse.

The Romans introduced Christianity to the South Slavs, but early pagan religions were not eradicated until the 9th century.³⁸ By evangelizing in what would become the vernacular Cyrillic text, the missionaries sent out from Constantinople were able to fully convert the Serbs into the Eastern Orthodox faith following the Great Schism in 1054.

This had profound consequences for the Serbian people. Given their use of the Cyrillic alphabet and their adherence to the Orthodox faith the Serbs set themselves apart from their Muslim and Catholic neighbors. Importantly though, this set the Serbs apart from the rest of Western Europe, who remained predominantly Catholic until the Reformation.

By the turn of the 16th century the Ottoman Empire conquered Serbia and placed it under firmly under its suzerainty. Throughout this time that the Orthodox Church cultivated and

³⁷ Pantovic, Milivoje. "Dispute Over Cyrillic Raises Tensions Between Croatia, Serbia." *Balkan Transitional Justice*. August 15, 2016. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/tensions-continue-to-raise-between-serbia-and-croatia-08-15-2016>

³⁸ Lampe, John. "Serbia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. September 13, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Serbia>.

maintained Serbian identity. Serbs during this time found strength in the Orthodox Church as the protector of their culture and identity. The Church supported and influenced the series of Serbian uprisings in the 19th century and was one of the primary antagonists towards Ottoman rule.

The role of the Church was integral in establishing the lasting connections of friendship between Serbia and other Orthodox ethnic groups subjugated by the Ottomans. When the Serbian Uprisings of the 19th century took place, Christian leaders supported by Russia led them.

Particularly in the second uprising of 1815, the Serbian armies with the support of Russia were able to seize important concessions from the Ottomans and for the first time were able to begin a march towards greater autonomy within the Ottoman system. As John Lampe remarks, “Despite their limitations, the two uprisings would nonetheless remain seminal events in the formation of national consciousness around a modern Serbian state.”³⁹

The success of the Serbians against the Ottoman Empire finally granted Serbia *de jure* independence by way of European recognition at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, where Serbia received official borders and became a legitimate state within the pre-World War I European system.⁴⁰ It is important to note that Serbia had enjoyed *de facto* independence from the Ottoman Empire since the end of the second Serbian uprising in 1817.

Following the Congress of Berlin, the Kingdom of Serbia immediately entered into alliances with the surrounding Orthodox states of Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro in order to begin an aggressive campaign against what remained of the Ottoman Empire. The result was the First Balkan War that saw the expulsion of the Ottomans from almost all of their former European territories.

³⁹ Lampe, John. “Serbia.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. September 13, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Serbia>

⁴⁰ Raj, Singh. “Congress of Berlin (1878).” Owlcation. August 8, 2016. <https://owlcation.com/humanities/Congress-of-Berlin-1878>

As a result of victories in both of the conflicts, Serbia became a powerful state in the Balkans and directly threatened Austria-Hungary's interests in the Balkans, particularly Bosnia. A powerful, Orthodox Serbia thus entered into a cold conflict with Catholic Austria-Hungary, the result of which created the conditions for the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This event, following the July Crisis, pulled Serbia and Russia into world war against the Central Powers.

How does Orthodoxy play into these events? Mainly, through its use as a unifying cultural identity that could bond Serbs together who did not necessarily live in the Kingdom of Serbia. The desire for the unification of Serbs was a common driver behind the Balkan Wars, Yugoslavism which the Black Hand Society advanced, and general Serbian nationalism.

Orthodoxy created an aura of separation between Serbia and the Western European powers that was only exacerbated following the adoption of communism at the conclusion of World War II. Orthodoxy is what continues to hold Serbia as a spiritual and cultural ally of Russia, despite the former's attempts to join the European Union. It is for that reason that many Serbs consider their "pockets in the West, but their hearts in the East" with Russia and other Orthodox countries.⁴¹

The Orthodox identity is not outwardly "religious", so to say, but rather the defining characteristic of the Serbian people that separates them from their neighbors. Orthodoxy connects the Serbs to their cultural cousins, particularly the Greeks and Russians. Nationalists weaponized Serbia's Orthodoxy during the Yugoslav collapse to reinforce the project of Milosevic.

⁴¹ Simic, Julija. "Survey: Serbia's Heart is in the East, Pocket in the West." *Euractiv*. September 6, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/survey-serbias-heart-is-in-the-east-pocket-in-the-west/>

Ivan Ivekovic wrote on the secularization and use of religion in the Balkans in a 2002 article. He stated that “religious consciousness preceded modern ethno-national self-identification but the borderlines drawn between religious communities in the Balkan space predetermined to a great extent the contours of Southern Slav ethno-national communities that were shaped later, even when their modern identities had been secularized.”⁴² Serb leaders specifically utilized Orthodoxy for strictly political means in the 1980s and 1990s, and the results of that action are clear today.

Those choices largely separated Serbia from the Western Christian tradition embarked by Slovenia and Croatia, who clearly benefited from the friendship of Western European states during their subsequent wars of independence and fight for recognition by the European and international communities. A crucial component of the Serbian historical memory is the community’s religious identity which connects it culturally to the East. That religious identity, informing the historical memory of Serbia, presents problems for a state that is attempting to pivot to Western Europe who does not share that same tradition.

It makes it much easier to remain close friends with Russia - the archetypal Slavic-Orthodox state. Vucic is frequently attacked as “sitting on two chairs”, meant to indicate that he is treating with both the EU and Russia, who are diametrically opposed. Vucic states frequently the need for Serbia to continue cultivating a good relationship with Russia.

At the most recent United Nations conference, Vucic publicly stated that “Russia is a true friend of Serbia, and we will continue to work on improving cooperation at all levels, both politically and economically.”⁴³ His hand-picked Prime Minister, Ana Brnabic, said that “it is

⁴² Ivekovic, Ivan. “Nationalism and the Political Use and Abuse of Religion: The Politicization of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam in Yugoslav Successor States.” *Social Compass* 49, no. 4. (2002): 523-536.

⁴³ “Russia is our true friend, Serbian president says.” *B92*. September 20, 2017.
https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=09&dd=20&nav_id=102360

unfair to ask Serbia to pick and choose, and I don't think it's needed. We are not pro-US or pro-Russian, we are pro-Serbia.”⁴⁴

This language reveals that Serbian politicians are greatly concerned about their continued relationship with Russia, despite some commentator's remarks that their continued political and military relationship with the country is “troubling” for their dreams of joining the EU.⁴⁵ As long as their shared Orthodoxy binds them together, it will be difficult for Western leaders to fully divorce Serbia from the East.

Conclusion

Serbia, since at least the beginning of the Yugoslav collapse, remains outside of the international society. Within Europe, it is a relatively isolated country that can count few true working friends, yet can point to numerous enemies. Until recently, Serbia existed as a pariah and an outcast on the European Union's periphery.

The accession of Serbia to the EU will test the power of its collective and historical memory. Serbia's cultural kin lie in the east with Russia. How easily will the government bury Euroscepticism and outright disdain towards European institutions? Or, will Vucic and the Serbian Progressive Party harness collective memory to foster unity behind their political program? Both are important questions as Serbia edges closer towards European integration.

The next chapter maps the political history of EU integration in Serbia following the end of the Yugoslav Wars in 1999. Politicians, parties, and activists alike offered differing plans for Serbia's future following its castigation from Europe, and arguments still occur today.

⁴⁴ “PM: We shouldn't be asked to choose between EU and Russia.” *B92*. November 20, 2017. https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=11&dd=20&nav_id=102839

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2: Political Effects of the Yugoslav Collapse

Introduction

The unraveling of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia began unraveling in 1980 following the death of its founder and longtime dictator, Josip Broz Tito. Tito had helped liberate Yugoslavia from fascism during World War II with his communist Partisans who established a socialist state emphasizing “brotherhood and unity” among comrades. Tito, whose father was a Croat and his mother a Slovene, held the competing nationalities at bay. This was largely because of his desire to firmly hold onto political power, and not necessarily a desire to squash nationalisms belonging to the constituent peoples of Yugoslavia. Indeed, the absence of his rule largely allowed competing nationalisms to take the place of the League of Communists.⁴⁶

The Yugoslav Wars resulted in the deaths of over 140,000 people and displaced over 4 million.⁴⁷ The breakup and subsequent conflicts created profound political consequences for each of the post-Yugoslav states. Many of those consequences are still unraveling today, particularly in states that have not received membership in the European Union such as Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Macedonia.

The political reactions to the collapse of Yugoslavia are immensely important to the development of the newly independent states following the wars. In Serbia’s case, decisions made during the wars follow them to this day. Whereas states such as Croatia postured towards Western Europe and the precursors to the European Union, Serbia turned itself towards historical allies such as Russia. In this way, Serbia began to alienate itself from the European community

⁴⁶ Djilas, Aleksa. “Tito’s Last Secret: How Did He Keep It Together?” *Foreign Affairs* 24, no. 4 (1995): 116.

⁴⁷ “Transitional Justice in the Former Yugoslavia.” International Center for Transitional Justice. 2009. <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-FormerYugoslavia-Justice-Facts-2009-English.pdf>

of states which hindered its future attempts to rejoin the community in the form of European Union membership.

Rebirth of Nationalism

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia ruled the country since the establishment of communism following the conclusion of World War II. The liberation of Yugoslavia was a bloody affair that pitted the occupying German and Italian armies and their collaborators against guerilla freedom fighters. Even amongst the freedom fighters conflict was frequent, particularly towards the end of the war as nationalist groups such as the Chetniks fought the communist Partisans for control of post-war Yugoslavia.

Ultimately, the Partisans rose from the conflict victorious and established the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. Tito would rule the country until his death in 1980 and deftly kept the different nationalities from fighting each other.

But, Tito proved to be irreplaceable, largely from his own design. Tito held the position “President for Life” and was solely in charge until his death. Following his death, constitutional reforms from 1974 took hold and the leadership of the country functioned through the rotating eight-member presidency, made up of a representative from each of the constitutive republics plus two Serbian autonomous provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo. In theory, this should have provided a check on the different republics and kept any one nationality from dominating the others.

Evidenced by the beginning of war 11 years later, this plan did not work. After Milosevic came to power in Serbia he installed leaders personally loyal to him in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro as part of his Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution. Milosevic in effect could deadlock the

presidency with tied votes, and ensured that his political goals were always at the forefront of the Presidency's policy agenda.

Milosevic was not necessarily a true nationalist. Instead, he utilized nationalism as a tool to exploit the Serbian political landscape. Because Serbia was the largest and most populous of the republics, this also meant that Milosevic had a chance to dominate Yugoslavia as a whole. Regardless, nationalism flourished in Serbia under the rule of Milosevic, and it directly led to the failure of the Yugoslav system because of the other states' trepidations about a centralized, Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

Milosevic crafted a nationalist message by weaponizing many of the key elements of Serbian historical memory. Chiefly, Milosevic focused the attention of Serbs on the region of Kosovo, borrowing many themes from the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts which painted ethnic Serbs living in Kosovo as under attack from the Albanian majority living there. The SANU memorandum asked:

What kind of a state is one that lacks authority within its own territory and lacks the means to protect the personal property of its citizens, to prevent genocide in Kosovo, and to prevent the emigration of Serbs from their ancient homeland? This position underlines the political discrimination against Serbia.⁴⁸

Milosevic saw that nationalism was a great political tool that could increase his power within Yugoslavia. Generally, the themes that he hit on beginning in the late 1980s were reflected in the SANU Memorandum, including the status of Kosovo within Serbia and the belief that Serbia was unfairly shackled by the federal configuration of Yugoslavia. Milosevic advocated for a strong, Serbian-dominated central power which alarmed Croatia and Slovenia. The arguments made by Milosevic mirrored those made by Nikola Pasic during the formation of

⁴⁸ Cosic, Dobrica. "Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum 1986."

the original Kingdom of Yugoslavia, namely that the Yugoslav project should focus on the unification of South Slavs under Serbian leadership rather than a confederation of equal states.

Shortly before Milosevic became the leader of Serbia, the Constitution of Serbia underwent a revision in 1990 that revoked Kosovo's autonomous status and brought the region under the direct control of Belgrade. This action was clearly influenced by historical memory and the belief that Kosovo is a distinctive part of Serbia, rather than its own region or separate entity. This action enraged the ethnic Albanians who had operated largely independent from Belgrade since 1963. Serbia's revocation of their autonomous status was one of the precursors towards the insurgency that led to the Kosovo war.

Milosevic was clearly aware of the power of historical memory, even if he himself only used it for purely political purposes. While Milosevic may not have been a "true believer" of the nationalist cause, he nevertheless inspired its return of those ideas influenced by historical memory that drove nationalist sentiment among elements of the Serbian population. Notably, his harsh actions during the Kosovo conflict and his defiance in the face of both international and NATO pressure represent the degree to which he utilized historical memory in his decision-making. Serbian opinion regarding the status of Kosovo, to this day, derives influence from the heavy use of historical memory by Milosevic's regime in its response towards Kosovo.

Driven by fears of growing Serbian power, the northern Yugoslav republics began to push back against Belgrade and Milosevic. In Croatia, nationalist politics carried to power Franjo Tudjman, a man who denied Croatian war crimes in World War II and who campaigned on the promise to personally protect Croatia from Milosevic.⁴⁹ The two men could not have been more

⁴⁹ Sadkovich, James J. "Father of His Country? Franjo Tudjman and the Creation of Contemporary Croatia." The Wilson Center. July 7, 2011. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/304-father-his-country-franjo-tudjman-and-the-creation-contemporary-croatia>

different, save for their mutual desire for power. Both easily exploited nationalism for political power, although Tudjman was probably more genuine in his brand of nationalism than Milosevic was.⁵⁰

Following the independence wars of Slovenia and Croatia, the world turned to Bosnia as a powder keg waiting to explode. Foreign observers as well as domestic politicians understood that any war in Bosnia would likely be the deadliest and hardest to contain. Perhaps the Serb nationalist and future president of the newly formed Republika Srpska Radovan Karadzic explained it best when he defiantly stated in the Bosnian assembly that:

This, what you are doing, is not good. This is the path that you want to take Bosnia and Herzegovina on, the same highway of hell and death that Slovenia and Croatia went on. Don't think that you won't take Bosnia and Herzegovina to hell, and the Muslim people maybe into extinction. Because the Muslim people cannot defend themselves if there is a war here.⁵¹

Karadzic was not wrong. Once war broke out in Bosnia, the well-armed Army of Republika Srpska quickly overran Bosniak positions and besieged Sarajevo. It became the longest siege of a major city in the history of modern warfare.

Croatian and Bosnian Wars – Beginning of Serbia's Pivot

The Croatian War of Independence and the Bosnian War represented the beginning of Serbia's turn away from Western Europe, manifested as the European Union. The events of both wars painted Serbs as distinctively "non-European" when compared to their counterparts in Slovenia and Croatia. The Serb actions against Bosnian Muslims particularly casted them in a negative light across Europe even as Croats and Bosnians committed similar atrocities throughout the wars. This section describes the beginning of Serbia's eventual pivot away from

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Karadzic, Radovan. "Address to Bosnian Assembly." October 5, 1991. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Makxe0PLB_8&t=24s

the European community, whereas Slovenia and Croatia turned decisively towards the Europeans of the West.

The Bosnian War was an incredibly important moment for the former republics of Yugoslavia, particularly in Croatia and Serbia. This war exposed the machinations of the nationalist politicians when taken to their extremes. Bosnia divided into three competing entities with differing goals. The Bosnian Muslims, led by Alija Izetbegovic, sought an independent Bosnian state. Izetbegovic knew that Bosnia could not remain in a Yugoslavia dominated by Serbia and Milosevic, and in 1992 held a referendum on independence for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosniaks and Croats supported the referendum to leave Yugoslavia, while the Serb population boycotted the vote in protest. An overwhelming majority of the Bosniak and Croat population voted to secede from Yugoslavia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina became an independent state on March 3rd.

Just as it had done with Slovenia and Croatia, the European Economic Community recognized the new Bosnian state as independent of Yugoslavia. However, when the Bosnian Serb polity declared independence from Bosnia as Republika Srpska, the European Economic Community refused to recognize their state, and they did not receive a seat at the United Nations. This is an important factor to consider when discussing the perspective of these new independent states and the beginning of their relationship with the European Economic Community – the precursor to the modern European Union.

Almost immediately after declaring independence from Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia both received the support of Germany, who zealously argued for their recognition by both the

United Nations and the European community. The three nations had enjoyed cultural and historical ties. As noted in a 1991 article,

Germany has long historical ties, both glorious and shameful, to Slovenia and Croatia. Slovenia was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and many people there still identify with the German-speaking world. There has also been German influence in Croatia, and during World War II, Croatia was ruled by a pro-Nazi regime... German public opinion is strongly pro-Croatian and anti-Serbian. Newspaper cartoons portray Serbia as a giant brute attacking helpless victims, and campaigns to raise funds for Croatia have been quite successful.⁵²

Germany quickly butted heads with the United States, Britain, and France over the issue, who insisted that premature recognition of Croatia and Slovenia would keep Serbia from negotiating for any peace. Germany ignored these requests by their European partners. In fact, whereas the United States kept sanctions against all six of the Yugoslav republics, Germany only sanctioned Serbia and Montenegro. The premature recognition of Croatia and Slovenia by Germany pushed the rest of Europe to accept their independence, and eventually was a unanimous decision by the European Community.

Meanwhile, public opinion in Europe and America turned sharply against Serbia and ethnic Serbs living in Bosnia and Croatia. The German ambassador to the United States, Immo Stabreit, penned an opinion piece in 1993 that characterized the West's reaction to the Yugoslav crisis in striking terms. Writing in the *Washington Post*, Stabreit wrote that,

We are witnessing the creation of a legend. It alleges that Germany, by pushing for early recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in December 1991, forced the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation, thereby triggering the tragic events in Bosnia that we are witnessing today. It is about time to dispel this myth by a look at the facts... it is Serbia, under the Communist-nationalist leadership of Milosevic, which bears primary responsibility for the destruction of the Yugoslav Federation and for the brutal inter-ethnic conflict that continues to appall the civilized world.⁵³

⁵² Kinzer, Stephen. "Germans Follow Own Line on Yugoslav Republics." *The New York Times*. December 8, 1991. <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/12/08/world/germans-follow-own-line-on-yugoslav-republics.html>

⁵³ Stabreit, Immo. "Yugoslav Breakup: Don't Blame Germany." *The Washington Post*. June 29, 1993. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1993/06/29/yugoslav-breakup-dont-blame-germany/cbbc1514-f078-4c7b-bd8a-b6f7d9690a97/?utm_term=.f67221a2ba98

Americans, too, embraced the new independent states of Croatia and Slovenia as escaping from the subjugation of Serbia and Milosevic. Within the United States, the CIA and human rights organizations largely placed the blame for the conflicts on Serbia.⁵⁴ The European consensus quickly pivoted in favor of Croatia and Slovenia against Serbia and Montenegro.

This was not unwarranted given the situation on the ground. The Bosnian Serbs armed themselves through the RAM plan established with Milosevic in order to drive out Bosniaks and Croats from regions and villages that the Serbs desired.⁵⁵ Former Yugoslav People's Army battalions in Republika Srpska quietly transformed into the new Army of Republika Srpska under the command of Ratko Mladic, who attacked Bosnian villages and shelling the capital city of Sarajevo.⁵⁶ European nations were appalled at what they saw happening in their own backyard, but stalled for years. Headley described this by stating that "Western inaction was also, of course, as much a result of a lack of political will to act in Bosnia, and disunity among the Western states themselves."⁵⁷

On February 5, 1994 a 120-mm mortar round exploded in the Markale market in downtown Sarajevo. The explosion killed 68 and maimed a further 200. While the RS army denied responsibility, international observers including both the UN and NATO agreed that the most likely source of the shell was from the Bosnian Serbs positions. The shelling of the Markale market pushed the West to action. On February 6, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali formally

⁵⁴ Ricchiardi, Sherry. "Confused Images: How the Media Fueled the Balkan War." *The Journal of the International Institute* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1996)

⁵⁵ Glaurdic, Josip. "Inside the Serbian War Machine: The Milosevic Telephone Intercepts, 1991-1992." *East European Politics and Societies* 23, no. 1 (2009): 86-104.

⁵⁶ Kifner, John. "Yugoslav Army Reported Fighting In Bosnia to Help Serbian Forces." *The New York Times*. January 27, 1994. <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/27/world/yugoslav-army-reported-fighting-in-bosnia-to-help-serbian-forces.html>

⁵⁷ Headley, Jim. "Sarajevo, February 1994: the first Russian-NATO Crisis of the post-Cold War era." *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 2 (2003): 209-227.

requested that NATO begin air strikes against those responsible for the attack. These would become known as Operation Deliberate Force, which NATO identified as “a response to the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) shelling of the Sarajevo market place” and that “increased factional fighting during the Fall and Winter of 1994 dictates prudent military contingency planning.”⁵⁸

NATO’s greater involvement in the Bosnian conflict is important for a number of reasons. First, it marked the first official time that the Western powers and the United Nations, united behind NATO, casted blame and responsibility for atrocities committed during the course of the war squarely on the Serbian population of Bosnia, and by extension the Serbian people. Second, it led to a set of consequences that would directly involve the world powers in ending the war on the ground and shaping the future of the Bosnian state following the signing of the Dayton accords. Third, it led to the European isolation of the Serbian Yugoslavia led by Milosevic.

General Mladic and his forces overran the town of Srebrenica in July of 1995. Before the outbreak of the war, Bosnian Muslims made up two thirds of the town. The UN designated Srebrenica a safe zone staffed by Dutch soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Thom Karremans. Karremans and his men found themselves surrounded by the heavily-armed Bosnian Serb army and requested air support from NATO. The air strikes never came, and subsequently Srebrenica was overrun by Mladic.⁵⁹ Between July 11th and the 22nd. Mladic’s men summarily executed over 8,000 Muslim men and boys in what became the deadliest genocide in Europe since the Holocaust.

⁵⁸ “Operation Deliberate Force.” NATO Fact Sheets. December 16, 2002. <https://web.archive.org/web/20081110153404/http://www.afsouth.nato.int/factsheets/DeliberateForceFactSheet.htm>

⁵⁹ DiCaprio, Lisa. “The Betrayal of Srebrenica: The Ten-Year Commemoration.” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 3 (2009): 73-95.

The Srebrenica massacre shocked the West as well as the UN, and soon parties demanded action to bring the crisis to an end in Bosnia. Following Srebrenica, almost no countries in the world found sympathy for the Bosnian Serbs. Even Serbia and Russia distanced itself from the government of Karadzic and the events were pivotal in bringing Serbia's participation in the Dayton Accords which ended the Bosnian War.

Throughout the negotiation of the Dayton Accords, all parties placed blame on the Bosnian Serbs as the primary aggressors. They were the only group whom NATO and the UN targeted militarily, and their leaders were the first to face charges of crimes against humanity immediately in 1995. A CIA report on Bosnia at the time placed blame on the Serbs for 90% of all crimes committed during the war.⁶⁰

However, Milosevic saw the opportunity at Dayton to deflect criticism away from himself and Yugoslavia by adopting the air of a peacemaker in Europe. Indeed, throughout the Bosnian War many in Europe thought that the path to peace had to involve Milosevic in some way.⁶¹ Milosevic arrived at Dayton as the official representative of Serb interests in Bosnia. Facing the Contact Group – a group of Western powers (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy) plus Russia – Milosevic deftly handled the negotiations as a legitimated statesman.

The outcome of the Dayton Agreement was actually extremely favorable to the Bosnian Serbs. Republika Srpska became an autonomous entity in the new Bosnia-Herzegovina and in fact retained some territories it had conquered and ethnically cleansed during the war. The Dayton accords recognized but did not truly address the grave human rights violations

⁶⁰ Cohen, Roger. "CIA Report on Bosnia Blames Serbs for 90% of the War Crimes." *The New York Times*. March 9, 1995. <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/09/world/cia-report-on-bosnia-blames-serbs-for-90-of-the-war-crimes.html>

⁶¹ Naughton, Philippe. "Milosevic cast as peacemaker: Serbian leader invited to Yugoslav peace talks." *The Independent*. January 9, 1993. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/milosevic-cast-as-peacemaker-serbian-leader-invited-to-yugoslav-peace-talks-1477450.html>

committed by the Bosnian Serbs. The Bosnian Croats received no special autonomous territory of their own, and were instead swallowed into the new Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina opposite of Republika Srpska.

Milosevic left the Dayton Accords with his reputation largely intact, although he had clearly led Serbia on an independent path from the rest of Europe. Europe welcomed Croatia and Slovenia with open arms. Slovenia joined the European Union and the NATO alliance quickly in 2004. Croatia's accession to the EU was longer than Slovenia's, but was nonetheless completed in 2013 ten years following their initial application. Serbia did not even apply for EU membership until late in 2009.

The end of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia had drawn new borders between the former states of Yugoslavia and the rest of Europe. Croatia and Slovenia, following Western acceptance and assistance in their respective conflicts, further integrated into Western Europe and made concerted efforts to join the institutions of the West – primarily the European Union and the NATO alliance. Serbia, meanwhile, pursued its own path.

Still reeling from international sanctions, Milosevic refused to lessen nationalist fervor domestically which led to further Serbian isolation. In fact, the sanctions solidified his power because he castigated the West and Europe as enemies of Serbia that conspired to further tear apart the country. Citizens only needed to look at the horrific economic conditions around them to see that Milosevic's accusations carried some merit. And with that, Milosevic steered Serbia further and further away from the European community.

Kosovo War – Serbia Becomes a Full Pariah

The image of Milosevic the peacemaker quickly dissolved and Serbia threw itself back into ethnic conflict only a handful of years following the conclusion of the Bosnian War.

Separatists in the Albanian-majority autonomous region of Kosovo began attacking Serbian security forces which led to a military crackdown by Serbian police and paramilitary forces. Combatants in Kosovo fought with the same intensity as that in Bosnia, although this war directly involved units that were directly under the control of Belgrade: this was no proxy war.

The conflict in Kosovo firmly turned the powers of the West against Milosevic and Serbia, and facilitated the country's dramatic removal from European society. Western powers, with the United States, castigated Milosevic as a bloodthirsty dictator and warmonger.⁶² The Western powers sprang into action following killings by Serb security forces and Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighters.

Milosevic, however, feared that the international community would interfere in what he considered to be an intrastate affair. In April of 1998, Milosevic creates a referendum that asked the Serbian people if accepting foreign intervention from the Western powers was the best plan to deal with Kosovo. With a 73% turnout rate, 95% of Serbian voters voted that they did not want foreign intervention in Kosovo.⁶³ Milosevic, inspired to act, accelerated the Kosovo campaign.

The 1998 foreign-intervention referendum is notable because it demonstrates a full refusal of foreign intervention by Serbia, despite the overwhelming evidence that NATO, the UN, or both would intervene. Milosevic miscalculated the desire of NATO members, particularly the US, to involve themselves in another Balkan conflict.

The members of NATO drafted a peace agreement, known as the Rambouillet Accords, that was presented to Yugoslavia and to a delegation of Kosovo separatists. Broadly, the accords

⁶² Poggioli, Sylvia. "Milosevic: The Life and Death of a Strongman." *National Public Radio*. March 11, 2006. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5257846>

⁶³ BBC News Staff. "Serb 'no' to foreign mediation in Kosovo." *BBC News*. April 23, 1998. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo/82713.stm

would have established a separate Kosovo entity and would have demanded NATO ground access to Yugoslavia, which Milosevic rejected out of hand. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger remarked that “the Rambouillet text, which called on Serbia to admit NATO troops throughout Yugoslavia, was a provocation, an excuse to start bombing.”⁶⁴

Milosevic rejected this proposal. After the UN Security Council failed to come up with a solution to end the violence because of the threat of a Russian veto, NATO decided to begin bombing missions against Serbia. This elicited harsh reactions from some in the international community, including Russia and China, who argued that NATO had acted without military authorization from the UNSC. Indeed, many non-Western delegations to the United Nations argued that NATO’s air strikes were illegal and raised concerns regarding NATO’s interference in a sovereign state’s domestic conflict without proper UN authorization.

The war in Kosovo spelled the end for Serbia’s membership in the European family of states. Widely condemned by all Western European states, Serbia was cast out from the society of legitimate European states. Those who had called Milosevic a peacemaker now widely called for him to stand trial at The Hague for war crimes. Only Russia and other non-Western states such as Belarus, China, India, and Libya condemned the bombings against Serbia. But the western European community labeled him as a war criminal and labeled Serbia as the primary aggressor and perpetrator in the Kosovo conflict.

As part of the deal, Milosevic would remove Serbian soldiers from Kosovo, and UN peacekeepers would occupy Kosovo as part of KFOR to protect both Kosovar and Serbian civilians from reprisals. Importantly, the contact group included Russia as part of the NATO-led

⁶⁴ Bancroft, Ian. “Serbia’s Anniversary is a Timely Reminder.” *The Guardian*. March 24, 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/mar/24/serbia-kosovo>

peacekeeping force in order to appeal to the Serbs, who saw Russia as kindred spirits juxtaposed to the Western “occupiers.”

Unlike the Dayton Accords, the end of the conflict in Kosovo did not repeat praise of Milosevic as a peacemaker. Instead, NATO's overwhelming force humiliated Serbia on the world stage. Whether the use of force by NATO without UN license was irrelevant – Milosevic's grip on the country slowly began unraveling without a conflict to distract people from the runaway inflation, destroyed infrastructure, and high unemployment. What unraveled next was the Bulldozer Revolution – the peaceful overthrow of the Milosevic regime, and a landmark moment in modern Serbian political history. The Bulldozer Revolution signified the moment that Serbia began to turn back to Europe.

The Fall of Milosevic – Beginnings of Change

By 1999, Milosevic's hold on Serbia began to falter. While he still wielded a powerful propaganda arm and bureaucratic machine, people in the country saw the conditions around them and clamored for change. Milosevic called for new Presidential elections, hoping that the traditional dysfunction of Serbian politics would protect his mandate on power.

Serbia's situation in early 2000 was dire. Unemployment in the country was well over 25%, industrial capability had fallen by 24%, and military spending consumed 75% of the entire Yugoslav federal budget.⁶⁵ For years, the Serbian opposition had embodied a public feeling of hopelessness. The main opposition parties never made a concerted effort to stand in unison against Milosevic and the governing coalition led by the Socialist Party. Students had, with some exceptions, created any kind of widespread protest movement that offered a real challenge to Milosevic.

⁶⁵ Birch, Sarah. “The 2000 Elections in Yugoslavia: The Bulldozer Revolution.” *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 3 (2002): 499-511.

That changed with the creation of the Otpor movement. Literally titled “Resistance”, the Otpor group was a student movement founded in 1998 originally to protest restraints on academic freedom at the University of Belgrade. By 2000, they emerged as the preeminent voice of the youth movement in Serbia to combat Milosevic’s government. Otpor utilized humor, massive demonstrations, strikes, and other means of nonviolent resistance in order to protest the government. They quickly became a powerful force, and recognized that they needed to coalesce behind a common candidate to combat Milosevic in the upcoming presidential election.

This brought about a significant change politically for opposition parties. Until 2000, the opposition parties had largely avoided working together, mainly because of the vast ideological and personal differences between them. The opportunity to topple Milosevic and the presence of the Otpor movement inspired the opposition parties to unite behind the coalition Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS).

DOS united 18 opposition parties together under a catch-all framework that argued plainly for the end of Milosevic’s regime. They adopted a set of policy goals called the “Program for Serbia” which demanded “political and economic reforms, the integration of Yugoslavia into international institutions, political decentralization, and investments in infrastructure.”⁶⁶ The two main parties that comprised DOS were Vojislav Kostunica’s Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and Zoran Djindjic’s Democratic Party (DS). While DSS and DS have nearly identical names, they are in fact different parties that advocated for different platforms both before and after the 2000 election.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 502.

Vojislav Kostunica was a lawyer and former academic whose controversial anti-communist statements triggered his firing from the University of Belgrade Law School.⁶⁷ Importantly, Kostunica was a Serbian nationalist despite his opposition to Milosevic. In fact, all of the candidates for president in 2000 were supportive of Serbian nationalism and used some degree of collective memory to inspire voters. But despite leading the opposition against Milosevic, the two men were not truly that different from one another. According to Sarah Birch,

The two men were similar; they had both risen in politics by being modest and hard-working rather than brash and aggressive; and regardless of the differences in their favored methods, they were both able to appeal to the people on the basis of nationalist sentiment. In short, Kostunica was in many ways a ‘modern’, ‘democratic’, ‘European’ version of his predecessor.⁶⁸

A key feature of the DOS movement was a promise to reintegrate Serbia into the international community. Indeed, their focus on this led to criticisms by Milosevic and his coalition that DOS was a puppet of NATO and the Western European countries that shunned Serbia. But it was integral to their campaign against Milosevic, who had literally steered Serbia out of the broader international community. Following the events of the Croatian and Bosnian Wars, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) lost recognition from the United Nations through general assembly resolution A/RES/47/1.⁶⁹

The other main figure who headed the opposition forces was Zoran Djindjic. Djindjic was a philosopher by trade, and served time in prison for anti-communist activities while he was in college. He threw his support behind Kostunica in the presidential election of 2000, and was

⁶⁷ Rauch, Robert. “Vojislav Kostunica.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Accessed October 30, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vojislav-Kotunica>

⁶⁸ Birch, Sarah. “The 2000 Elections in Yugoslavia: The Bulldozer Revolution.” *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 3 (2002): 503.

⁶⁹ “United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/1.” United Nations. September 19, 1992. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r001.htm>

widely seen as one of Serbia's most pragmatic politicians. Like Kostunica, Milosevic painted him as a tool of the western powers who had conspired to doom Serbia. Djindjic and Kostunica both advocated for increased collaboration with the West as necessary to rebuild the country.

The election of 2000 began and ended with rich political drama. Serbia held the election on September 24, and the official results listed Milosevic's coalition with 38.62% of the votes whereas the DOS opposition group led by Kostunica and Djindjic listed 48.96%. Because there had officially been no majority, Milosevic declared that there would have to be a second runoff election.

It was this announcement that set the grave for Milosevic's political career. Kostunica and DOS declared that they would boycott any runoff election and claimed that the government had deliberately misled the country – they believed DOS had garnered enough votes to win the election outright in the first round. Soon, DOS called for general strikes and half a million protestors began demonstrating outside of the parliament building calling for Milosevic to step down. After losing the loyalty of the army, police, media, and crucial cultural institutions such as the Serbian Orthodox Church, Milosevic released a final tally in favor of Kostunica and stepped down on October 6th.

Losing the support of the army and police robbed Milosevic of any ability to physically stop the crowd, but losing the church was an important moment. It signified the end of Milosevic's monopoly on the cultural memory that had fueled his legitimacy among conservatives and nationalists who looked to the church for guidance.

The West praised the overthrow of Milosevic. According to Birch,

The world was swift to recognize the political change in Yugoslavia, which was readmitted to the United Nations and the OSCE in early November, and to the IM on 20 December. Trade sanctions were also lifted and diplomatic relations were restored with most

Western states in November and December; EU and U.S. aid packages followed as a gesture of support to Kostunica.⁷⁰

The election of Kostunica started Serbia's path of turning back towards Europe. While no candidates were advocating for European integration, had Milosevic persevered in the 2000 election there is no doubt that Serbia would not be in the position that it is today. The foreign aid that flowed into the country began to lift Serbia from the economic hole that it was in from the Milosevic era. Western governments indicated that they were ready to work with the new DOS coalition government, and by extension Serbia, now that Milosevic was out of power.

However, the overthrow of Milosevic did not immediately solve all of Serbia's problems. Instead of consolidating the alliance of DOS, Kostunica and Djindjic (now the Prime Minister) began fighting bitterly for control of the new coalition government. It quickly became apparent that the DOS coalition was great at beating Milosevic, but not necessarily at ruling the country. The personal animosity between Kostunica and Djindjic boiled over publicly following the extradition of Milosevic to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague.

Kostunica was deeply concerned about extraditing Milosevic to ICTY. Despite having just defeated Milosevic at the polls, he was deeply concerned about the procedures and perceived fairness of ICTY. The United States and European Union all but demanded that Milosevic stand trial at The Hague in exchange for needed foreign aid in Serbia. But while Serbia overthrew Milosevic, most Serbs did not desire to see him tried in a foreign court. The media empire that he had constructed to sustain his power had a lasting effect on the average person's conception of the ICTY. Many Serbs saw the ICTY as an "anti-Serb Tribunal, one more instrument that other

⁷⁰ Birch, Sarah. "The 2000 Elections in Yugoslavia: The Bulldozer Revolution." *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 3 (2002): 507.

nations would use to victimize the Serbs.”⁷¹ When ICTY was established in the midst of the Bosnian War, Serbs saw it as “an instrument of the Western powers to assert their control and influence over the region.”⁷² It is therefore not shocking to understand why Kostunica, who was still a soft nationalist, had reservations in cooperating with its demands.

Djindjic, however, had no reservations. In his understanding, any foreign investment, development, and re-entry into the community was entirely dependent on Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. These political maneuvers saw him cast by Serbs as someone who had “sold out” to the West.⁷³ The concept of extraditing domestic war criminals to an international criminal body was an act that Djindjic saw as necessary to rebuild Serbia both physically, from material assistance, and culturally, from international acceptance.

PM Djindjic extradited Milosevic to the ICTY on June 28th. President Kostunica was furious and adamantly claimed that he was entirely unaware of the deal made between Djindjic and the United States to extradite Milosevic. Simultaneously, Deputy PM Miroljub Labus exclaimed that Yugoslavia (Serbia) was “back in the international community” following the extradition.⁷⁴

The excitement surrounding the extradition was short-lived. Kostunica, manic from Djindjic’s maneuvers behind his back, pulled out his Democratic Party of Serbia from the DOS coalition entirely in July. The departure of the DSS was significant, and now the only legitimate

⁷¹ Saxon, Dan. “Exporting Justice: Perceptions of the ICTY Among the Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim Communities in the Former Yugoslavia.” *Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 4 (2005): 559-572.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 562.

⁷³ Peskin, Victor. “After Zoran Djindjic: The Future of International Criminal Justice.” *Open Democracy*. March 28, 2003. https://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/article_1107.jsp

⁷⁴ “Milosevic extradition unlocks aid coffers.” *BBC News*. June 29, 2001. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1413144.stm>

large party remaining in the coalition was Djindjic's Democratic Party. The coalition crumbled following the assassination of Djindjic by a sniper in March 2003.

The assassination of Djindjic was a significant moment in Serbia's attempts to return to modern Europe. Djindjic was without a doubt the most significant pro-European Serbian politician following the fall of Milosevic. Eulogizing his death in the *New York Times*, Laura Silber wrote that

There is no doubt that the men who killed Zoran represented a nexus of hard-core nationalists and criminals who hated him because they knew he wanted to rein them in. They hoped that with those bullets, Serbia would fall into disarray and stop cooperating with The Hague, and that the next elected leader would pale next to Zoran Djindjic in courage and intelligence. I fear they were right.⁷⁵

Silber's reaction to the slaying of Djindjic mirrored that of most of the West, who feared that Serbia would begin to slip back into the hands of parties such as the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party. The following year's presidential election featured a second-round showdown between the SRS' Tomislav Nikolic and the Democratic Party's Boris Tadic, who had taken over as head of the party following the killing of Djindjic.

The 2004 presidential election in Serbia featured two parties who had fundamentally different outlooks on Europe. The SRS was, and to this day is, a fiercely nationalist party who saw Europe as a hostile enemy that despised Serbia and hunted its war-heroes. The DS, meanwhile, campaigned as a pro-European party that wanted to guide Serbia back into the European neighborhood. While the DS did not adopt EU accession as a policy platform until 2008, it was widely understood that DS was friendly to the idea of integration into the European community.

⁷⁵ Silber, Laura. "Serbia Loses More Than a Leader." *The New York Times*. March 14, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/14/opinion/serbia-loses-more-than-a-leader.html>

Tadic defeated Nikolic by a margin of 53% to 46% and formed a new government with former president Kostunica as the Prime Minister. Tadic and the DS formed the government of Serbia for the next 8 years, winning again in 2008. During this time, they oversaw the peaceful dissolution of the state union with Montenegro in 2006 as well as the signing of a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union in 2007. In December of 2009, Serbia officially applied for membership in the EU and has been negotiating since then.

Conclusion

The Yugoslav collapse affected Serbia in profound ways, and particularly defined their relationship to the West. Politically, Serbia ended the 20th century as a pariah state. Milosevic cultivated a belief amongst the Serbian people that the West campaigned to destroy Serbia, which has led to a lasting distrust of Western institutions even today. Milosevic isolated Serbia from the world and particularly from Europe.

The election of Kostunica and Djindjic's DOS coalition signaled the end of Serbian isolation. They attracted foreign investment into Serbia and guided the country back into key institutions such as the United Nations and IMF. Their coalition did not last long, but the pivot back towards Europe was largely accomplished under Boris Tadic who inherited Djindjic's Democratic Party.

However, lasting questions remain. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, and even the most pro-European parties refuse to recognize their independence. Almost all of the Western states recognize Kosovo, and the European Union indicates that there is no future for Serbia in the group without recognition of the breakaway region. The Serbian Progressive Party's founders and leaders are former ultra-nationalists with a newly discovered affection for EU

membership now that they rule the country. Western media has attacked the current president, Aleksandar Vucic, as a leader with authoritarian tendencies.

Both the historic cultural memory (chapter 1) and the more immediate memory of the Yugoslav breakup continue to shape Serbia as it moves to enter the European Union. These chapters will answer two fundamental questions: how does Europe address Serbia today, and how does Serbia perceive its future in Europe?

Chapter 3: The Prospect of a European Serbia

Introduction

Serbia's accession to the European Union challenges represents a profound challenge for both the European community as well as Serbia. The Union is facing grave challenges, particularly as populist, right-wing parties challenge its institutions within the body and stir skepticism for its usefulness domestically. Serbia is a torn country: its culture lies in the Eastern Orthodox tradition more akin to that of its traditional ally Russia, yet its economic stability resides in the Union. Further, Serbia possesses painful memories of the West from the Yugoslav Wars, and its deeper cultural memory and renders it alien to many in the Union's traditional bloc.

For better or worse, Serbia chose to embark on European accession. The decision found as much praise internationally and domestically as it did scorn. The process is difficult, particularly for a country such as Serbia, which faces institutional, economic, and political issues that retard its desire to become a full member of the European Union.

Accession History

The first prominent political party to seriously consider an attempt to join the European Union was the Democratic Party under the leadership of Boris Tadic. Tadic was the first adamantly pro-European politicians in Serbia after an absence of real relations following the Kosovo War. He and his party advocated for close ties to Europe, and in his first term as President he initiated the Stabilization and Association Agreement in late 2007, shortly before the upcoming 2008 presidential election.

An intergovernmental fight erupted even before the ink on the stabilization agreement was dry. Membership in the European Union was by no means an opinion held by the vast majority of Serbians at the time, and certainly not by a majority of the parties in the National

Assembly. The ordeal following the announcement of the stabilization agreement led to deep divisions between the ruling coalition.

In particular, then-Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica vehemently opposed signing the stabilization agreement. Following the announcement, Kostunica said that,

This agreement has only one goal, to be interpreted as Serbia's signature to Kosovo's independence. Nothing will come out of this trick, because after the elections, the new government and parliament will annul the Tadić-Đelić signature. Imagine if Serbia, for instance, recognized Scotland's independence, while Great Britain swiftly proceeded to sign a deal with Serbia that pertains to Great Britain's territorial integrity. No European state would have done what Tadić and Đelić have done.⁷⁶

The question of European integration dominated the political landscape in Serbia's 2008 presidential election. Tadic and his supporters ran under the banner of "Let's win Europe together" in a clear endorsement of his desire to lead Serbia into the EU. The second round election pit Tadic against Tomislav Nikolic, a fervent nationalist candidate from the Serbian Radical Party. Nikolic's approach to Europe could not have been farther from Tadic's. He advocated for increased relations with Russia, and argued that joining the European Union was a worthless endeavor if it meant the forced recognition of Kosovo as an independent state.⁷⁷

The second-round election was extremely close, and demonstrates how divided the Serbian people actually were in addressing the question of EU membership. In what was truly a referendum of sorts on proceeding with the accession process, Tadic and the Democratic Party won 50.31% to Nikolic's 47.97%. The margin of victory between the two candidates was only 107,312 votes, and official turnout was 67%.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "EU Deal Signature Will Be Annulled." *B92*. May 2, 2008.

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2008&mm=05&dd=02&nav_id=49912

⁷⁷ Vasovic, Aleksandar. "Serbia Prepares for Key Presidential Vote." *Balkan Insight*. February 2, 2008.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-prepares-for-key-presidential-vote>

⁷⁸ "Republic of Serbia Election for President." Election Guide. February 3, 2008.

<http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2062/>

Reactions from the international community on Tadic's victory were generally positive, especially from the European Union. Union Secretary Javier Solana said that he was "very pleased with the results" and that "this is a great success for [Tadic] and for the people of Serbia. The result of the election is a sign that the desire of most of the people of Serbia is to continue with European integration, and Europe is very pleased about that."⁷⁹

The European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso remarked that the election was "a victory of democracy and European values in Serbia. Serbia has demonstrated the ability to take on the responsibilities of a modern and democratic society."⁸⁰ Barroso's comments are particularly interesting to this work because of their perceived implication that the election of Tadic in Serbia was the beginning of a productive partnership between Serbia and Western Europe. Rather than turning decisively towards Russia, Serbia chose to turn towards the European Union, albeit only by a few percentage points in the election.

The election of Tadic was a pivotal moment in Serbia's relationship with Europe. Had Serbia elected Nikolic under the banner of the Radicals, EU accession talks would not have occurred. That mainly is because of the initial primary obstacles to negotiations with the EU involved the arrest and extradition of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, wanted for war crimes associated with the Bosnian War. That Karadzic and Mladic fled to Serbia and were hiding inside the country was the worst kept secret in the western Balkans.⁸¹

It is unlikely that a Radical Party government would have utilized state resources and security forces to apprehend Mladic and Karadzic. To this day, the Radical Party denounces the

⁷⁹ "The European Union congratulated Tadic." *B92*. February 4, 2008.

http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=04&nav_category=418&nav_id=283431

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ "Mladic Arrest Removes Stain from Serbia." *NPR*. May 26, 2011.

<http://www.npr.org/2011/05/27/136672883/man-believed-to-be-war-crimes-fugitive-arrested>

authority of the ICTY and praises the “heroic” actions of Bosnian Serb wartime leaders, particularly Mladic. The European Union made it clear that without the arrest of both men, negotiations and the possibility of membership were absolutely impossible.⁸² But, with significant pressure from the EU, Serbia arrested both men: Karadzic, in 2008 and Mladic in 2011.

To finally extradite these men in exchange for continued EU negotiations was an enormous move for Serbia's leadership. To begin, both men were heroes to a number of Serbs who saw them as protectors of Serbia's historical memory and fellow Serbs. The sad effects of ethnic warfare in many ways blinded people to some of the atrocities committed by men such as Mladic, whose actions were often diluted or disputed by Serbian media both during and after the war. Following Mladic's arrest thousands of nationalist demonstrators rioted in Belgrade and in Bozanic, Mladic's childhood home.⁸³

Not everyone in Serbia supported Tadic and his efforts to integrate Serbia further into the European Union, particularly if it meant the arrest and extradition of Serbs to a foreign court that many saw as a Western tool to control and punish Serbia. Clearly, Serbia's historical memory, both old and new, still permeates throughout the country regarding pivotal issues such as EU accession.

Following 2008, no political party has won the Serbian presidency without endorsing a path to the European Union. Even Nikolic, the ardent nationalist, won the presidency in 2012 when he presented himself and his new party as “reformed” nationalists intent on EU integration.

⁸² Stephen, Chris. “Lure of EU Membership Led to Arrest of Mladic.” *The Irish Times*. May 27, 2011. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/lure-of-eu-membership-led-to-arrest-of-mladic-1.583418>

⁸³ Stojanovic, Dusan and Danica Kirka. “Clashes Erupt in Belgrade Against Mladic Arrest.” *NBC News*. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43209344/ns/world_news-europe/t/clashes-erupt-belgrade-against-mladic-arrest/#.WgDyJVtSziU

Despite reservations from some members of the governing Progressive Party, current president Aleksandar Vucic continues to stress that the EU is the only path forward for Serbia, saying in 2017 that “I think that every single member of the government does his or her best in fulfilling our goals and one of our main goals is our full-fledged EU membership... we need to be part of the European Union. That’s my task, that’s my job and I will do it.”⁸⁴

Since 2012, the job of negotiating membership accession falls in the hands of the Progressives led formerly by Nikolic, now by Vucic. While they are not as adamantly pro-European as Tadic’s Democrats, they have publicly reformed themselves as pro-European politicians with a flavor for moderate nationalism. Vucic, who once boasted in the National Assembly that he would personally protect Mladic from extradition, is now the man leading Serbia into the European Union through the grueling and strenuous chapter process.⁸⁵

As the process exists now, there are 35 separate chapters that each candidate country must open and close before finally entering the Union. Negotiating through the chapters “helps candidate countries to prepare to fulfill the obligations of EU membership. They also allow the EU to prepare for enlargement in terms of integration capacity.”⁸⁶ As of this work, Serbia has opened 8 chapters and closed 2. The opening and closing of chapters throughout the process is able to show how serious both parties are in working towards final accession. For example, Turkey has been an official candidate country since 1997 and began accession negotiations in

⁸⁴ Stojanovic, Dusan and Jovana Gec. “AP Interview: Serbia’s leader vows to lead nation into EU.” *AP News*. October 13, 2017. <https://www.apnews.com/feca5204089b49ee91107ac3ed58114d>

⁸⁵ Karnitschnig, Matthew. “Serbia’s latest would-be savior is a modernizer, a strongman – or both.” *Politico Europe*. April 14, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/aleksandar-vucic-serbias-latest-savior-is-a-modernizer-or-strongman-or-both/>

⁸⁶ European Commission. “Accession Negotiations.” June 12, 2016. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-negotiations_en

2005. However, because of a conditionality clause regarding to the Ankara Associate Agreement to Cyprus, negotiations stalled and 15 chapters remain open but not closed.

The following sections detail each class of the Serbian chapters: closed, opened, and unopened. Some chapters are more important to Serbia's accession than others, and will receive greater analysis as a result. Analyzing the chapters in the context of the current political situation indicates that Serbia's process is very much a long-term project for the country.

Closed Chapters

Serbia has closed only two chapters in its current negotiations with the European Union: Chapter 25 (Science and Research) and Chapter 26 (Education and Culture). Both simultaneously opened and closed in a single day, which indicates that the EU negotiators found these chapters sufficient to begin with. This section is brief, and will touch on each chapter and why Serbia cleared them.

Chapter 26: Education and Culture

On February 27, 2016, Serbia took its first step towards official EU membership within the accession negotiations by opening and closing Chapter 26: Education and Culture. The EU defines this chapter like so: "The EU supports cooperation in education and culture through funding programmes and through the open method of coordination. Member States must also prevent discrimination and facilitate the education of children of EU migrant workers."⁸⁷ The working document describes Serbia's achievement in this chapter area warmly, only recommending two additional suggestions that are relatively attainable and did not require the continued open status of the chapter.

⁸⁷ "Commission Staff Working Document: Serbia 2016 Report." European Commission. September 11, 2016.

There were two main issues that Serbia continues to face in regards to the education chapter: preschool education and unemployment for tertiary graduates. At the time of the commission's working document, only 52% of children 6 and younger received pre-school education, which is off target for the EU's 2020 goal of 95%. The document makes clear that aside from the preschool sector, education in Serbia is at appropriate levels comparative to criteria for entry.

Crippling unemployment plagues not only Serbia, but many states in the Balkans. A worrying 43% of college graduates remain unemployed in the country. This had led to a significant level of emigration as young, highly educated Serbs leave the country to pursue better opportunities elsewhere. Although this link is not conclusively established in Serbia, generally nationalist and populist candidates perform better in elections where the electorate is not highly educated.⁸⁸ In that way, Serbia's brain drain could contribute to the growing success of nationalist and populist candidates and parties in the future, which further entrenches collective memory among those who do not leave the country.

Even with these issues present, Chapter 26 opened and closed on the same day for Serbia, indicating that the European Union saw the progress in this area sufficient for entry into the bloc.

Chapter 25: Science and Research

On December 13, 2016, Serbia closed its second official chapter in its EU accession process. That chapter was Chapter 25, for Science and Research. Within the EU's Commission Staff Working Document from September 2016, they described this chapter by saying that the EU "provides significant support for research and innovation. All Member States can benefit

⁸⁸ Inglehart, Ronald F. and Pippa Norris. "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash." *HKS Working Paper No. WRP16-026*. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2818659

from the EU's research programmes, especially where there is specific excellence and solid investment in research."⁸⁹ The document lists that:

Serbia has a **good level of preparation** in the area of science and research. Some progress was made with the adoption of the strategy for scientific and technological development.

In the coming period, Serbia should in particular:

- Adopt the action plan to implement the strategy, and the science and research infrastructure road-map;
- Foster cooperation between industry and academia and increase the level of investment in research.⁹⁰

This initial assessment, written before Serbia opened and closed the chapter three months later, shows that the country was well-prepared for this particular chapter before the negotiations had begun in earnest. The closing of Chapter 25 gave Serbia, and its leaders, continued momentum and encouragement to continue through the process. However, it is important to note that Chapter 25 is one of the easier chapters to close because its stipulations fall under the authority of the negotiating country.⁹¹

Chapters 26 and 25 are so far the only chapters closed by Serbia in the accession process. The difficult task ahead is the closing of the remaining opened chapters, while also making progress in the opening of additional chapters. A number of these will be straight-forward and close without great controversy, but many yet will test the resolve of both the Serbian people and the Progressive Party government led by Vucic. Those particular chapters warrant further discussion.

⁸⁹ "Commission Staff Working Document: Serbia 2016 Report."

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Two new chapters opened, one closed in EU accession talks." B92. December 14, 2016. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2016&mm=12&dd=14&nav_id=99952

Open Chapters and Chapter 35

Serbia currently holds eight total open chapters. They are chapters 5, 6, 20, 23, 24, 30, 32, and 35. These eight open chapters, in addition to the two previously closed, bring Serbia to 10 out of 35 total chapters, indicating that Serbia's path to EU accession is still a long way away. More than likely, the government's goal of accession by 2020 is unrealistic.

Serbia's progression through the open chapters indicates that they remain committed to the process. All but one of the open chapters will be relatively easy for Serbia to close, as they deal with internal institutions and relations with the other member states and EU priorities. One chapter will be difficult for Serbia to close, and that is the final one. Chapter 35 represents the greatest challenge to Serbia's accession because it challenges Serbia's people to overcome their own historical and cultural memory surrounding the status of the breakaway region of Kosovo.

Kosovo broke from Serbia in February of 2008 following years and months of ambiguity regarding its autonomy following the end of the Kosovo conflict. The Serbian reaction to the region's declaration of independence showed that the medieval memory of Kosovo as the cradle of Serbian civilization was still very much alive. Serbs rioted throughout Serbia and Kosovo. The religious head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo called on the Serbs of Kosovo to arm themselves in preparation for renewed ethnic warfare.⁹²

The international community exhibited a mixed reaction to the Kosovo independence declaration. NATO countries who fought to end the war unilaterally accepted the declaration, most importantly Germany and the United States. Twenty-three of the twenty-eight members of the European Union came to recognize Kosovo as an independent state. But, in 2010, the

⁹² Prodanovic, Ksenija. "Serb church urges state of war over Kosovo." *Reuters*. February 17, 2008. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSHAM738779?irpc=932>

European Parliament passed a resolution demanding that all member states recognize Kosovo as an independent state.⁹³

Notably, there are still a number of countries that do not recognize Kosovo's independence. A full 83 UN member-states have refused to recognize Kosovo's independence, most notably Spain, China, India, and Russia. Spain, because of their own precarious situation with their two autonomous regions, refused to recognize Kosovo's claim to independence. This was important given their status as a member of the EU.

China has enjoyed friendly relations with Serbia for a number of years. Under Xi Jinping they have poured millions of dollars into projects in Serbia as a part of their new Silk Road initiative to link Europe to China.⁹⁴ Bombs hit the Chinese embassy in 1999 during the shelling of Belgrade, which resulted in the deaths of 3 journalists and the injuries of some 20 others. China has stood by Serbia as a supporter of their territorial integrity since.⁹⁵ It is unlikely that China will recognize Kosovo's independence considering that they count Serbia as an important component of their plan to invest in Europe and influence European politics. Because Serbia needs their financial and political support, Vucic and future Serbian presidents are unlikely to do anything to jeopardize their relationship with the Asian giant.

India's refusal to recognize Kosovo is important because of India's newfound presence on the world stage. India is the world's largest democracy, the second most populous country, and the 7th strongest economy by nominal GDP (they are the 3rd by purchasing power parity).

⁹³ "Parliament calls on all EU countries to recognize Kosovo." *Euractiv*. July 9, 2010.

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/parliament-calls-on-all-eu-countries-to-recognise-kosovo/>
⁹⁴ Surk, Barbara. "As China Moves In, Serbia Reaps Benefits, With Strings Attached." *The New York Times*. September 9, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/09/world/europe/china-serbia-european-union.html>

⁹⁵ Mizokami, Kyle. "In 1999, America Destroyed China's Embassy in Belgrade." *The National Interest*. January 21, 2017. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/1999-america-destroyed-chinas-embassy-belgrade-many-chinese-19124>

While it has not invested in Serbia to the degree that China has, as the country grows under current PM Narendra Modi investment may grow. The single largest reason that India does not recognize the independence of Kosovo is because of their own precarious situation regarding Kashmir, according to former Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon.⁹⁶ Interestingly, Menon first remarked that “historical alignment with Russia...makes non-recognition the default position.”⁹⁷ That an emerging power would look towards Russia in guiding its response to an Eastern European issue is fascinating, to say the least and speaks to the image of patronage afforded to Russia on behalf of Serbia and other Balkan issues.

That patronage is certainly not a mirage. Russia is a traditional ally of Serbia because of their shared Orthodox faith, historical relationship, and cultural similarity. Throughout the Bosnian and Kosovo Wars, the Western members of the Contact Group recognized early that success would only materialize with the support of Russia, given their influence on Serbia. Indeed, many hypothesize that Milosevic held out against NATO for so long in 1999 under the impression that Russia would formally enter the war on the side of Serbia.⁹⁸ A September 2017 briefing from the Congressional Research Service outlined the relationship between Serbia and Russia:

Russia has long considered Serbia to be an area with which it has historical linkages as a result of a 1774 treaty in which Catherine the Great forced the Ottoman Empire to grant Russia vague rights to represent the Christian people of the Balkans. This development established Russia’s role as a patron and father figure for the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans... The extent of Russian influence is also illustrated by a May 2016 study by the Belgrade-based Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies, a policy think tank with ties to the West. It found 110 registered

⁹⁶ Sivaramakrishnan, Arvind. “Kashmir issue clouds Indian view of Kosovo.” *The Hindu*. September 26, 2016. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/Kashmir-issue-clouds-Indian-view-of-Kosovo/article14670496.ece>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Lambeth, Benjamin. “NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment.” RAND Corporation (2001)

nongovernmental organizations, associations, and media outlets that appeared to be directly connected with the Russian lobby in Serbia, up from about 12 since 2015.⁹⁹

There are clearly profound linkages between Serbia and Russia, and Russia's reaction to the Kosovo independence declaration is not surprising. Russia uses its permanent seat on the UN Security Council to block all attempts to legitimize the formal independence of Kosovo via that body.¹⁰⁰ It is unlikely that Russia will change this stance, particularly as it will be a thorn in the side of the European Union throughout Serbia's accession proceedings.

The EU crafted the text of Chapter 35 specifically to address the hostile relationship between Serbia and Kosovo. The general language demands only that Serbia and Kosovo "normalize relations." The Brussels Agreement of 2011, which marked the first time that Pristina and Belgrade had spoken formally since 2008, outlined a number of issues between the two bodies. The negotiations, and subsequently the target areas for the Chapter 35 negotiations, include election autonomy, guaranteed rights for the Serb minority of northern Kosovo, regulations for the police force, civil protections, the establishment of liaisons between the capitals, energy and telecommunications agreements, customs agreements, and academic degree reciprocity.¹⁰¹

Chapter 35 represents a profound challenge for Serbia. No other chapter tests its leader to the degree that the Kosovo question does. Serbia can reform its financial institutions. It can amend its banking laws. It can align itself with the European Union in every way. But normalizing relations with Kosovo demands something very different of Serbia.

⁹⁹ Morelli, Vincent L. "Serbia: Background and US Relations." Congressional Research Service. September 19, 2017.

¹⁰⁰ "An independent Kosovo can never join UN, Russia warns." *The New York Times*. January 7, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/17/world/europe/17iht-kosovo.4.9299507.html>

¹⁰¹ "European Union Common Position: Chapter 35 Other Issues." Conference on Accession to the European Union - Serbia. November 30, 2015.

When the European Union requires a “normalization of relations”, they all but demand the recognition of Kosovar autonomy by Serbia. Despite the pro-EU aspirations of some politicians and groups, there is still a sizeable amount of people who push back against such an affront to Serbian cultural memory. A Belgrade Center for Security Policy poll from February 2017 shows that only 8% of Serbs support Kosovo’s independence if it “ensures stability and contributes to Serbia’s development.”¹⁰²

If Serbia is actually serious about joining the European Union, it appears that they will have to cross a significant bridge. The EU may not formally demand the recognition of Kosovo in writing, but the expectation is certainly present under the auspices of “normalized relations.” If Serbia is unwilling to grapple with the cultural memory of Kosovo as the Serbian homeland, then their journey to the EU will certainly halt, much like Turkey’s accession talks which stalled as a result of Turkey’s refusal to negotiate on the issue of Northern Cyprus. Northern Cyprus is a far less important issue to them than Kosovo is to Serbia.¹⁰³

Serbia’s actions towards Kosovo will dictate the strength of the relationship between Belgrade and Brussels. The EU has demonstrated that it is willing to work with the Serbian government and bring it into the fold of the organization. But the relationship between the EU and Serbia is an imbalanced one: the EU has not made Serbia its number one strategic concern, whereas the dominant political issue in Serbia is the status of the EU negotiations. As noted in a

¹⁰² Vukojeic, Smiljana. “Poll: Serbs unwilling to go to war over Kosovo.” *Euractiv*. February 14, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/poll-serbs-not-willing-to-go-to-war-over-kosovo/>

¹⁰³ Rinke, Andreas and Gulsen Solaker. “Cyprus remains stumbling block in Turkey's EU ambition: Merkel.” *Reuters*. February 25, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-eu/cyprus-remains-stumbling-block-in-turkeys-eu-ambition-merkel-idUSBRE91O10L20130225>

Center for European Policy Analysis report, “Such a condition [Chapter 35] could be used to deny Serbia EU entry even if it meets all other requirements.”¹⁰⁴

Currently, it seems unlikely that Serbia and Kosovo normalize relations anytime soon. While leaders from Pristina and Belgrade continue to meet and hold open dialogue, it appears to be more posturing than actual substance. It will take a monumental political effort by President Aleksandar Vucic to push through the recognition of Kosovo through the current composition of parliament. Even members of his own party are skeptical of the EU and would not risk losing Kosovo in exchange for entry into the EU. Clearly, the historical memory of Kosovo’s belonging to Serbia is strong enough to block Serbia’s accession.

EU Views of Serbia

Enlargement is a difficult subject in the European Union. Despite the growth of the bloc in recent years, many of the older members are skeptical about enlargement. This is particularly true in regards to enlargement in the Balkans, where the countries are poorer and likely to benefit more from the EU than the EU is to benefit from their inclusion. The EU Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, has remarked that “it will take several years to overcome the skeptical views on EU enlargement that dominate some of the Western countries.”¹⁰⁵

The European Commission sponsored a 2009 poll to measure public opinion of the planned expansion of the EU. While many thought that the enlargement brought positive outcomes, such as a new ability to travel and work in different countries, there were deeper problems associated with enlargement. Roughly half of the respondents said that they felt

¹⁰⁴ Bugajski, Janusz. “Serbia's slow EU path.” *Center for European Policy Analysis*. April 25, 2016. <http://cepa.org/Serbia-slow-EU-path>

¹⁰⁵ EWB. “Hahn: The next two years will be good for enlargement of the EU.” December 11, 2017. <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/11/12/hahn-next-two-years-will-good-enlargement-eu/>

insecure as a result of the expansion. Additionally, 54% of respondents said that expansion caused problems because of the divergent cultural traditions of the new member states, 56% said that expansion contributed to domestic job loss, and 66% said that the expansion made the EU more difficult to manage.¹⁰⁶

Although it has been 8 years since this poll, skepticism within the EU has not faded regarding enlargement. Many countries in the EU worry that the further inclusion of low-performing eastern European economies will be an undue burden on the other members. A recent Politico article declared that the earliest next round of expansion will not be until at least 2027, and that the “Golden Age of expansion is over.”¹⁰⁷ However, that same article gave Serbia an 80% chance of joining the EU in the future.

The EU will provide a policy update in 2018 regarding future enlargement. That policy update will include a status report of Serbia’s current position within the accession negotiations. Likely, the country will be on a good path. Few obstacles remain in their way in terms of foundational changes to the country. Only Chapter 35 stands in their way. As it stands right now, political forces prevent Vucic from recognizing Kosovo. The historical memory is too strong and there is no real reason to do so and alienate members in his coalition, particularly powerful actors such as Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic who has repeatedly stated that Serbia will never recognize an independent Kosovo.

Conclusion

Bulgaria, a neighbor of Serbia, holds the EU presidency in 2018. Speaking on the bloc’s future, prime minister Boyko Borissov implored that the Union must admit Serbia, Montenegro,

¹⁰⁶ “Views on European Union enlargement.” Eurobarometer - European Commission. January-February 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Heath, Ryan. “The race for EU membership.” *Politico*. December 15, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/the-race-for-eu-membership-neighborhood-turkey-uk-european-commission/>

and other eligible Balkan states in order to strengthen the bloc following the departure of the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁸

The question of Serbia's accession to the European Union may not necessarily depend on whether Serbia can accept an independent Kosovo, but rather if the European Union can accept a permanent status-quo Kosovo. The European Union is struggling with Euroscepticism, the first member-state's withdrawal from the body, and doubts about its future. As the situation in the Balkans becomes more unstable with the increasing creep of China and Russia, the EU's best move may be to hasten the accession of Serbia, without Kosovo independence, in order to stabilize the western Balkans.

¹⁰⁸ Zalan, Eszter. "Bulgaria calls for West Balkan EU integration after Brexit." *EU Observer*. November 7, 2017. <https://euobserver.com/enlargement/139808>

Chapter 4: Political Attitudes in Serbia

Introduction

The European Union's view of Serbia is certainly mixed. As described in the previous chapter, members are weary about continuing the expansion of the Union. But, following the United Kingdom's decision to exit to EU, many remaining members have called for expansion (particularly Serbia and Montenegro) as a way to counterbalance the UK's leaving.

Boris Tadic emerged as a Serbian politician that could win on a pro-European platform. Before his rise, many were deeply skeptical of European institutions. Serbians saw the European Union as anti-Serb following the Yugoslav Wars and particularly after the EU's cooperation with NATO. But as economic conditions soured in Serbia and Milosevic fell, many saw joining the EU as a way to move Serbia into the 21st century and into the European community. Filip Ejdus described this process as moving from the "periphery" of Europe.

Today, despite the goal of Vucic and his Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) to move Serbia into the bloc and out from the periphery, a number of parties do not support European integration.

Anti-European Attitudes in Serbia

Despite the 2017 election of pro-EU candidate Aleksandar Vucic, skepticism about joining the European Union is still a prevalent force in Serbia. Polling taken around the time of the most recent election suggests that only 43% of Serbs are sure they want to join the Union, and a full 35% stand firmly against accession.¹⁰⁹ That 22% of Serbs are unsure of their opinion of the EU marks that there is still deep suspicion in joining the bloc.

¹⁰⁹ Cvijic, Srdan. "EU the biggest loser in Serbia's elections." *Politico*. April 5, 2017. <https://www.politico.eu/article/aleksandar-vucic-eu-the-biggest-loser-in-serbia-elections-eu-the-biggest-loser-in-serbias-elections/>

A paper by Marko Stojic of the Sussex European Institute argues that the “domestic political debate on the EU is abstract and that the EU is almost exclusively perceived through its policy towards the former Yugoslavia over the last two decades.”¹¹⁰ Through this lens, Stojic identifies three political parties that have advocated against Serbia’s joining the EU. Two of these parties carry labels as the “qualified opposition,” which he defines as “a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU trajectory.”¹¹¹

This section will highlight the parties that currently oppose EU integration, as well as a few individuals from pro-European parties who are individually skeptical of the benefits of accession.

Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS)

The Democratic Party of Serbia historically was always skeptical of European integration and particularly on European institutions, most notably the ICTY courts established by the UN with the support of the EU. The party famously quit the governing coalition established with Zoran Djindjic’s Democratic Party (different party) following the extradition of Milosevic. Although the party has faltered and shrunk since the leadership of former leader Vojislav Kostunica, the party remains opposed to the accession negotiations. The party lists their ideology as “national conservatism and Euroscepticism”¹¹² on their official website.

In his paper, Stojic argues that the DSS is anti-European for reasons that differ from more extreme ideologues, such as the Radicals. Stojic writes.

The Democratic Party of Serbia did not object to Serbian EU integration in principle. Its programme underlined a party’s European orientation that is based on an old European, conservative heritage. It stated that Serbia, as a European country, should closely cooperate with

¹¹⁰ Stojic, Marko. “The changing nature of Serbian political parties’ attitudes towards Serbian EU membership.” *European Parties Election and Referendum Network Working Paper No. 24* (August 2011): 1-52.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹² “Facts about DSS.” Democratic Party of Serbia. Accessed November 2017. <http://www.dss.rs/fact-about-dss/>

European countries, ultimately becoming a member state of the EU... the party [held the] opinion that the EU did not treat Serbia in the same manner as other states and that the accession conditions imposed to Serbia were unfair.¹¹³

Today, the DSS is a shell of its former self. In 2003, they held 53 seats in the National Assembly and joined the governing coalition. In 2014 the party did not win a single seat and only returned to the National Assembly in 2016 with 6 seats in a coalition with the far-right movement Dveri. Their performance in Presidential elections is just as bad. In 2012, Kostunica garnered 290,861 votes. In 2017, DSS candidate Aleksandar Popović earned only 38,167 votes.¹¹⁴

The DSS is more important as a study of Serbian political history than as an actual political force in today's politics. Because they were a part of the government coalition from 2003-2008 they played a major role in the development of Serbia's long pivot back towards Europe. Despite their relative obscurity now they were a primary defender of Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo, and continue to advocate for the continued non-recognition of Kosovo's independence.

New Serbia

New Serbia is a small political party that often joins coalitions with like-minded parties. Despite their small numbers they have joined governing coalitions following the parliamentary elections in 2003, 2007, 2012, and 2014. New Serbia established itself as a party that defended the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the backbone of Serbian culture and advocated for the reestablishment of the Serbian monarchy.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Stojic, Marko.

¹¹⁴ "12th Regular Press Conference of the Republic Electoral Commission." Republic of Serbia Electoral Commission. April 18, 2017. <http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/english/aktivnosti-konferencije.php#a12>

¹¹⁵ Stojic, Marko.

In an effort to remain politically viable, they recently softened their opposition to European integration for pragmatic reasons. The party has never counted more than 10 members in parliament, and currently only has 5. In order to survive as a legitimate political party, New Serbia seems to shift its political stance towards Europe based on public opinion at the time, a claim echoed by Stojic.

Serbian Radical Party (SRS)

The Serbian Radical Party has been the predominant anti-European party since its formation in 1991 by ultranationalist Vojislav Seselj, who still leads the party. The party is fiercely nationalist, skeptical of all Western political institutions, deeply distrustful of the United Nations, and advocates for a singular close relationship with its cultural ally Russia.

The Serbian Radical Party served as the official “opposition” of Milosevic’s Socialists during the Yugoslav Wars. Milosevic deftly used the abhorrent public comments made by Seselj as a comparison to himself, and often appeared as the moderate. While the Radicals were technically the official opposition in parliament, they secretly worked with Milosevic to advance the nationalist cause. Throughout the wars they became a powerful political force and came to influence much of Serbia and rump Yugoslavia’s nationalist policies during the 1990s.

If any party has best captured the use of Serbia’s historical imagination, it is the Radicals. Party leaders such as Seselj refuse to acknowledge war crimes and genocide committed by Serbs during the Bosnian War and the counter-insurgency in Kosovo. In line with Serbian nationalist principles, they advocated both during and after the wars for a united Greater Serbia incorporating at least Kosovo and the Serb populations of Bosnia. At the time of this writing, the party enjoys very friendly relations with the Russian party of power United Russia, and sends

delegates to visit the Russian State Duma. Supporters of the Radicals are comfortable waging war to pacify the Kosovo region despite the results of the 1999 war.

The Radicals' hatred of the West is vitriolic and is a core value of its party platform. In the past, the Radicals supported Saddam Hussein's Baath Party.¹¹⁶ Seselj particularly despises the West and particularly the European Union. Before founding the party, Seselj was a professor at the University of Belgrade and had even taught political science courses at the University of Michigan.¹¹⁷

Seselj served time in prison starting in 1984 as a result of anti-Communist activities before Yugoslavia fell apart. The presiding judge in the case listed that he "acted from the anarcho-liberal and nationalist platform thereby committing the criminal act of counterrevolutionary endangerment of the social order."¹¹⁸

Seselj established the political movement that would become the Radical Party during the Bosnian War. Throughout the war a number of paramilitary organizations had connections to him personally, most infamously the White Eagles who fought in both Croatia and Bosnia. Seselj's alleged leadership of these groups landed him an indictment from the ICTY for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing campaigns. Although he himself was not a military leader, his political rhetoric incited his followers to commit war crimes against Croats and Bosniaks.

Seselj surrendered himself in 2003 to the ICTY and stood trial before them at The Hague. Seselj was defiant throughout his trial and made clear his outright disdain for what he believed and characterized to be an illegal international body. While incarcerated, Seselj penned a manuscript that attacked Javier Solana (the Secretary General of NATO during the Kosovo War).

¹¹⁶ Stojanovic, Dusan. "Serbian Radical Party Riding High." *Washington Post*. January 24, 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/24/AR2007012401340.html>

¹¹⁷ Mueller, John. "The Banality of Ethnic War." *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 42-70.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

Additionally, it was heavily critical of the European Union, which Seselj saw as being complicit in NATO's bombing campaign against Serbia and as having a radical anti-Serb agenda.¹¹⁹ In 2016, the ICTY acquitted him of all charges in a surprise ruling to many observers. Seselj remarked in a press conference that, "I escaped without punishment, but maybe I could have received at least a little bit, so Serb enemies in Serbia and outside would not be as furious."¹²⁰

Seselj is an important figure in this discussion mainly because of his fervent embrace of Serbian nationalism and of justifying the unification of the Serbian people because of an acceptance of historical memory. Seselj is largely responsible for the concept of the Greater Serbia that other nationalists such as Milosevic formulated throughout the Yugoslav wars. Seselj is the author of over 200 books, all of which contain some kind of call for the creation of a Greater Serbia at the territorial expense of Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Macedonia.

His ideology influenced many who continue to hold powerful positions in Serbian politics. While imprisoned, his deputy Tomislav Nikolic became the president of the party and Aleksandar Vucic became the vice president. Both men were fervent nationalists who appealed to the same themes that Seselj had for years.

But, Nikolic and Vucic split from the party in 2008 over the pivotal question of European integration. Nikolic likely recognized the changing political winds at the time and recognized the need for a European position in order to stay relevant as a political force. At the time, integration into the Union was politically popular: about 65% of Serbs polled said that they supported integration into the bloc.¹²¹ I address the 2008 split in the final section in this chapter on the

¹¹⁹ Seselj, Vojislav. "Felon and War Criminal Javier Solana." Serbian Radical Party, 2006.

¹²⁰ Simons, Marlise. "Vojislav Seselj, Serbian Nationalist, Is Acquitted of War Crimes by Hague Tribunal." *New York Times*. March 31, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/01/world/europe/vojislav-seselj-war-crimes.html>

¹²¹ Cavoski, Aleksandra. "Perceptions of the EU in Serbia." Europe for Citizens - European Commission (2012)

Serbian Progressive Party, which Nikolic and Vucic founded after their expulsion from the Radicals and who rules the country today.

The Serbian Radical Party has survived tumultuous electoral changes in Serbia and may find itself a larger party yet. In 2006, almost 70% of Serbs supported joining the EU. Ten years later in 2016, that number fell to just 47% and continues to dip every year.¹²² Additionally, the long accession process contributes to the apathy of ordinary citizens. In the same poll, only 35% characterized that Serbia's planned accession to EU is a "good thing" while another 31% said that it is a "bad thing." The other 34% answered indifferently. In Serbia, such apathy is significantly greater benefit to Eurosceptic parties, like the Radicals, than pro-European ones. The Radicals currently have 22 seats in the 250-seat National Assembly. With support for the EU waning every year among the Serbian electorate the Radicals look to grow their party and remain Serbia's greatest force against integration.

Pro-European Attitudes in Serbia

Pro-Europeanism became the dominant political stance of most parties after the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement in 2008. The largest party that rallied against the accession negotiations, DSS, lost most of its membership and today is only a minor party. Only the Radicals maintain a support base that is similar to its composition at the signing of the agreement. That means that the major political parties today, and especially those who govern, at least publicly support the accession of Serbia into the EU.

¹²² "European Orientation of Serbian Citizens." Serbian European Integration Office - Republic of Serbia. December 2016.
http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/opinion_poll_december_16.pdf

This section will start first with the parties that historically always supported EU accession, followed by those recent ones who now support it as a matter of political necessity. The former would include the Serbian Progressive Party, analyzed last in this section.

Democratic Party (DS)

The true supporters of European integration were always the Democratic Party, led first by Zoran Djindjic and then by Boris Tadic (see chapter 3). The Democratic Party led the beginning of the pro-European movement in Serbia. The 2008 electoral alliance of Boris Tadic named itself “For a European Serbia” and Tadic’s years as President (2004-2012) saw Serbia turn definitively to European integration.

The Democratic Party steered Serbia through the early parts of the negotiation process and Tadic was the most pro-European politician in Serbia. He largely picked up the mantle left by the absence of Zoran Djindjic and framed European integration as Serbia’s ticket to prosperity. Rather than doubling down on the image as an international pariah and troublesome Balkan neighbor, Djindjic and Tadic proved that pro-European politics were possible. Had the Democratic Party not accomplished the work that it did between 2000-2012, European integration would not be a possibility for Serbia.

The 2012 presidential election was a shock to Tadic and his party, who were widely expected to defeat Nikolic and the new Serbian Progressive Party.¹²³ Tadic left the party in 2014 following his ouster as leader of the party. He went on to found the New Democratic Party, which has no seats in the National Assembly.

Rather than submit their own candidate, the Democratic Party chose to support independent opposition candidate and former Ombudsman Sasa Jankovic in the 2017 election,

¹²³ “Russian media about Nikolic's victory.” *B92*. May 21, 2012.
http://www.b92.net/info/izbori2012/vesti.php?yyyy=2012&mm=05&dd=21&nav_id=611120

who came in 2nd place. But, Jankovic refused to join the Democratic Party following the election and instead chose to establish his own political movement to oppose the winner, President Aleksandar Vucic, who he accused of “suspending democracy.”¹²⁴ This further splintered the power of the Democratic Party and of the opposition to Vucic in general, the result of which is the obvious strengthening of Vucic’s Progressive Party as the only major torchbearer of the pro-European message. The Democratic Party’s seat count in the National Assembly fell from a high of 102 in 2008 to a low of just 12 today. Its losses have largely been to the benefit of the Progressives.

Serbian Progressive Party (SNS)

Former SRS leaders Tomislav Nikolic and Aleksandar Vucic created the SNS in 2012 as a pro-European offshoot of the SRS. Today, the party is a populist, conservative organization that dominates Serbian politics due to the deft leadership of the party’s leader, Vucic. The party is seemingly a strange combination of many different ideologies, best suited to maximize the party’s message throughout the country. The party includes nationalists, pro-Europeans, Eurosceptics, socialists, and democrats.

The party’s real founder was Nikolic, who left the Radicals in the midst of his leadership there and took 21 of their ministers with him. Under the banner of the SNS, Nikolic delivered a surprise defeat to Boris Tadic in 2012 by blending elements of his own nationalism with the pro-European message that the Democrats had solely enjoyed until then. The combination of these two somewhat opposing themes was enough to push Nikolic past Tadic by 70,000 votes.

¹²⁴ Rudic, Filip. “Serbia Poll Runner-up Jankovic to Form Political Movement.” *Balkan Insight*. April 13, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-presidential-runner-up-jankovic-to-form-political-movement-04-13-2017>

Nikolic struggled in the presidency, however. He feuded with members in his own coalition and raised concerns in Brussels over his actual commitment to European integration. It became clear that he bled too much political capital to his young right-hand-man Vucic, who quickly accumulated power in the government and who many saw as a challenge to Nikolic's authority as the party's founder. These tensions became public when the SNS chose to nominate Vucic as their candidate for the 2017 election rather than the incumbent president, Nikolic.¹²⁵

As it stands, the Serbian Progressive Party is the party best-positioned to rule Serbia until the target dates for EU accession in the early 2020s. But unlike parties such as the Democrats who have well-established platforms and ideology, the SNS is likely just the political vessel of Vucic.

Regardless of whether his desire to steer Serbia into the EU is genuine or not, Vucic is at the steering wheel of the country's future. His negotiating style is certainly better than his predecessor's, but many criticize him for not having accomplished much with current talks.¹²⁶ However, he has established himself as firmly pro-European nominally, and cast his election victory in 2017 in pro-European terms, "showing that most want reforms to continue, they want Serbia to continue on the European path, while keeping our traditional friendship with Russia and China."¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Bjelotomic, Snezana. "Presidential election: Conflict in SNS between Vucic and Nikolic." *Serbian Monitor*. February 17, 2017. <http://serbianmonitor.com/en/politics/30031/presidential-election-conflict-sns-between-vucic-and-nikolic/#.WhW5zlWnHIU>

¹²⁶ Abazi, Haki. "The Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue is Just Lose-Lose." *Balkan Insight*. November 13, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-kosovo-serbia-dialogue-is-just-lose-lose--11-13-2017>

¹²⁷ "Quotes by Aleksandar Vucic." *Euronews*. April 3, 2017. <http://www.quotes.euronews.com/people/aleksandar-vucic-lWmRI9x3>

Historical Memory in the Political Parties

Historical memory plays some sort of influencing role in all of Serbia's major political parties. Some of Serbia's most fundamental political attitudes have their roots in the collective memory of the country.

EU accession is the number one political issue throughout Serbia. Every major political party has produced some kind of stance, one way or the other, on Serbia's place in the EU. A party's decision to either support or reject Europeanization reflects how important historical memory is to that party.

The parties and movements in opposition to Vucic are unorganized and lack any kind of coherent ideology one way or the other. Generally, they want further European integration and count the young, highly educated, and diaspora among their supporters. Following the 2017 election they are scattered and lack any real cohesion that stands to challenge Vucic's power. For the sake of this section - it is important to understand that they are generally not as receptive to historical memory for political power as the established political parties. This, of course, is a broad generalization of a large collection of groups that could be considered "the opposition" to Vucic. Nonetheless, it is important to note that few, if any, of these groups utilize imagery from Serbia's historical memory to challenge Vucic.

The easiest example of politicized historical memory is the case of the Radicals (SRS). The SRS care deeply about the preservation of historical memory. Vojislav Seselj is a self-described ultranationalist who believes in the benefits of pursuing "Greater Serbia." This is an ideology directly influenced by historical memory. The SRS' hostility towards the EU is not surprising given their steadfast Russophilia. To the SRS, Europeanization means rejecting Serbia's special relationship with Russia and joining a Western tradition that it has never been a

part of. Seselj frequently blames the West for conspiring against Serbia. During the Yugoslav collapse, he said “The Western powers have no proof against Serbia and they are just trying to find an excuse, a horrifying image that will mobilize opinion and justify the bombardment of our country.”¹²⁸ Seselj once remarked that he saw no difference between Adolf Hitler and Bill Clinton.¹²⁹

Members of the SRS see membership in the EU as a betrayal of Serbian history, both distant and recent. Supporters of the SRS are the most Eurosceptic and anti-Western Serbians voting for any major party. Seselj continues to inspire supporters with references to “heroes” of the Bosnian War such as General Mladic.

In his youth as an academic, he attempted to publish journals that called for Socialist Yugoslavia to be replaced with a Serb-dominated central state - clearly in line with the thinking of Serbian nationalists before his time.¹³⁰ The BBC’s profile of him notes that he “presented himself as the successor to the nationalist Chetnik fighters of World War II.” His supporters used his fiery rhetoric as justification for atrocities against Croats and Bosniaks in the war which led to his war crimes trial. If nothing else, the SRS is a party obsessed with Serbian historical memory. The irredentist policy, the bellicosity towards non-Serb ethnicities, and the anti-European attitudes supported by its rank reveal a party whose entire ideology is based in a lettered following of historical memory.

¹²⁸ Agence France-Presse. “CONFLICT IN THE BALKANS; Serb Threatens West With Retaliation.” *The New York Times*. October 2, 1998. <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/02/world/conflict-in-the-balkans-serb-threatens-west-with-retaliation.html>

¹²⁹ “Vojislav Seselj in his own words.” *BBC News*. November 7, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2793899.stm>

¹³⁰ “Profile: Vojislav Seselj.” *BBC News*. November 7, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2317765.stm>

Other parties are more complicated. The Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) both have policies that suggests historical memory influences party decision making, but the hold is nowhere near as great as that of the SRS.

DSS' Euroscepticism draws from the same base as that of the SRS - they value the relationship Serbia has with Russia and are suspicious of joining ranks with an organization that supported bombing Belgrade during the Kosovo War. Kostunica is an adamant believer of Kosovo's position as the birthplace of the Serbian people. Following Kosovo's declaration of independence, then-Prime Minister of Serbia Kostunica proclaimed:

Kosovo – that's Serbia's first name. Kosovo belongs to Serbia. Kosovo belongs to the Serbian people. That's how it has been forever. That's how it's going to be forever. That the place where we were born is not ours; we and our state and our church and everything that makes us what we are today! If we as Serbs renounce [our statehood], our origin, our Kosovo, our ancestors and our history – then, who are we Serbs? What is our name then?¹³¹

Kostunica is by no means an ardent nationalist calling for the establishment of a new Serbian Empire in the Balkans. But he clearly believes that Kosovo belongs to Serbia. Kostunica helped overthrow Milosevic during the Bulldozer Revolution, and while he was conservative he was never a political nationalist. But he did have a deep belief in principles largely informed by historical memory; namely, the perseverance of Kosovo within the Serbian state due to its important cultural connotations.

The position of the SNS is even more complicated as the party continues to redefine its ideology beyond just the current “party of power.” It is difficult to determine where Vucic's true ideology lies. His early career in the SRS indicates that he was, at one point, a true believer in Serbian nationalism as espoused by Seselj. Even after his split from the SRS, he and former

¹³¹ “The Promise is Given, Kosovo is Serbia as Long as We Live.” Serbian Orthodox Church. February 25, 2008. http://www.spc.rs/eng/promise_given_kosovo_serbia_long_we_live

President Nikolic both continued to support typical positions related to Kosovo and Serbia's relationship with Russia.

Vucic and Kostunica now disagree on the role of Europeanization, but their understanding of Serbia's historical memory is largely similar. They both decried Kosovo's independence declaration in 2008. But Kosovo offers a political consideration for Vucic that Kostunica did not seize upon. Dejan Anastasijevic wrote:

Vucic is probably aware that his engagement in the Brussels dialogue on Kosovo is the main reason the EU is ready to tolerate his rising authoritarianism and illiberal policies at home. By rushing to cut a deal, this leverage would be removed, and he would likely face increasing pressure on other issues, such as the rule of law in Serbia and his cozy relations with Russia. It is highly improbable that he would put himself in that situation. So those who are expecting a final resolution this autumn are likely to be disappointed.¹³²

Anastasijevic correctly identifies that Vucic is keenly aware that he has a strong diplomatic hand to play. I summarize in the last two chapters this point further. Essentially, Vucic understands that the EU will trade stability in the region (particularly with Kosovo) for membership in the EU. Utilizing historical memory is politically useful for Vucic in this sense, regardless of whether or not he remains a true believer of the Greater Serbia cause. His continued devotion to Serbia's "territorial integrity" draws heavily on the typical themes deployed by Vucic himself when he was an unapologetic nationalist. It gives him political cover to delicately negotiate the normalization of relations with Kosovo and sail comfortably through the EU accession process while accumulating power domestically.

Conclusion

Serbian attitudes towards EU integration are at their lowest levels of support since at least 2003, falling from 70% in that time to under 50% today. Serbs are generally apathetic towards

¹³² Anastasijevic, Dejan. "Vucic's Latest 'Historic' Promise: A Deal with Kosovo." *Balkan Insight*. July 25, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/blog/vucic-s-latest-historic-promise-a-deal-with-kosovo-07-25-2017>

the promises of prosperity and economic security in the EU, and few believe that any real changes will come as a result of the accession.

That has not stopped Serbia's political parties from pursuing accession as a political goal. As a platform, it appears to be successful. The Democratic Party rode the wave of EU euphoria throughout the 2000s under Djindjic and Tadic, and the Progressives dominated the 2010s under a pro-European message. The most important political question facing Serbia undoubtedly is European integration - every party has a position, and Vucic's negotiations with the EU and Kosovo dominate the daily news.

Two worrying trends threaten integration. The first is the electoral success of Seselj's Radicals, who did not hold a single seat in the National Assembly from 2012 until 2016, returning to the National Assembly with 22 seats as an official member of the opposition. The return of the SRS to the National Assembly indicates that the anti-European message can still be used with success, and if their party continues its resurgence it will be a difficult adversary for pro-European parties to work with as the country navigates through the chapter process. Their success could also indicate that creeping Serbian nationalism is making its way back into mainstream Serbian politics.

The second trend is the increasing perception that the Union is unstable. The impending British exit from the Union rocked the stability of the Union, since it was the first time that a member state had willingly voted to leave the EU. Additionally, the refugee crisis highlighted tension and fierce disagreement among member states who could not agree on how to process and place migrants, and whether individual nations could refuse the demands of Brussels to house refugees in their borders. The experience of hundreds of thousands of refugees that poured through the Balkans en route to EU member states only further exacerbated doubts in the minds

of Serbians regarding whether they wanted to join the EU. As Russia and China continue to invest in the region, more and more Serbs may continue to question why they need to integrate into Europe at all.

Chapter 5: The Cost of Integration

Introduction

Serbia finds itself at a crossroads between Western Europe's modern institutions and its Slavic-Orthodox Eastern European culture. It also finds itself at a crossroads between the country's historical memory and the desire to transcend its painful history and integrate into the modernity and cosmopolitan atmosphere of the European Union.

The past two chapters have summarized Serbia's current standing. Serbia waits on the precipice of EU integration. Europe's primary goal is not further enlargement, but the chances that Serbia succeeds in accession is high if the country can successfully normalize relations with Kosovo in the EU's eyes. Key leaders in the EU continue to stress that Serbia will be a member of the EU by 2025.¹³³

Domestically, support for integration continues to fall, but the leaders of the major political parties are nominally committed to continued negotiations. Prime Minister Brnabic stated that "EU membership remains our main direction"¹³⁴ and Vucic says that "we are doing our best to stay firmly on our EU path and to fulfil all our obligations."¹³⁵ Even the parties and individuals that make up the opposition to Vucic's rule favor EU membership, the only exception being the Radicals.

¹³³ "Serbia, Montenegro seen as frontrunner candidates to join EU in 2025." *Central European Financial Observer*. September 14, 2017. <https://financialobserver.eu/recent-news/serbia-montenegro-seen-as-frontrunner-candidates-to-join-eu-in-2025/>

¹³⁴ Sekularac, Ivana. "Serbia's first female PM pledges education reform, EU membership." *Reuters*. June 28, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/serbia-government/serbias-first-female-pm-pledges-education-reform-eu-membership-idUSL8N1JP2JM>

¹³⁵ Kumar, Isabelle. "EU membership remains Serbia's priority, says PM Aleksandar Vucic." *EuroNews*. May 19, 2015. <http://www.euronews.com/2015/05/19/membership-of-the-european-union-remains-a-priority-for-serbia-says-prime>

One thing is clear: Serbia's membership in the EU would be a turning point for the country and a definitive moment in its modern history. But Serbia's accession would also be a pivotal moment for the EU itself, particularly depending on the state of Serbian institutions at the time of its final accession. This chapter culminates the themes introduced so far throughout the preceding chapters, including:

- Serbia's historical memory and imagined Greater Serbia
- Nationalism leftover from the Yugoslav wars
- Serbia's struggling democracy
- The divide between Eastern and Western Europe
- The future of Serbia with the European Union

Vucic Empowered

No matter how one looks at the Serbia EU accession negotiations, Aleksandar Vucic has utilized the process to become the most powerful politician in Serbia. When the government introduced the stabilization and association agreement in 2007, Vucic was still an ardent nationalist in the Radical Party. Vucic was still a nationalist Radical party leader when the stabilization agreement was signed in April of 2008. It was not until five months later that he and Nikolic left the Radicals over a dispute with party leadership regarding their position on EU integration. Correctly reading the political winds allowed Vucic to reach the highest levels of government with a stint as Prime Minister and then a commanding 2017 victory as President.

Vucic's career truly began in his role as the Minister of Information in Milosevic's administration towards the end of the autocrat's reign, between 1998 and 2000. As the Minister of Information, Vucic was primarily responsible for controlling the government-run propaganda empire as well as for stifling independent journalism. By all accounts, Vucic was remarkably

proficient at this job.¹³⁶ One of his reforms was the heavy fining of critical journalists. He also blocked all foreign television channels, leaving the Serbian people no alternative to pro-Milosevic propaganda.

After Milosevic's fall in 2000, Vucic remained an important figure in the Radical Party of Seselj and was a key nationalist in the country. Vucic stayed with the party while it was still politically viable and while nationalism was a popular political position. While serving as the Secretary-General of the party, Vucic oversaw policy and successful campaigns in 2003, 2007, and 2008 when the SRS had significant numbers of seats in the National Assembly.

Both Nikolic and Vucic correctly interpreted that in 2008, following Tadic's negotiation of the Stabilization and Association agreement, adopting a pro-European attitude would ensure the continued success of their political careers. In 2008, poll support for EU accession was well above 60-70%, and the Radicals' message of anti-Europeanization would likely only resonate with that bottom 30% of voters. Nikolic and Vucic secured their own futures by leaving the SRS to establish the Serbian Progressive Party.

Despite Nikolic formally being the party's founder, Nikolic struggled to maintain control of the party and of the country. Approaching the 2017 election, the controversial, aging, and gaffe-prone Nikolic could not bury rumors that SNS members did not support his re-election bid. Party leader Zorana Mihajlovic said that she could "not support Nikolic and that current Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic is only one who can win the presidential race."¹³⁷ Even then-Interior

¹³⁶ De Launcey, Guy. "Serbia transforming from pariah to EU partner." *BBC*. January 21, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25808463>

¹³⁷ Zivanovic, Maja. "Serbian President Nikolic 'Confident' of Re-Election." *Balkan Insight*. January 31, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/nikolic-claims-he-has-support-for-presidential-race-01-31-2017>

Minister Nebojsa Stefanovic said that the party would not formally support Nikolic until after he and Vucic came to a decision together.¹³⁸

Nikolic's flaw grew out of his decision to formally leave the party upon assuming the Presidency in an effort to remain "independent" of parties. In his absence, party leaders and coalition partners (particularly the Socialists) worked well with Vucic. Almost every leader that was interviewed by media in the lead-up to the election indicated their support for Vucic, or at least for Nikolic and he to discuss the options moving forward with the party.

It was a stunning transformation for Vucic, who in 2012 appeared to be perfectly content as Nikolic's right-hand man. In many ways, Nikolic was Vucic's political mentor. But as Nikolic's popularity and approval rating began descending, Vucic seized the opportunity to propel himself to the front of the party and secure his own political future.

The final straw came in a February meeting between the two men. The SNS officially nominated Vucic as their nominee, but Nikolic said that he intended to seek a second term as an independent, threatening to fracture the party. Under Vucic's direction, the SNS media produced advertisements promoting Vucic and declaring that if the President and Prime Minister took the country in different directions it would be impossible to maintain Serbia's stable course.¹³⁹ Nikolic swallowed his pride and stepped aside from the race.

It was now visible that Vucic single-handedly controlled the SNS as his own personal political machine. No other prominent SNS politician had amassed the power and control that Vucic attained between 2008 and today. Many outside observers began clamoring for the opposition to unite behind a single candidate in order to keep Vucic from attaining office.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Zivanovic, Maja. "Serbian President Nikolic Abandons Bid for Second Term." *Balkan Insight*. February 20, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/still-no-agreement-between-serbian-president-and-prime-minister-02-19-2017>

Unfortunately, the toxic Serbian political culture did not allow for this to happen. None of the opposition candidates refused to back out of the race or work with one another. The third-highest candidate in the race, 26 year-old Luka Maksimovic, was a satirical candidate (Beli) that meant to parody the state of Serbian politics with Vucic. Beli won nearly 10% of the vote.

The main opposition candidate, former Ombudsman Sasa Jankovic, won 16% of the vote and was highly critical of Vucic and his personal power. None of it seemed to matter to those who voted, as Vucic soundly defeated all ten of the opposing candidates in the first round with 55% of the vote. Vucic made history by becoming the first Serbian president to win in the first election outright and not requiring a runoff.

Vucic's election sparked outrage throughout the country. Thousands of students, union members, and pensioners organized "Against the Dictatorship" protests in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Kragujevac. The protesters listed their demands in a Facebook post¹⁴⁰ on April 10:

- Fair and Free Elections
- Free Media
- The removal of all party-assigned and officials from state-owned and public companies
- Decentralization
- Shift in priorities of economic and social policies
- Protection of labor rights and improved status of all workers
- Protection of living standards
- Entirely publicly financed educational and health services that are available to everyone

The world watched as the protests grew larger and larger. During the largest nights, over 30,000 people from across the country went to the streets to protest Vucic's "dictatorship." But Vucic reacted calmly to the protesters, and did not issue police crackdowns on any protests and

¹⁴⁰ Rudic, Filip. "Serbia's Anti-Vucic Protests: Key Facts." *Balkan Insight*. April 12, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-s-anti-vucic-protests-key-facts-04-12-2017>

arrested no leaders. He used liberal language to describe the protests, stating on April 6th that “there are always people not satisfied with election results. It’s a democratic process. Nobody intervened, we allowed them to protest.”¹⁴¹

The protests against Vucic’s seizure of the presidency lasted for over two months, but finally petered out. By the time the last protesters left the streets, none of the goals were accomplished. Vucic successfully navigated the protests largely by simply ignoring them and refraining from outrageous comments about the protesters, their goals, and their message. The defeated opposition candidates made no effort to unite even during the protests, when a singular anti-Vucic movement could be popular.

Vucic emerged from the protests stronger than ever, and threw himself a massive coronation-like inauguration at the Palace of Serbia, rather than in the presidency where each of his predecessors held their inauguration ceremonies.¹⁴² The ceremony clearly meant to separate Vucic from his predecessors and demonstrate that Vucic was a different breed of politician for Serbia. That Vucic chose the Palace of Serbia for his swearing in, which held Tito’s offices and was the center of government for Yugoslavia, was not a coincidence.

The EU accession process is a tool that Vucic uses to maintain his control over state institutions and over the country as a whole. As long as Vucic is seen as the shepherd of Serbia guiding the country into the EU he will remain powerful domestically and be given wide breadth to do as he pleases by foreign leaders. Matthew Karnitschnig of Politico addresses this point clearly in an article written a year before the 2017 election. Karnitschnig remarked that Vucic was

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Zivanovic, Maja. Serbia’s Vucic Plans Lavish Inauguration Ceremony.” *Balkan Insight*. June 14, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-to-be-inaugurated-on-the-special-event-06-13-2017>

Either Serbia's last great hope to become a modern European democracy or a strongman-in-waiting whose autocratic tendencies threaten to destabilize the Balkans. Love him or hate him, it's difficult to deny that the 46-year-old Vučić has become the region's key political actor. By keeping a lid on regional tensions from Kosovo to Bosnia, Vučić has managed to win the confidence of key leaders in the U.S. and Europe.¹⁴³

The difficulty of addressing a character like Vucic is that his combination of a number of factors makes him difficult to defeat in Serbia. He has the soft nationalism of Kostunica but professes his European credentials like Djindjic and Tadic. Unlike Nikolic, he is willing and eager to work with and court European leaders. Despite some of his more divisive rhetoric on Kosovo, he always accepts the opportunity to meet with Kosovo President Hashim Thaci and Federica Mogherini, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Regardless of whether these meetings have any substance, Vucic puts on the air of progress towards the normalization of relations with Kosovo, which is the key to Serbia's EU integration.

The charges that Vucic is a wannabe autocrat are not without merit. Under his presidency and even while he was Prime Minister Vucic successfully dismantled dissenting media and consolidated control of the country's judicial system.

He has done so largely without any kind of condemnation short of a few think tanks. Since 2014 (the year Vucic became PM) Serbia's press freedom fell from a score of 40 to 49, and the downward slide of press freedoms do not appear to be halting anytime soon.¹⁴⁴ The report says that "journalists who criticize the government are typically tarred as traitors, social degenerates, and tools of the mafia or foreign intelligence agencies."¹⁴⁵ A source quoted in the

¹⁴³ Karnitschnig, Matthew. "Serbia's latest would-be savior is a modernizer, a strongman - or both." *Politico*. April 14, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/aleksandar-vucic-serbias-latest-savior-is-a-modernizer-or-strongman-or-both/>

¹⁴⁴ O'Toole, Shannon. "A Cry for Help from Serbia's Independent Media." Freedom House. October 5, 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/blog/cry-help-serbia-s-independent-media>

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

report even remarked that Vucic's control of the media is "beyond propaganda" and that "people used to be able to decode government propaganda, but now [independent media] are just feeding people lies."¹⁴⁶

The EU has largely looked the other way on these issues. EU officials such as Mogherini, Tusk, and Junker are silent when it comes to press freedom, judicial independence, and Vucic's dominance of domestic politics in his country. European leaders are solely concerned with regional stability in the Balkans. The Balkans faces a myriad of problems including corruption, cronyism, rampant unemployment, and lingering ethnic tension throughout the region.

The European Union views Vucic not only as a reliable partner eager to work with its representatives (unlike Kostunica and Nikolic) but also as a leader willing to address issues such as the normalization of relations with Kosovo as well as other secondary concerns such as the refugee crisis. Serbia is still the strongest and most prosperous of the remaining non-EU former Yugoslav states, and its accession to the EU (along with Montenegro) would benefit the EU as it fills the void left by the United Kingdom's eventual withdrawal.¹⁴⁷

Stability is the number one concern for the Balkans, and Vucic is a force of stability in the region. The EU appears content ignoring or downplaying charges of Vucic's autocratic behavior if it means that he can guide Serbia into the EU and normalize relations with Kosovo. Additionally, Vucic mirrors some of the tactics of the EU's other Eastern European states such as Poland and Hungary, both lead by men whose commitment to true liberal democracy is shaky at best.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ "GDP - Current US Dollars." World Bank. Accessed December 1, 2017.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=RS-HR-BA-ME-MK-SI-XK>

Vucic quietly has built his personal political empire by promoting ministers personally loyal to him, burying political opposition, strangling critical opposition media, stacking the judiciary with pro-SNS judges, and greatly enhancing the powers of the previously-weak presidential office.¹⁴⁸ Following the election, the editorial board of the New York Times wrote:

European leaders who see in strongmen such as Mr. Vucic a force for stability — and who hope Mr. Vucic will make good on his promise to keep Serbia on track to join the European Union even as Russia’s influence in the Balkans grows — must avoid the temptation to look the other way as Mr. Vucic and his allies seize monopoly control over the country’s political institutions and its press. To accede to such control by Mr. Vucic would be a betrayal of the European Union’s core values, and of the many Serbians who look to the European Union as a beacon of democratic rights and freedoms at a time when Eastern and Central European leaders are turning their backs on democracy.¹⁴⁹

It appears as if the beleaguered EU is perfectly willing to condone Vucic’s autocratic domestic tendencies. Present knowledge does not indicate that he has begun to jail and kill journalists, political enemies, or the general population for dissent, which makes it easy for the EU to not comment on his other illiberal tendencies. Vucic uses unique tactics (many within the bounds of the weak Serbian constitution) to stifle liberal democracy within Serbia. He has largely encouraged and brought about the self-censorship of private media, according to Freedom House. He has used the powers granted to him in the Constitution to remove opposition judges and install those loyal to him. He can now wield the courts to silence political enemies - especially the media.¹⁵⁰ No high-level EU officials have yet condemned these actions.

The EU’s tacit acceptance of Vucic’s authoritarian flair is troubling, particularly as populism continues to permeate throughout the member-states. The EU accession process should

¹⁴⁸ Editorial Board. “A Serbian Election Erodes Democracy.” *The New York Times*. April 9, 2017. <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/04/09/opinion/a-serbian-election-erodes-democracy.html?referer=>

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Gall, Lydia. “A Difficult Profession: Media Freedom Under Attack in the Western Balkans.” Human Rights Watch. July 15, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/07/15/difficult-profession/media-freedom-under-attack-western-balkans>

open the door for both economic and political liberalization. In Serbia's case economic liberalization and the expansion of trade policy is almost certain as a result of the accession negotiations and chapter process. Political liberalization is a different story. The EU has so far made no effort to seriously address the shortcomings of Serbia's democracy. To do so may not be in their interest as long as Vucic is in power and is able to lead Serbia with stability and remain an active and visible EU partner.

But what if Serbia stalls further in its goal to join the EU? What if Vucic is unable to sway the opinions of more hardline members of his coalition to support accession? What if Serbia, even under Vucic's leadership, cannot overcome the provisions of Chapter 35 - recognizing Kosovo independence? Or what if they cannot overcome other chapters, for various reasons? For Vucic, it will not matter. His unique ideological makeup - soft nationalism with a blend of European reform - will allow him to seamlessly slip back into the typical Serbian nationalist position that the West has cheated Serbia, and that the country truly belong in the East.

The possibility of Serbia joining the EU is high, and because of that Vucic is able to play the part of European reformer quite well. But should that change it will not affect his grip on power. For one, as mentioned earlier, the public's apparent desire for integration is lower and lower every year. It would be much more politically damaging to Vucic if he fails to guide Serbia into the EU if the public overwhelmingly supported that position, but since only about one third of people actively desire for membership while a full two thirds either "don't know" or do not desire membership then the fallout of remaining in negotiation limbo with the EU (i.e. Turkey's current position) will not harm Vucic's personal power.

In conclusion, the EU accession negotiations provide Vucic with the ability to strengthen his hand domestically and in the Balkan peninsula. If he leads the country through the process, he can expect admiration for his leadership and for transforming Serbia from a peripheral onlooker to a major player in Southeast Europe within the EU. If negotiations stall over an issue such as Kosovo recognition, Vucic will declare that EU integration was not in Serbia's interests and use foreign development from China and Russia to grow Serbia's economy and solidify his grip on the country.

The leading opposition figure, Jankovic, recently said that the opposition to Vucic cannot allow him to become the next Ceausescu.¹⁵¹ As long as the opposition remains splintered and divided, they may not have a chance to challenge Vucic's power. As long as the economy continues to improve, as long as Vucic's grip on the media tightens, and as long as the judiciary remains a tool of the presidency there will be no real challenge to Vucic's increasing control of Serbia. He may be a European reformer, but Vucic is using this opportunity to become Serbia's next autocrat.

Serbia's Future with Historical Memory

Sandra Obradovic writes that "the resurrection of old collective memories with the emergence of new events from a social representations approach be understood through the process of anchoring, where new events are anchored into old ones to make the unfamiliar familiar."¹⁵² Like Ejdus described in his work on the subject, Serbia is looking at its EU negotiations through the lens of its historical experience with Western Europe, particularly from

¹⁵¹ "Opposition figure 'won't let Vucic end up like Ceausescu.'" B92. December 1, 2017. https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=12&dd=01&nav_id=102941

¹⁵² Obradovic, Sandra. "Don't Forget to Remember: Collective Memory of the Yugoslav Wars in Present-Day Serbia." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2016): 12-18.

the Yugoslav Wars. EU integration has not lessened Serbian collective memory - in some ways it may strengthen it.

If the EU accession process was weakening Serbia's collective memory, which influences its nationalism, there would be definite signs. Figures in the government and in popular culture would not publicly exclaim support for convicted war criminals such as Karadzic and Mladic. Government officials would not feel the need to passionately and publicly attack EU, US, and NATO officials who call on them to denounce Russian aggression in eastern Europe. And they certainly would not continue to feud and bicker with neighbors such as Croatia.

Unfortunately, the shared legacy and memory of the Yugoslav wars dominates Serbia and other Balkan states. It has only been 25 years since the beginning of the Bosnian War, and only 18 since the NATO bombing of Belgrade during the Kosovo War. The conflicts continue to dominate news and current events. Many of the politicians who now rule Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, and Kosovo were active in politics or even served during the wars, and the next generation of leaders all have parents or grandparents whose lives were changed by the experience of the Kosovo War.

Serbia's collective historical memory is a creation of their leaders in the 20th century to address a number of crises that befell the people of Serbia and Yugoslavia. The question of Kosovo is largely a question of identity for the Serbian people who cast themselves as historic defenders of Christian Europe against the occupation of the Muslim Turks. Serb leaders justified ethnically-motivated violence against both Kosovars and Bosniaks in the 1990s through propaganda which fueled an imaginative belief of Serbs as fighting a modern crusade against Muslim invaders.

This propaganda still exists in 21st century creations such as memes and internet blogs. One such meme from a radical website shows a saluting Ratko Mladic with the words “Serbia: Fighting ISIL since 1992.”¹⁵³ Another image on a separate website shows an image of Serbian medieval knights and the caption “Serbs: Fighting ISIS Since 1389.”¹⁵⁴ There are countless numbers of these images on the internet, with more and more created every day which fans the flames of intolerance and historical revisionism.

It is not likely that Serbia’s accession to the EU will have any profound effects on the historical collective memory of the Yugoslav conflicts and prior. One only need look at Croatia, an EU member state that also struggles with resilient nationalist sentiment. Prominent Croat politicians frequently decry that the ICTY is anti-Croat and that any atrocities committed by Croats during the wars were in self-defense. Just this year, convicted war criminal Slobodan Praljak dramatically committed suicide in the courtroom after the rejection of his appeal. Afterwards, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic described his ruling and subsequent suicide as a “deep moral injustice towards six indicted Croats from Bosnia and the Croatian people.” The Croat member of the Bosnian presidency, Dragan Covic, said that “his suicide showed ‘what sacrifice he was ready to make’ to show he was not a war criminal.”¹⁵⁵

This is just one example of Croatia’s own memory, but there are many others present in the news of the Balkans. Publications in Serbia frequently quote politicians who bemoan the “double standard” of allowing Croatian nationalism to go unchallenged while any semblance of

¹⁵³ Sotirovic, Vladislav. “Bosnian Muslim Genocide Over the Serbs in Srebrenica and Its Vicinity in 1992-1995.” *The Global Almanac*. March 31, 2016. <http://www.sotirovic.eu/almanac/2016/03/31/bosnian-muslim-genocide-over-the-serbs-in-srebrenica-and-its-viceinity-in-1992-1995-photo-album/>

¹⁵⁴ Buchanan, Patrick J. “Why is Kosovo’s Rebellion Our War?” *The Global Politics*. September 20, 2017. <http://global-politics.eu/kosovos-rebellion-war/>

¹⁵⁵ “Slobodan Praljak suicide: War criminal 'took cyanide' in Hague court.” *BBC*. December 1, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42204587>

Serbian nationalism is quickly addressed.¹⁵⁶ Serbian collective memory is strong and is still present throughout politics, society, and culture. Joining the European Union will bring about many changes, but it will not suddenly erase decades of imagined historical memory.

However, there is hope that accession and integration could bring about some changes. Integration into the common market, adoption of the Euro, and participation in continental politics could produce an opening of the country and a softening of relations with its neighbors. But there is no way to guarantee these changes as long as other countries with similar shared memories (Croatia) continue to remain the same. It is just as likely that EU integration will have no effect whatsoever on Serbia's collective memory.

One thing is for certain: the controversy over Kosovo's sovereignty will not disappear because of greater EU integration and eventual accession. Even if Serbia's government recognizes the independence of Kosovo in order to close Chapter 35, there will always be powerful political parties and figures who will appeal to nationalism and invoke the historical memory of Kosovo in order to enhance political power.

Serbs may not want to die in another war for Kosovo, but they also do not want their government or leaders to recognize its independence. Any action taken to normalize relations with Kosovo will have profound political effects in the future, and a cultural battle over a new collective memory will begin over how to conceptualize the "loss" of Kosovo in exchange for European integration.

The Cost of Integration

The cost of integration is threefold. First, EU accession negotiations will strengthen Aleksandar Vucic's power regardless of whether Serbia succeeds or fails. Second, historical

¹⁵⁶ "Vucic on Hague suicide, reactions, and 'double standards.'" *B92*. November 30, 2017. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=11&dd=30&nav_id=102929

memory will continue to exist and a new chapter of Serbian memory will be created to account for the country's new role in Europe as either an EU member or as a defiant Balkan outsider. And finally, the accession of Serbia to the EU indicates an implicit acceptance of illiberal democratic governance under Vucic in exchange for regional stability.

Serbia itself will not change the EU. They are not a large economy that would instantly become a major player in European policy the way that Turkey would be if they succeeded in joining the union. A Serbian accession would simply hint at a change in what the EU sees as important for new and old members alike. Already, member states such as Poland and Hungary have illiberal democratic governments. Other countries such as France, Germany, and the Czech Republic have major political groups that threaten their respective liberal systems.

Vucic and the Progressive Party deny claims that they are overtaking Serbian political institutions, but their actions say otherwise. Vucic is at best a reformed nationalist with autocratic impulses and at worst a strongman focused on consolidating the power of the presidency. Paul Taggart of the University of Sussex has developed five characteristics of European right-wing populism that Vucic embraces: ambivalence towards representative politics, an idealized notion of the heartland which allows for exclusivity, ideological ambiguity to allow for changing political doctrines, a sense of crisis, and an ability to adapt to changing political environments.¹⁵⁷

Vucic has no real love of representative politics, as evidenced by his destruction of the independent Serbian judiciary and his use of the media to beat political opponents into submission. His soft nationalism encompasses the "idealized notion of the heartland" as Serbia including Kosovo, and always prioritizes the needs of Serbs over any other ethnic group in the country. He is a political chameleon who morphs from populist, to European reformer, to

¹⁵⁷ Taggart, Paul. *Populism*. Open University Press: Philadelphia. 2000. 2-4.

conservative, to forward-thinking progressive depending on his audience. He uses the EU accession negotiations to create a sense of crisis that demands political action from him and his party. He easily adapts to changing political environments and used it in the past to hijack the party he helped co-found with Nikolic, at Nikolic's expense.

In essence, the EU is establishing a dangerous precedent by not addressing the strangulation of democracy in Serbia under Vucic. Vucic uses the accession process to empower himself. Vucic only became pro-European when it was politically expedient to do, and if the tide in the country turns against integration he easily will return to his old position of Euroscepticism.

The EU faces profound challenges in the future. Brexit was the first shock to the unity of the body since its founding. Populists across the continent spread Eurosceptic attitudes on issues such as banking, trade, migration, and sovereignty. The Syrian migrant crisis and subsequent terrorist attacks drove many people to vote for parties and candidates that hold right-wing, populist views and generally are very anti-European. The Balkans bore the brunt of the migrants fleeing the Middle East which created the perfect conditions for populism and renewed ethnic tension.

The Balkans are quickly becoming unstable once again. Bosnia and Herzegovina is barely holding itself together as a state and officials from Republika Srpska publicly call for referendums on secession so that they can join Serbia. The populist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) leads a coalition government in Croatia that purposefully antagonizes its neighbors and is facing a looming financial crisis following the arrest of Ivica Todoric and the collapse of Agrokor. Kosovo and Serbia, despite their dialogues, are no closer towards normalizing their relationship than they were at the beginning of Serbia's EU negotiations. Montenegro recently

survived a coup attempt staged by pro-Russian agents angered by that country's decision to join NATO.

The EU needs a stable force in the Balkans right now, and one that is focused on the Balkans. Slovenia and Croatia both have completely changed their trajectory to western Europe, and largely wash their hands of regional politics. Of the remaining non-EU states, Serbia has the best chance of calming the region and promoting the continuation of peace. The EU desires that arrangement, and a stable Balkans with Serbia as a member-state allows Brussels to focus on other pressing issues. Vucic certainly is aware of this fact, which is how he has played the part of reformer so well.

This thesis arrives at these primary conclusions regarding Serbia's accession negotiations into the EU:

First, Vucic is slowly but steadily degrading democracy in Serbia by controlling the media, interfering in the independence of the judiciary, and by separating and isolating opposition figures and parties. He remains popular with European leaders because of his perceived dedication to the accession process, regardless of his domestic shortcomings.

Second, historical memory is still a powerful force in Serbian politics and culture, and no amount of EU negotiating can quickly diminish its hold and quickly "Europeanize" the culture. Serbia's culture is unique and explains why its leaders continue to "sit in two chairs" between Russia and the EU as Hoyt Brian Yee said. Just as EU membership will not diminish collective memory, it will also not isolate Serbia from Russia, its Orthodox big brother.

Third, assuming that the current trajectory remains constant, the accession of Serbia to the EU with a strong Vucic (and his party) will indicate a changing set of priorities for the beleaguered group: regional stability over adherence to democratic principles.

These are the costs associated with Serbia's European integration. The next few years are extremely important to the future of the EU and of Serbia. No one can know for sure how the negotiations will ultimately end, or even if Vucic is able to continue his consolidation of power and become an illiberal autocrat. But the evidence so far indicates that he at least has a mechanism in place to remain in power for a number of years. Prominent European leaders continue to set the Serbian accession target date for the late 2020s. Vucic will likely still lead Serbia at that time, for better or worse.

European integration may bring better economic conditions and opportunities for the Serbian people. It may also usher in a new type of illiberal democratic dictatorship, the likes of which the splintered opposition groups fear. These two possibilities are not mutually exclusive, and likely will both occur.

The weaponization of historical memory as ethnic nationalism set in motion the disastrous events of the 1990s. Serbia is still grappling with the consequences of those years and is as close as it has ever been to joining the European community of states. Yet many cannot help but feel that Serbia is eerily returning to the days of Milosevic, with one commentator writing that "as a veteran of the struggle against Milosevic, I feel scared."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Anastasijevic, Dejan. "These Blasts From Serbia's Past Scare Me." *Balkan Insight*. October 2, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/blog/these-blasts-from-serbia-s-past-scare-me-10-02-2017>

Chapter 6: The Serbian Paradox

Introduction

The European Union is willing to allow Serbia to join the bloc “before 2025” despite the country’s painful history and status as a peripheral outsider. I addressed a number of concerns for the European Union’s position, chiefly that accession could normalize Vucic’s authoritarian tendencies in exchange for Balkan stability. For a body who lists “making its governing institutions more transparent and democratic”, that is problematic.

But the EU faces profound challenges in its future. The impending withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU is certain to hurt both parties according to most sober analysis.¹⁵⁹ Divisions among member-states are forming which threaten the cohesion of the body. Powerful political movements are growing in states such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Poland that openly question the benefits of EU membership. Securing the accession of Serbia and other states could, in theory, revitalize the body that is still reeling from a tumultuous past few years.

Aleksandar Vucic: Shaped by History

“History teaches values. If it is true history, it teaches true values; if it is pseudo-history, it teaches false values. The history taught to our children is playing a role in shaping their values and beliefs—a much greater role than we may suspect.”¹⁶⁰

This quote, from Gutenberg College’s David Crabtree, fits the current predicament that Serbia faces. This thesis addresses the hold that historical memory (a factor that contributes to nationalism) has on the current Serbian leadership. Indeed, the very idea of the Serbian people is

¹⁵⁹ Crisp, James. “Hard Brexit will hurt EU more than Britain, warn university researchers as divorce talks begin in Brussels.” *The Telegraph*. September 25, 2017. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/25/hard-brexit-will-hurt-eu-britain-warn-university-researchers/>

¹⁶⁰ Crabtree, David. “The Importance of History.” Gutenberg College. November 1993. <http://msc.gutenberg.edu/2001/02/the-importance-of-history/>

rooted in a historical imagination of an independent state that predated the Ottoman occupation between the late 14th century and 19th century. The question remains: what links that pre-modern Serbian history to the present, particularly the current Vucic administration?

In many ways, Vucic resembles a Serbian Forrest Gump in that he is present through every political change since the late 1990s. As the Minister of Information in Milosevic's dictatorship, he oversaw the stifling of press freedoms and the silencing of journalists critical to the regime. As a member of parliament following the ouster of Milosevic he was a defiant voice of nationalism and made outrageous statements offering personal support to wanted war criminals.¹⁶¹ As leader of the Serbian Progressive Party, he claims to have shed his nationalist past and presented himself as a Western-style reformer.¹⁶²

Serbia's leaders in the modern era have always looked to the past for strength and guidance. Marshal Tito tried to foster brotherhood and unity among a diverse group of ethnic groups which had both worked together and fought each other in the past. Tito, like many others, earnestly believed that communism would replace the imaginations concocted by the hard-core nationalists. With both the Croatian Ustase and Serbian Chetniks defeated by Tito, the victorious communists genuinely believed that the nationalist factions would simmer down and eventually disappear under the weight of state socialism.

But the past did not die an easy death. Remnants of the nationalist spirit survived socialism in Yugoslavia. In Serbia, it particularly festered in the intelligentsia. The infamous Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum of 1986 laid out a plan for

¹⁶¹ Brunwasser, Matthew. "Serbia's Brand of Reconciliation: Embracing Old War Criminals." *The New York Times*. November 23, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/23/world/europe/serbia-war-crimes-russia.html>

¹⁶² Robinson, Matt and Jaksa Sceekic. "Milosevic-era minister shakes off dark past on path to power in Serbia." *Reuters*. March 13, 2014. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/milosevic-era-minister-shakes-off-dark-past-path-144051698--business.html>

reorganizing the Yugoslav government system and is awash in nationalist ideology linking to events from centuries before. One passage reads that “the physical, political, legal and cultural genocide perpetrated against the Serbian population of Kosovo and Metohija is the greatest defeat suffered by Serbia in the wars of liberation she waged between Orasac in 1804 and the uprising of 1941.”¹⁶³ Indeed, this focus on the persecution of Serbs at the hands of the other nations and within the Yugoslav system reads throughout the entirety of the memorandum.

A second point addresses the two autonomous regions that held the same voting status enjoyed by the constituent nationalities within the Constitution:

What kind of state is one that lacks authority within its own territory and lacks the means to protect the personal property of its citizens, to prevent genocide in Kosovo, and to prevent the emigration of Serbs from their ancient homeland? This position underlines the political discrimination against Serbia, especially when one remembers that the Constitution has imposed internal federalism on Serbia, creating a permanent source of conflicts between Serbia Proper and the provinces.¹⁶⁴

The SANU Memorandum perfectly exhibits the thinking that informs Serbian historical memory. There is a genuine understanding by some that Serbia was held down and its progress muzzled while other nations were given wide breadth to prosper. The beliefs presented by the sixteen authors of the memorandum came to form the foundations of Serbian nationalism that helped fuel the Yugoslav collapse.

Milosevic underwent a transformation from a committed socialist to an arch-nationalist throughout the release of the SANU memorandum. Slowly but surely, he utilized nationalistic fervor to empower himself domestically, culminating with his 1989 speech in Kosovo prophetically suggesting that Yugoslavia was on standing on the precipice of ethnic war.

¹⁶³ SANU Memorandum. 1986. http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/archive/files/sanu_memo_e3b3615076.pdf

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, the most interesting part of that speech comes from the concluding paragraph:

Six centuries ago, Serbia heroically defended itself in the field of Kosovo, but it also defended Europe. Serbia was at that time the bastion that defended the European culture, religion, and European society in general. Therefore, today it appears not only unjust but even unhistorical and completely absurd to talk about Serbia's belonging to Europe. Serbia has been a part of Europe incessantly, now just as much as it was in the past, of course, in its own way, but in a way that in the historical sense never deprived it of dignity.¹⁶⁵

After the fall of Milosevic, Vucic wandered in the ideological wilderness, continuing to espouse nationalism until it was politically expedient to support European integration. Following the 2012 break from the Radicals to form the Progressives, Vucic is now heard reciting similar quotes as the one from Milosevic above in his push to guide Serbia into the EU.

Vucic is the consummate Serb politician. In fact, he is such a stereotypical Serbian candidate that in the 2017 presidential race, the parody candidate Beli won nearly 10% of the vote. The character's full name - Ljubisa 'Beli' Preletacevic - "denotes somebody who switches political party for personal gain."¹⁶⁶ Beli was clearly intended to poke fun at Vucic, who clearly left the Radicals when he recognized that advocating for a pro-European agenda was politically beneficial at the time.

Vucic's current strategy is to appease the West (and the EU) while maintaining close ties with the East (Russia, and now China). Joining the EU is Serbia's strategic goal, but they refuse to consider joining NATO or to impose sanctions against Russia.¹⁶⁷ In the ongoing Kosovo

¹⁶⁵ Milosevic, Slobodan. "St. Vitus Day Speech." June 28, 1989. https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/SLOBODAN%20MILOSEVIC_speech_6_28_89.pdf

¹⁶⁶ Robinson, Matt. "In Serbian election, the comedy candidate is no joke." *Reuters*. March 21, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-election-satirist/in-serbian-election-the-comedy-candidate-is-no-joke-idUSKBN16S139>

¹⁶⁷ Andic, Vesna. "Serbia Calls EU Pressure To Join Russia Sanctions 'Unacceptable.'" *Radio Free Europe*. October 20, 2016. <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-calls-eu-pressure-join-sanctions-against-russia-absolutely-unacceptable/28064425.html>

dialogue, Serbia insists that if the United States is present to mediate on behalf of Kosovo that Serbia wishes Russia to participate as a mediator as well.¹⁶⁸

Vucic certainly sees this as prudent strategy for his country and for himself. But Serbia has straddled this strange divide for most of its history. In the 14th century, Serbia's Eastern Orthodoxy kept it closer to Greece and Russia, but its rulers still thought of themselves as Christian Europeans, particularly when juxtaposed to the looming threat from the Muslim Ottomans. Following the liberation from Ottoman rule in the late 19th century, Serbs again found themselves more culturally akin to the Slavic Orthodox tradition, but still yearned for recognition from the Western European elites. Following World War II, Tito balanced the country's natural inclination towards the East (communist Europe) with the West, who provided Yugoslavia with resources.

Serbia, under Vucic, has not changed its course when it comes to its international relationships. As one researcher characterized it, their pocketbooks lie in the West, their hearts lie in the East.¹⁶⁹ Vucic and his policies are clearly influenced by this historical memory and by the Slavic-Orthodox relationship to Russia. Vucic also uses soft nationalism to broaden his appeal domestically.

Vucic and his allies have done a remarkable job of presenting themselves as a stable force in a troubled region. For the EU, the escalation of another conflict in the Balkans would be a disaster and they would likely be shown as ineffective in curtailing violence. Vucic represents their best hope for stability in the Balkans.

¹⁶⁸ Rudic, Filip. "Serbia Seeks Russian Role in Kosovo Talks." *Balkan Insight*. December 20, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-russia-willing-to-mediate-serbia-kosovo-talks-12-20-2017>

¹⁶⁹ Simic, Julija. "Survey: Serbia's heart is in the East, pocket in the West." *Euractiv*. September 6, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/survey-serbias-heart-is-in-the-east-pocket-in-the-west/>

Vucic appears poised to continue courting both the East and the West to achieve his goals. In just one month, he negotiated the opening of two additional chapters in the accession process¹⁷⁰ while also signing a number of agreements (including an energy deal and the purchase of military equipment) from Russia.¹⁷¹

He and his ministers insist that while they are committed towards EU membership, and a general pivot towards the West, they will not abandon their historical ties to old allies in the East and will not join the EU in sanctioning or punishing Russia. Although Vucic speaks very carefully on pivotal cultural issues such as Kosovo, there is no doubt by his desire to hold onto Serbia's Slavic-Orthodox connection that his thinking is informed by events of the past.

Vucic clearly balances talking points and rhetoric depending on his target audience. Marshal Tito mastered this technique in dealing with the Cold War superpowers. Tito could play the communist ideologue and WWII-era hero with the Soviets while simultaneously pumping up his anti-Stalin credentials to the Western democracies.

Does Vucic think of himself as the new Tito in this way? He certainly heaps praise on the father of socialist Yugoslav. In a 2017 interview for Politico he remarked that “[Tito] was a very smart guy. A communist dictator, but very smart. He knew how to connect the people... That's what we need. We need to connect people.”¹⁷² In describing his vision of a Balkan free-trade zone (a favorite trope of his when meeting Westerners) to the reporter interviewing him, he

¹⁷⁰ Rudic, Filip. “Serbia to Open New Chapters in EU Negotiations.” *Balkan Insight*. December 11, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-opens-two-more-chapters-in-eu-negotiations-12-11-2017>

¹⁷¹ Rudic, Filip. “Serbia's Vucic Seals Kremlin Summit With Gas Deal.” *Balkan Insight*. December 19, 2017. <https://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-meets-putin-serbia-to-re-export-russian-gas-12-19-2017>

¹⁷² Karnitschnig, Matthew. “Aleksandar Vučić: ‘Tito was a very smart guy.’” *Politico Europe*. April 6, 2017. <https://www.politico.eu/article/q-and-a-with-aleksandar-vucic-serbia-prime-minister-president-election/>

describes it as “the old Yugoslavia, plus Albania. It’s a political idea but without jeopardizing their sovereignty.”¹⁷³

The clear difference between Tito and Vucic is the concept of historical memory. There is no indication that Tito had any need or use for it, and indeed actively attempted to suppress notions of historical memory and nationalism because it threatened socialist solidarity, which in turn threatened his grip on the country. The emotional connection made between Serbia’s past and its importance to the future was never exploited by Tito – indeed, Brotherhood and Unity was meant to bury these sentiments. While Vucic may revere Tito for his power, cult of personality, and lasting adulation in the former Yugoslav republics, he likely does not see himself as a successor to his legacy. Instead, he is forging ahead with his own.

The Paradox

Serbia’s historical memory always drew it towards the East, and it is culturally more akin to Moscow than to Brussels. Why, then, is Serbia pivoting towards the West with EU integration? I believe that there are three main reasons for this action:

1. A desire to move on from the past
2. Possibility for greater regional power
3. A belief that good relations with the West and Russia are not mutually exclusive positions

Pro-Western politicians and intellectuals always existed in Serbia, but never held considerable influence until the days of Zoran Djindjic and Boris Tadic. Now, the supposed political popularity of Europeanization has turned former nationalists into European reformers.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Moving on from the Past

“At the Austrian frontier, we were treated like dogs. Our Serbian origins are anathema. Nobody wants us. Everyone is worried about the Albanian refugees, but what about Serbian refugees like us? We are looked on as the pariahs of Europe.”¹⁷⁴ This quote from refugee Tonca Stanic in 1999 revealed the outlook that many had of Serbs following the disastrous collapse of Yugoslavia. Indeed, following the Yugoslav Wars the Western world saw Serbia as an aggressor towards its neighbors and chiefly responsible for the charges of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and wanton destruction that characterized the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s.

To an extent, Western observers were correct on these points. Bosnian Serbs (supported by Milosevic and Serbia proper) certainly committed the majority of the atrocities in that conflict, and by sheer numbers more Kosovar Albanians were killed the Kosovo War than Serbians were. The images of thousands of refugees, rape victims, and mutilated bodies flooded the TV screens of Western audiences, further changing opinions for the worst against the Serbs.

But Serbian critics rightfully point out that all sides committed atrocities in the Balkan Wars and that placing the blame entirely on the doorstep of the Serbian people has done little for reconciliation between neighbors. This is particularly relevant towards the Serbian-Croatian relationship which faces challenges over wartime grievances. Vucic frequently laments on the “double standard” that Serbia faces from some in the West and from Croatia.¹⁷⁵

Serbia entered the 21st century friendless and devastated from the NATO bombing campaign. The ouster of Milosevic did little to change the minds of Westerners who still saw Serbians as a country of warmongers. The legacy of Milosevic’s defiant stance towards Europe

¹⁷⁴ Bran, Mirel. “Nobody wants us, the pariahs of Europe” *The Guardian*. May 2, 1999. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/may/03/balkans2>

¹⁷⁵ “‘Only I have the guts to call a spade a spade,’ says Vucic.” *B92*. January 1, 2018. https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2018&mm=01&dd=01&nav_id=103164

is hard to overcome even today, and the Western response to Serbia in the Yugoslav Wars makes forgiveness difficult. A rudimentary internet search unveils deeply rooted distrust in Western states because of the NATO bombing.¹⁷⁶

Serbian politicians soon realized that being friendless and perceived as a bad neighbor harmed their country. Part of the bulldozer revolution that ousted Milosevic was because of the horrific conditions that the country had fallen into as a result of his isolating policies. The subsequent elections following his removal espoused some form of reconciliation with Serbia's neighbors - meaningful but small steps towards shedding their pariah status.

Serbia's bid to join the EU clearly includes a desire to shed its recent legacy as a problematic neighbor and outsider. Filip Ejdus describes Serbia as being on Europe's periphery - joining the EU would bring them into the European community and would no longer relegate them as "outsiders."

Serbia clearly wants to stop being the "pariah" of Europe and become a reliable partner. Although there will still be the occasional dispute between Serbia and its neighbor, a shared membership in the EU should foster more room for cooperation, which is desperately needed in the Balkan peninsula.

Re-Assertion as Premier Balkan Power

Serbia is the most powerful Balkan state not already in the EU. It has over 7 million people compared to Croatia's 4 million and Slovenia's 2 million.¹⁷⁷ In gross GDP, Serbia is behind both Croatia and Slovenia, but has experienced rapid economic growth since the fall of Milosevic. Between then and now, the Serbian economy (without the benefit of EU membership)

¹⁷⁶ "How do Serbians generally feel about America?" *Quora*. Accessed January 2, 2018. <https://www.quora.com/How-do-Serbians-generally-feel-about-America>

¹⁷⁷ "Population, total." World Bank. Accessed January 2, 2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=RS-HR-SI>

grew over 83%.¹⁷⁸ Serbia has also made a number of weapons deals with Russia and China is investing heavily in the country as part of its new Silk Road initiatives. For the European Union, the accession of Serbia would represent the addition of a strong country in an otherwise weak region into the fold.

Serbian politicians are certainly aware that their relationship with the EU is no longer entirely one-sided given the rise of Euroscepticism among member states and the continued defiance of members against Brussels (Hungary and Poland, particularly). Serbia offers the EU a political “win” by demonstrating that countries still yearn for membership in the bloc. If Serbia’s economy begins rapidly improving, the EU will be able to claim some responsibility and further support the narrative that membership in the EU is beneficial to other countries in Europe. Observers will hail a successful and prosperous European Serbia as evidence of the EU’s ability to make positive change on the continent, even with states that do not traditionally belong to the Western European tradition. Like the EU did with the inclusion of the post-Soviet Visegrad group, bringing more Balkan states into the EU will increase the power of the bloc at the expense of Russia, as the thinking goes.

But this comes at a cost. As proposed in the previous chapter, integration for the EU represents a need for stability in the region. Slovenia and Croatia have largely avoided real entanglements with Serbia because of the latter’s exclusion from the EU. Serbia will work within the framework of the EU to challenge the newfound prestige enjoyed by Croatia and Slovenia in the Balkans and reassert itself as the premier political player in the region.

This is doubtlessly important for Serbia’s leaders. Vucic has done more than some of his predecessors to reassert Serbia’s role in the region by courting foreign leaders and establishing

¹⁷⁸ “GDP (current US\$) 2000-2016” World Bank. Accessed January 2, 2018.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2016&locations=RS-HR-SI&start=2000>

relationships with partners willing to engage with Serbia. Vucic is also keenly aware that he brings something else many other EU members lack - a unique relationship to Russia and to Vladimir Putin.

Vucic is an intelligent and adept politician. Despite frequent insistence by him and his officials that Serbia is fully engaged with the EU alone, the cultural and political relationship shared by Russia and Serbia is difficult to ignore as a factor. As the EU and Russia creep closer and closer to collision, Serbia will be able to present itself as a peacemaker and arbiter of negotiations between the two adversaries. This will further enhance Vucic's domestic *and* international power. Depending on how Russia continues to test the limits of the EU, Serbia could easily become one of the most important players in future negotiations.

This, succinctly, is a great opportunity for Vucic personally. It is why his blend of soft nationalism with a European projection works perfectly for Serbian politics. European reformers in the past went too far by ignoring the real strength of historical memory (informing nationalism) in the context of pursuing integration with the EU. Vucic and the SNS are able to dog whistle to nationalists while pursuing the EU project. Vucic's politics present an opportunity for Serbia to enter the EU as an immediate regional power, and not as a quiet and obedient backbench country.

The EU's continued confrontation with Russia in the East, particularly with the Baltic states and Poland, is a development that is not going to end as long as Vladimir Putin remains President of the Russian Federation. Negotiations, conferences, sanctions, and the like will be a reality on the Eastern border of the EU. Serbia, and Vucic, understand that should they enter the EU, Brussels may look to them as a mediator. This would immediately heighten the strength of

Serbia within the body as well as among the former Yugoslav member states, and would empower the country to reassert its role as the most prominent player in the Balkans.

Sitting in Two Chairs

In November 2017, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Hoyt Brian Yee angered Serbian politicians by stating that Serbia “cannot sit on two chairs at the same time,” obviously referencing the country’s position towards the West and Russia.¹⁷⁹ Yee’s comments sparked outrage among the SNS leadership, most notably from Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic who remarked that Serbia would always pursue what was best for its interests.

Although Vucic and PM Brnabic insist that Serbia is committed to the EU path alone, there is no doubt that they intend to work with Russia during their accession negotiations and after their eventual membership into the EU. One reason is entirely economic, as Russia supplies Serbia almost all of its oil and gas and almost 7.9% of all imports.¹⁸⁰ The other reason is cultural, as Russia and Serbia are historical allies and cultural cousins.

Serbia’s connections to Russia are an obvious concern to many in the West. Were they not, US diplomats would not comment so openly and publicly about them. But those in the EU do not see the Russian relationship as problematic as the ongoing conflict regarding the status of Kosovo. EU negotiations are not hinged on erasing Serbia’s relationship with Russia, but rather on establishing a working relationship with Pristina.

The EU is positioned to make concessions with Serbia for membership. The EU will exchange stability in the Balkans for normalizing Vucic’s hold on power, despite his “insistence”

¹⁷⁹ Vasovic, Aleksandar. “Serbian foreign minister rejects U.S. call to choose between Russia and the West.” *Reuters*. November 2, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-minister/serbian-foreign-minister-rejects-u-s-call-to-choose-between-russia-and-the-west-idUSKBN1D22OK>

¹⁸⁰ “Serbia.” Observatory of Economic Complexity. Accessed January 5, 2018. <https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/srb/>

that he will step down after the end of the accession negotiations.¹⁸¹ And, as explained earlier in the section, having a member-state with such a strong relationship may not be a bad thing for the EU, whose leaders are generally antagonistic or outright hostile to Putin and Moscow.

With this information in mind, Serbia does not appear to be making any plans to change its current strategy. Serbia does not see their relationship with Russia as mutually exclusive of membership in the EU. Without the EU giving them an incentive or warning to do so, Serbia will never deliberately worsen relations with its historical ally. Indeed, as the continued negotiations with Kosovo heat up, Serbia will likely rely on Russia even more as an outside mediator while Kosovo turns to powers such as the United States.

Serbia will always have a relationship with Russia. This is a sober reality. The two countries are linked historically, religiously, and culturally. Russia played a dominant behind-the-scenes role in the Yugoslav conflicts, mainly to the benefit of Serbian actors.¹⁸² In 2015, Russia vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution that labeled the Srebrenica massacre as a genocide, with the Russian official claiming that the resolution was “confrontational and politically motivated” against Serbia.¹⁸³ Serbia has repeatedly refused to agree to economic sanctions against Russia for their role in the Ukraine crisis.¹⁸⁴ Serbia’s continued refusal to even consider NATO membership is another testament to the strength of the Serbian-Russian

¹⁸¹ Filipovic, Gordana and Misha Savic. “Serb President Sees Second Term Unlikely After EU Work Ends.” *Bloomberg*. December 26, 2017. <https://www.bloombergquint.com/politics/2017/12/22/serb-president-sees-second-term-unlikely-after-finishing-eu-work>

¹⁸² Weitz, Richard. “Russia, NATO, and the Yugoslav Wars.” *Second Line of Defense*. Accessed January 5, 2018. <http://www.sldinfo.com/russia-nato-and-the-yugoslav-wars/>

¹⁸³ Sengupta, Somini. “Russia Vetoes U.N. Resolution Calling Srebrenica Massacre ‘Crime of Genocide.’” *New York Times*. July 8, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/09/world/europe/russia-vetoes-un-resolution-calling-srebrenica-massacre-crime-of-genocide.html>

¹⁸⁴ Stojanovic, Dusan. “Serbia says it won't impose sanctions on Russia.” *San Diego Union-Tribune*. August 22, 2014. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-serbia-says-it-wont-impose-sanctions-on-russia-2014aug22-story.html>

friendship, although that decision has more to do with NATO's 1999 bombing of Serbia than anything else.

Under any other political party, Serbia may not have a chance to integrate into the European project. The Democrats made Europeanization the central pillar of their campaigns in the 2000s, yet could not fend off attacks from nationalists even within their own coalition. Any government led by the Radicals would eschew accession negotiations altogether and doom any chance of entering the EU. So the SNS under Vucic is truly in a unique position to continue "sitting in two chairs" by appealing to nationalism at home while still working with Brussels to join the EU. And by guiding Serbia into the EU, Vucic establishes his party and himself as the first positive political development Serbia has had in a number of years. By continuing to "sit on two chairs" regarding policy as long as they can, Vucic and the SNS will remain successful. Whether "sitting on two chairs" will equate to successful accession into the EU is a different story, but the bloc so far has not made Serbia's relationship with Russia a true deal-breaker.

Is Historical Memory Irrelevant?

When Serbia entered formal accession negotiations to join the EU many observers saw it as a defining moment for the country. Finally, a country plagued with nationalist fervor and aggression towards its neighbors was moving on from its past. Finally, Serbia could forgive the West for perceived wrongs and join the EU - a principle Western institution. Finally, Serbia could normalize relations with Kosovo.

Recent estimates predict that Serbia will join the EU in 2025, assuming that the country has successfully "normalized" relations with Kosovo pursuant to Chapter 35. How will accession to the EU affect historical memory? Will its power be rendered irrelevant as Serbia opens a new chapter of its history?

I do not believe that this will be the case, for a number of reasons. First, historical memory is a foundational belief held by the current governing power: the SNS and Vucic. Second, historical memory encompasses more than just imaginations of the Serbian Empire under Dusan. It also includes those memories that many in Serbia still hold about their country's role in the breakup of Yugoslavia and the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Third, the continued strength of Croatian nationalism, informed by its own country's collective historical memory, is a sign that membership in the EU does not easily erase or erode held beliefs about historical memory. Finally, historical memory is too useful of a tool to Vucic and the SNS to not be considered important in any study of Serbian politics. To put it bluntly: historical memory will *always* matter to a country like Serbia. To suggest otherwise would be to ignore the entire history of that country since its days of suzerainty under the Ottoman Empire.

Historical Memory: The Ideological Foundation of the SNS

The Serbian Progressive Party is nothing more than a watered-down version of the Radicals who began to espouse Europeanization when it was politically expedient. They are ideologically ambiguous and generally fall into the classification of a right-wing populist party. The party was founded by Nikolic and Vucic, former high-ranking officers within the Radical Party, who understood that combining soft nationalism with promises of EU membership was a winning political strategy.

Collective historical memory is the blueprint of Serbian nationalism. At its core, Serbian nationalism is as an irredentist belief in restoring "Greater Serbia" in the image of the medieval Serbian Empire before its fall to the Ottoman Empire. This strand of nationalism influenced the Radicals, who formed at the onset of the Yugoslav crisis in 1991. The party's founding was a

direct result of the ethnocentrism that grasped the country at that time and supported the policies of Milosevic. Reporter Dusan Stojanovic wrote:

Supporters of the Radicals were active in Serbian paramilitary units loyal to Milosevic in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, and are widely blamed for launching campaigns that wiped out non-Serbs near Serbia's border regions... Their platform called for keeping alive Milosevic's dream of uniting all Serbs in the Balkans into a single country.¹⁸⁵

Are the Progressives all that different from the Radicals? Nikolic and Vucic did their best to take the former Radical deputies and establishment a modern party away from the fringes of the far-right. But the SNS frequently engages in dog-whistle politics to win the support of hardcore nationalists in Serbia who remember the current President as an ardent defender of war criminals such as Ratko Mladic.

The SNS does not advocate for the return of Greater Serbia in its platform. For his part, Vucic claims that he is "ashamed" of his past. But he is using skills from his past to shape Serbia's future. As Minister of Information under Milosevic, Vucic stifled the press and targeted journalists who dared speaking out against the regime. Understanding the importance of media to regime survival, Vucic clandestinely brought the mainstream media under his control in the years leading up to his presidential run. Reporters Without Borders wrote that "political influence and concentration distorts the Serbian media market."¹⁸⁶ In the 2017 presidential election, Reporters Without Borders found that Vucic had 10 times more media airtime than all other candidates combined.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Stojanovic, Dusan. "Serbian Radical Party Riding High." *Washington Post*. January 24, 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/24/AR2007012401340.html>

¹⁸⁶ Gruska, Ulrike. "Who owns the Media in Serbia?" Reporters Without Borders. June 21, 2017. <https://rsf.org/en/news/who-owns-media-serbia>

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

Vucic supports Europeanization only as long as it benefits Serbia. Vucic is intelligent enough to recognize that a Serbia-dominated Yugoslavia is not coming back. As Slovenia and Croatia have raised their GDPs and profiles in the EU, Serbia has lagged behind as a neighbor left behind by modernization.

Vucic's dedication to refusing recognition of an independent Kosovo has remained steadfast. The assassination of moderate Kosovar Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic led to Serbs walking out of a planned EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Immediately, Vucic questioned the impartiality of Kosovo's police investigation and demanded that Serbia be included in the investigation of the shooting. Tensions quickly flared between Serbia and Kosovo over the shooting. Kosovo PM Ramush Haradinaj suggested that the killing was the result of "illegal involvement in the north of other institutions beyond Kosovo" in a clear reference to Serbia.¹⁸⁸

If historical memory was irrelevant, Serb politicians in northern Kosovo would not be gunned down outside their party headquarters. At the time of this writing, authorities cannot even determine if the perpetrators were Kosovars or Serbs. Both had their issues with him: Kosovars hated him because of his responsibility for civilian deaths during the war. Hardline Serbs hated him because in recent years he has accepted the legitimate control that Kosovo has over its claimed territory, and repositioned to fight for Kosovar-Serb minority rights rather than for the elimination of the Kosovo Republic.¹⁸⁹

If historical memory was irrelevant, Vucic and the SNS could easily accept the material fact that Kosovo is an autonomous state recognized by the majority of the world's states as

¹⁸⁸ "The Latest: NATO urges restraint after Serb leader's death." *Daily Mail*. January 16, 2018. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-5274003/The-Latest-Leading-Serb-politician-Kosovo-shot-death.html>

¹⁸⁹ Janjevic, Darko. "Who was Oliver Ivanovic, the murdered Serb politician in Kosovo?" *DW*. January 16, 2018. <http://www.dw.com/en/who-was-oliver-ivanovic-the-murdered-serb-politician-in-kosovo/a-42168200>

independent. Serb leaders would easily sail through negotiations with Pristina, close Chapter 35, and be well on their way towards EU membership.

We know that historical memory is still relevant because it continues to inform the basic framework of Serbia's relationship towards Kosovo. The tension between Belgrade and Pristina derives from a fundamental belief that *Kosovo je Srbija* - Kosovo is Serbia. This belief traces its origins through historical memory to the romanticized time of the Serbian Empire with its capital in modern Kosovo. The fall of the Serbian Empire likewise ended with the defeat and death of Prince Lazar in the oft-celebrated 1389 Battle of Kosovo. Serbian nationalist and important cultural institutions such as the Serbian Orthodox Church consider Kosovo the cradle of Serbian civilization.

Serbian nationalism influences Vucic and his party as a result of their historic connection to the Radical party. While Vucic and the SNS are not aggressively nationalist, they are certainly right-wing. Some commentators have described the SNS as populist, although that characterization is not entirely accurate. While the SNS embodies certain populist elements (such as dominance by a personality-politician) it lacks the "elite vs. people" aspect that traditionally makes up populist politics. According to Benjamin De Cleen:

I think it helps to stress populism's vertical dimension: populist politics construct 'the people' by opposing it to 'the elite' and claim to represent 'the people'. Nationalism is not built around this vertical dimension, but around a horizontal dimension: nationalist politics construct and claim to represent the nation, which is discursively constructed by distinguishing between those who are 'in' and those who are 'out' of the nation.¹⁹⁰

In this sense, it then is helpful to understand that the rhetoric of Vucic falls on De Cleen's horizontal dimension. He does not rally against "the elites" of his own country. In many

¹⁹⁰ Galanopoulos, Antonis and Benjamin De Cleen. "Populism, Nationalism, and Transnationalism." *European Green Journal*. November 17, 2016. <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/populism-nationalism-and-transnationalism/>

instances, the elites of Serbia support him and his party. Instead, he often paints Serbia and its people as a group battling against “elites” from Brussels, Washington, or a host of other outside groups. Vucic may claim he has moved on from his past, but nationalism defined his political beginnings and it continues to influence his actions today.

Reactions to the Yugoslav Collapse

Most Western scholars, wartime correspondents, and observers cast Serbia as the principle villain of the Yugoslav collapse. There is merit to that argument. Milosevic’s attempt to coalesce the state organs of federal Yugoslavia into a central Serb-controlled state led to the secession of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. Milosevic stripped Kosovo of its Autonomous Region status, thereby bringing it directly under the control of Serbia. This led to directly to the Kosovo War and the soured relations that followed it. Serbs were primarily responsible for the majority of casualties in both the Bosnian and Kosovo wars.

The majority of individuals indicted by ICTY for war crimes were Serbs. ICTY convicted 89 people for various war-related crimes before it closed operations in December 2017. Of those 89 individuals, 62 were Serbs. Sixteen Croats received punishment, and only one Albanian was convicted.¹⁹¹

The mission of ICTY was to bring closure to victims as well as to the broader people of the Balkan peninsula who found themselves engulfed in the wars during the collapse. Instead, ICTY did the complete opposite. It inflamed the suspicions of many Serbs that the international court conspired against them from the moment it was created.

Every convicted Serb (or acquitted Croat/Bosniak/Albanian) reinforced the belief held by many Serbs that Western institutions were out to get them. In the eyes of many Serbs, the

¹⁹¹ “Key Figures of the Cases.” International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. November 2017. <http://www.icty.org/sid/24>

legitimacy of ICTY was lost in the acquittals of Croats (e.g. Ante Gotovina) and Albanians (e.g. Ramush Haradinaj) who held as responsible for their own ethnic cleansing campaigns.

The effectiveness of the ICTY is not at issue here, and I do not dispute the findings of the court in individual cases. What is important is the *perception* that ICTY rulings created in Serbia. Politicians bemoaned that ICTY punished the crimes of Serbs while ignoring those of other ethnicities. Serbians on trial routinely proclaimed that the court was foreign and illegal. Many defiantly refused to participate in any meaningful way to the proceedings. Karadzic, in his opening statement, stated:

It would appear that the Prosecution has struck an agreement with our enemies in war, or as we like to say, without joking, that the Prosecutor is trying to turn this Tribunal into a disciplinary commission of NATO. And to say that this is not an exaggeration, you will hear from the high-ranking officers of this Tribunal itself to the effect that everybody who - that NATO planned to liquidate Karadzic, and everybody who went against the grain of NATO had to be taken to trial.¹⁹²

This is a common held belief among many in Serbian political circles. Many who are not outwardly dismissive of ICTY nonetheless express disappointment when prominent Serbs are convicted, such as Nikolic and Vucic did following the Gotovina acquittal in 2012.¹⁹³

Politicians are not the only Serbs who decry the rulings of ICTY. Thousands of people protested the extradition of Milosevic¹⁹⁴ and Mladic¹⁹⁵ to the Hague-based international court. Many coffee shops and restaurants in Serbia and Republika Srpska display portraits and graffiti

¹⁹² *Prosecutor v. Karadzic*. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. March 1, 2010. <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/karadzic/trans/en/100301IT.htm>

¹⁹³ Dhumieres, Marie. "In the search for justice in the former Yugoslavia, are we ignoring the Serbian victims of war crimes?" *The Independent*. December 17, 2012. <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/in-the-search-for-justice-in-the-former-yugoslavia-are-we-ignoring-the-serbian-victims-of-war-crimes-8422169.html>

¹⁹⁴ "Milosevic Supporters Protest Extradition to War Crimes Court." *Los Angeles Times*. July 3, 2001. <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jul/03/news/mn-18110>

¹⁹⁵ Vasovic, Aleksandar. "Belgrade protest against Mladic arrest turns violent." *Reuters*. May 29, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-mladic-protests/belgrade-protest-against-mladic-arrest-turns-violent-idUSTRE74S1GR20110529>

of Mladic, Milosevic, Karadzic, and even Draza Mihailovic, the World War II Chetnik leader.¹⁹⁶

The dramatic electoral rise of the SNS, an offshoot of the ultranationalist SRS, indicates that the Serbian people, too, are unwilling to claim a full *mea culpa* for the Yugoslav collapse.

In post-war Germany, nationalism is framed in terms of pre- and post-World War II. The reasons for this are obvious. Since the conclusion of World War II Germany made painstaking efforts to overcome the country's collective guilt. Although recent developments (such as the rise of the Alternative for Germany) have called reinvigorated that debate, generally speaking almost no major political movements in Germany relied on nationalism following the war.

In Serbia, nationalism cannot be framed in pre- and post-Yugoslavia. That is because there is no collective guilt among the Serbian population regarding the actions of Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Genocide denial is still widespread throughout Serbia and Republika Srpska. Bosnian Institute scholars Sonja Biserko and Edina Becirevic wrote:

You are allowed to condemn the genocide, but not allowed to link this verdict with Republika Srpska. It is as if, while condemning the Holocaust, you treated any condemnation of Nazism as politicization... Republika Srpska is founded on genocide, and there is no dialogue that can alleviate this fact.¹⁹⁷

These observations indicate that historical memory is still a powerful force among the Serbian people and among the highest levels of Serbian governance.

Historical Memory in Balkan EU Members

Historical memory is not a phenomenon native only to Serbia. The creation of unifying experiences meant to unite a society is, and always will be, a part of mankind as long as we live

¹⁹⁶ Vulliamy, Ed. "Ratko Mladic's arrest is a hollow victory in a country that refuses to apologise." *The Guardian*. May 28, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/may/28/ratko-mladic-bosnia-ed-vulliamy>

¹⁹⁷ Biserko, Sonja and Edina Becirevic. "Denial of genocide - on the possibility of normalising relations in the region." Bosnian Institute. October 23, 2009. http://www.bosnia.org.uk/news/news_body.cfm?newsid=2638

in organized societies. Historical memory can bind a society together with a set of common values and an understanding of the group's common attributes and history.

The dangerous side of historical memory is that it is largely myth masquerading as facts. National unity and shared civic understanding are good things. But ethnic nationalism is downstream from historical memory. All forms of ethnic nationalism have some degree of historical memory associated with them. German nationalism developed in the 19th century through the intelligentsia's Prussian conservatism that sought to unite the separate German states. The nationalism that characterized the new German Empire was based in large part on the imagined crusading spirit of the Christian Teutonic knights from the medieval period.¹⁹⁸ German irredentism heavily influenced Nazi orthodoxy and the belief in the need for *Lebensraum*.

Likewise, nationalism in the Balkan peninsula derived from the top-down: a product of the intelligentsia and other elites. This section will deal specifically with Croatian nationalism because of its obvious similarities (and violent outcomes) to Serbian nationalism.

Alex J. Bellamy writes that:

Conceptions of Croatian national identity in the 1990s were framed by the historical statehood narrative with its claim that Croatia has enjoyed continuous statehood since the time of the medieval kingdom. According to Croatian politicians and intellectuals, 'people' become 'Croats' through a perceived shared history of statehood. Unlike the Serbian nation, which found continuity in Orthodox Christianity, Croatian national identity is founded upon statehood and was perpetuated by the continuity of that statehood.¹⁹⁹

Bellamy makes an important consideration in identifying the necessary relationship between the Serbian nation and the Orthodox identity. But Croatia, too, characterized itself in religious terms throughout the Yugoslav breakup and particularly in the Bosnian conflict. The

¹⁹⁸ Gerwath, Robert. *The Bismark Myth: Weimar Germany and the Legacy of the Iron Chancellor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 20.

¹⁹⁹ Bellamy, Alex J. *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream?* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003. 57.

Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) of nationalist Franjo Tudjman frequently categorized their political project of secession as the part of the “Holy Croat Cause.”²⁰⁰ Tudjman frequently utilized Catholic symbolism to distinguish the separateness of the Croats from the Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Bosniaks.

Croat nationalism was just as destructive as Serbian nationalism in the 1990s. Some historians speculate that Tudjman and Milosevic engaged in secret negotiations to partition Bosnia along ethnic lines at the infamous Karadjordjevo meeting in March 1991. At Milosevic’s ICTY trial, former Tudjman ally Stjepan Mesic testified that carving up Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia was the “main topic of the discussions.”²⁰¹

Fast-forward to present day. Croatia enjoys membership in the European Union, membership in NATO, and an economy larger than Serbia’s. Yet nationalism still persists in Croatia. Violence from Croatian nationalism was largely ignored following the conclusion of the Croatian War for Independence and the Bosnian War because Western Europe was quick to cast Serbia and Serbs as the aggressors in both conflicts: any crimes by Croats were either outliers or associated with liberating the homeland.

Croatia signed its stabilization agreement in 2001, only 6 years after the end of its war with rump Yugoslavia. It became an official candidate country in 2004. Croatia sailed through their chapter process and in 2011 the European Parliament approved Croatia’s membership in the EU, contingent upon the ratification of their accession treaty by the other member states. In 2013, Croatia officially entered the EU as the 28th member state.

²⁰⁰ Ivekovic, Ivan. “Nationalism and the Political Use and Abuse of Religion: The Politicization of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam in Yugoslav Successor States.” *Social Compass* 49, no. 4 (2002)

²⁰¹ “Karadjordjevo Meeting.” *World Heritage Encyclopedia*. Accessed January 18, 2018. http://www.worldheritage.org/articles/eng/Karadjordjevo_meeting

The founding of the EU represented a chance for Europe to set aside competing nationalisms that led to two world wars. Membership in the EU has not diminished nationalism in Croatia. In fact, nationalist sentiment continues to fester throughout Croatia. Joining the EU did absolutely nothing to erase Croatia's own historical memory, which is still widespread throughout the country. Paul Mason, writing for *The Guardian*, said that:

Croatia's conservative nationalist politicians had made enough liberal noises to convince Brussels they could meet the basic criteria for EU membership. Since then, they've been sucked into the surge of nationalist rivalry that's gripped the Balkans. All cultural nods and winks towards the fascist regime in the second world war must go. Ultimately, the EU must be prepared to trigger Article 7 processes.²⁰²

The failure of EU membership to drive out Croatian nationalism, informed by its own historical memory, indicates that Serbia's historical memory is not irrelevant in the face of likely EU accession. In fact, Serbia is likely to follow the trajectory of Croatia. Its historical memory may grow and more overt nationalism may return following a successful EU accession. At least in the Balkans, EU accession does not appear to affect the hold of historical memory.

Historical Memory as a Tool

This thesis argues that Vucic's political history reveals a tendency of ideological ambiguity. This enabled him to masterfully shed his ultranationalist persona when it became politically inconvenient for him. It has allowed him to maintain rhetorical flexibility by responding to pressures domestically and internationally. In foreign relations, his refusal to commit firmly to either the East or West begets him a strong hand to play up his political importance in the region. This leads to criticism, particularly from some in the West who accuse

²⁰² Mason, Paul. "Croatia's election is a warning about the return of nationalism to the Balkans." *The Guardian*. September 12, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/12/croatias-election-warning-nationalism-balkans-eu-government-second-world-war-fascism>

him of creating problems in order to “deepen the West’s reliance on him as the region’s problem solver.”

Vucic understands the importance of historical memory to the Serbian people. It is a winning political object that can mobilize support for him and his party because it appeals to base instincts of the human condition - the feeling of community. This is described at length by Benedict Anderson in his concept of the imagined community.

One need not be a rabid nationalist to feel longing for Serbian solidarity, either personally or politically. As Anderson writes, what is important is the belief that such a community exists. The belief in the fraternity of greater Serbs - whether they live in Serbia proper, Bosnia, or Kosovo - glues together deeply held beliefs about national origin and purpose. The fraternity that Serbian citizens enjoy with their northern Kosovo neighbors creates a compelling problem when the northern Kosovo Serbs believe that they face discrimination from the Albanian majority.

The presence of historical memory throws gasoline on this fire. Those in Serbia may believe that their fellow northern Kosovo Serbs are discriminated against. When they begin to call upon a collective “memory” of Ottoman (i.e. Muslim) subjugation, defeat, and cultural robbery that occurred following their defeat on the fields of Kosovo in 1389, even the most average Serbian could become violent towards Muslim neighbors if fed enough propaganda steeped in and inspired by historical memory. It certainly happened in both the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts.

Only a few Serbians are truly nationalists in the cut of Vojislav Seselj who genuinely believe in the benefit of recreating a Serbian Empire and dominating the other ethnicities of the Balkan peninsula. Although it must be stressed that even that belief finds its grounding in the historical memory of Ottoman suzerainty, in which “centrality” was the most important element

for a people. Most nationalists or apologists utilize historical memory and nationalism as merely a tool in their quest for power.

Vucic falls into this latter group. He is not an ardent, heartfelt nationalist, despite his genuine sympathies for the cause. While he is certainly no cosmopolitan, Vucic understands that historical memory can be used as a vehicle for political mobilization. In his case, displaying soft nationalism at home while invoking an air of Europeanization in his foreign relationships has constituted a winning strategy.

Nationalism and historical memory are nothing more than convenient tools for Vucic. They allow him to expand his power. There could be some truth to the belief that Vucic whips up small situations of nationalistic sentiment in order to then personally calm them and cement his status as the reforming problem-solver in the region. Indeed, in this thesis I have argued that the EU certainly sees him as stepping into that role and is interested in Serbian accession because of the promise of stability.

Like Vucic, former strongman Milosevic stepped into this role following his representation of the Bosnian Serbs at the Dayton Accords which ended the Bosnian War. He fell out of this role when he overplayed his hand in Kosovo. Only time can tell whether Vucic can maintain the appearance of a “Balkan problem-solver” without fumbling it away as his former boss did.

Conclusion

Serbia is on the doorstep of a major change. Despite its cultural connection to Orthodox East with Russia, its leaders are driving it into the European Union through the current accession negotiations. Serbia has long-standing issues with many member-states in the EU, including its neighbors, Croatia and Slovenia, as well as Germany for their role for painting Serbs as monsters

during the Bosnian and Kosovo Wars. But despite all this, if Vucic is able to negotiate some sort of arrangement to normalize relations with Kosovo, Serbia will become the EU's next member and immediately have an impact on the bloc's relationship toward Russia.

Vucic leads a nation that is profoundly impacted by the shared memory of its history. Vucic himself is molded within this history. In some ways, he now embodies and mimics his country's path towards Europeanization. Vucic claims to be a "reformed" nationalist, but continually appeals to nationalist language domestically to consolidate support for his Progressive party. In foreign relations, Vucic continues to court both the West as well as Russia and China. In many ways, Vucic is the archetypal Serbian politician.

Vucic and Serbia, despite traditionally holding affinity and relationships with the East, are looking to the West for specific reasons. Membership in the EU will certainly benefit the country, and Vucic and Serbia continue to move further towards this goal by "sitting in two chairs." Although they will always have a shared cultural and historical connection to Russia and the East, Serbia is moving West because the perceived benefits of membership are simply too great to ignore. Despite this economic move to the West, historical memory is not dead. If it were, the EU accession process would be much easier than it has been. Membership in the EU will not, and cannot expect to, erase six hundred years of history.

Conclusion

*“The answer to Kosovo should be permanent, rule out conflict as an option, and benefit everyone in this region.”*²⁰³ - Aleksandar Vucic, 2017

Key Findings

This thesis asks a broad question: how is Serbian historical memory affecting Serbia’s negotiations to join the European Union? Informing the answer main research question are a series of six subsequently tailored inquiries. This conclusion consolidates the answers to these questions in a succinct series, and includes final notes on the ultimate findings from this project in its entirety.

Main Question

This thesis sought to answer the following research question: How is Serbian historical memory affecting Serbia’s negotiations to join the European Union? Clearly, Serbian historical memory has had a profound impact on the ongoing negotiations to join the European Union.

The crux of this conclusion comes answering the minor questions that inform this larger thesis research question. It is the nature of the Serbian paradox - “pockets in the West, hearts in the East” - that show how deep historical memory is rooted in the politics of Serbia.

Every society is influenced, to a degree, by its historical memory and its understanding of events in its collective past. As Ejdus clarifies: “They are the product of ‘formative eventing’, the process whereby the contours of formative events in a nation's history are produced and reproduced by its political elites in order to serve their present conditions.”²⁰⁴

²⁰³ “Vucic Says Serbia Must Resolve Dispute with Kosovo 'Together.’” *Radio Free Europe*. July 25, 2017. <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-vucic-kosovo-dispute-eu-negotiations/28636381.html>

²⁰⁴ Ejdus, Filip. *Memories of Empire and Entry into International Society: Views from the European Periphery*. New York: Routledge. 2017. 124.

Serbia has a number of moments in its history that are the subject of formative eventing. The first is the establishment of the Serbian Empire under Dusan the Mighty. This represents, for many Serbians, a great historical moment when Serbia was a powerful European state akin to the other great medieval kingdoms of the continent. The capital of that empire was in modern Kosovo, and the pivotal Battle of Kosovo in 1389 led to the destruction of Dusan's empire by the Ottoman Turks.

In 1989, Milosevic held rallies throughout Serbia where he invoked images of heroic Serbians fighting pitched battles against foreign invaders 600 years earlier. His nationalist rhetoric was supported by the historical image of Kosovo as a land lost in 1389. Such celebrations had occurred before throughout the centuries as Serbian nationalists evoked the image of "Kosovo lost" to inspire Serbian unity. Thomas Emmert documents that the Serbian Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences held a commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the battle in 1889, writing that,

The 500th anniversary commemorations were more successful than anyone could have imagined. In spite of all the attempts at repression, the anniversary of Kosovo became a popular symbol in the struggle for the liberation of all South Slavs from foreign rule. To many who still yearned for their freedom, the Kosovo ethic sounded a note of hope. About 15,000 people made their way to Vrdnik for the celebration that had been organized by the commission in Ruma.²⁰⁵

Ten years after Milosevic's infamous Gazimestan speech, Serbia was locked in a war with Kosovo, was bombed by NATO, and was largely seen in the West as a pariah on Europe's doorstep rather than the Christian defenders that Milosevic, the Orthodox Church, and other nationalist actors saw themselves as.

²⁰⁵ Emmert, Thomas. "The Kosovo Legacy." Excerpt from *Kosovo* by William Dorich. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://www.njegos.org/orthodoxy/kosovo.htm>

Serbia sank into recession and hyperinflation following the Yugoslav collapse. Unemployment was high, corruption was rampant, and the country sluggishly limped towards normalcy. The country watched as Slovenia and Croatia, former adversaries in the Yugoslav wars, sailed through their EU accession processes in 2004 and 2013, respectfully. For many within Serbia, the EU represents a path out irrelevance and pain.

The EU has made its case that membership will only come when an official, legally-binding agreement is made between Kosovo and Serbia. The EU framed EU membership for Serbia around the prospect of reaching an agreement with Kosovo, referred to throughout the process as “normalizing relations.”

All opposition to EU accession is framed as a matter of betraying historical memory. Nationalists and others who oppose Serbia’s entry into the EU all bemoan the loss of Kosovo and the betrayal of Serbia’s traditional ally, Russia, in exchange for Western Europeans who helped bomb their country in the 1990s.

Vucic has portrayed himself to the West as a reformed man capable of making difficult decisions in order to propel Serbia into the EU. That characterization is not entirely untrue. Vucic has staked his political career on getting Serbia into the EU, but I believe that he is a man still deeply influenced by historical memory. Vucic did not start as a liberal Europeanizer (such as Djindjic) but rather as an ardent nationalist who began embracing EU accession once it became politically very popular.

Vucic will lead Serbia into the EU. I also believe that he will oversee a renewed growth of historical memory and nationalism, not unlike what has occurred in Croatia under the post-accession HDZ government. The biggest political hurdle facing Vucic and the SNS is the looming negotiations with Kosovo and Brussels. For a large number of Serbians, these will be

politically unpopular. There may even be mass demonstrations similar to those in 2008 following Kosovo's declaration of independence, led by nationalist actors such as the SRS and the Church.

Thus, the largest effect that Serbian historical memory has had on the EU negotiations has been Kosovo and the political cloud that surrounds any action regarding the breakaway province. Serbia, one way or another, must overcome this aspect of historical memory if EU accession before 2025 is truly the national goal. This can be done, and I believe that Vucic and the SNS will accomplish this. But there are profound consequences for the domestic and regional politics after Serbia joins the EU, and historical memory is a factor in all of them.

The following six questions address the role that historical memory continues to play in Serbian society. They will also answer pertinent questions about the consequences of Serbia moving forward with its accession negotiations.

Secondary Research Questions

What role does Serbia's history play in influencing today's leaders?

The collective history of any groups certainly influences its present and future, and Serbia is no different. Every politician, judge, and activist living in Serbia probably has some kind of personal connection to the Yugoslav Wars and the Milosevic years. Whether they were direct participants or merely had family members impacted, there are few in Serbia (and the greater Balkans) whose experience is untouched by the brutality of those conflicts.

The more modern events of the Yugoslav collapse continue to profoundly impact Serbia and Serbian political leadership. Despite overtures at reconciliation, Serbia continues to have strained relationships with Croatia and Slovenia, largely a result of the Yugoslav conflicts. Serbia continues to maintain an awkward, quasi-paternal relationship towards the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. RS President Milorad Dodik continues to propose

holding a referendum²⁰⁶ on joining Serbia, which brews instability in a country that has miraculously held itself together since the signing of the Dayton Accords.

The territorial dispute over the status of Kosovo is a dispute rooted entirely in history, both old and recent. Many Serbs, because of historical memory, continue to hold the deeply ingrained belief that Kosovo is a fundamental part of Serbia, that it is the very center of the Serbian civilization.

Furthermore, the events of the Kosovo War still weigh heavily in the minds of Serbs and Albanians alike. The atrocities that took place during the crackdown remind Albanians who were alive that there is no option but independence from Serbia. Serbs who lived through the NATO bombings continue to see the West as an aggressor, which contributes to growing Euroscepticism throughout the country.

The issue of Kosovo (and the other Yugoslav wars) is perhaps the greatest indicator that history still matters for politicians on all sides and of all ethnicities. If it did not, then they would not spend so much time *talking* about it. Both Kosovar-Albanians and Serbs pontificate *ad nauseam* about the role of history. They engage in back-and-forth tug-of-wars over what is the correct historical account. Serbia continues to engage in wars of words with Croatia as well, most recently over Serbia's UN exhibit on the Jasenovac concentration camp.²⁰⁷

Primarily, Serbia's history plays an influencing role in today's events because it informs historical memory. This thesis has attempted to show the importance of historical memory to Serbian politics throughout history and today, and that connection could not be possible were it not for the physical history itself.

²⁰⁶ "Defying Court Ban, Republika Srpska Goes Ahead with 'Statehood Day.'" *Radio Free Europe*. January 9, 2018. <https://www.rferl.org/a/republika-srpska-statehood-day-defying-court-ban/28964699.html>

²⁰⁷ "Croatia Protests Due to Serbia's Jasenovac Exhibition at UN." *Total Croatia News*. January 26, 2018. <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/24850-croatia-protests-due-to-serbia-s-jasenovac-exhibition-at-un>

How does the EU, and EU states, view Serbia as it prepares to join the bloc?

This question is addressed fully throughout Chapter 3 of this work. The EU is clearly more receptive to Serbia joining the bloc than it was even a few years ago. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel signaled after Vucic's presidential election that Germany formally supported Serbia's accession to the EU.²⁰⁸ France's ambassador to Serbia, H.E. Frederic Mondoloni, has likewise signaled that France is supportive of Serbia's accession.²⁰⁹

The Visegrad countries as well as Austria announced in 2017 that they supported Serbia's accession.²¹⁰ Hungary's controversial PM Viktor Orban even made an official announcement from his office signaling that they stood by Serbia's accession even in the face of Croatia's complaints, despite the latter being a partner in the EU.²¹¹

In a 2017 speech, President of the European Council Donald Tusk stated clearly why the EU values Serbia and their quest to become a member-state:

Let me also commend you for your personal commitment to the stability and security of the region, a region which remains the European Union's strategic priority. Within your first 50 days in office, you have met almost all your neighbors and regional partners. I encourage you to keep up this work. Your role is absolutely unique.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Shalal, Andrea. "Germany's Gabriel supports Serbia's EU bid, says protests 'part of democracy.'" *Reuters*. April 12, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-germany/germanys-gabriel-supports-serbias-eu-bid-says-protests-part-of-democracy-idUSKBN17E2B0>

²⁰⁹ Milosevic, Žikica. "Ambassador of France to Serbia: Past and Future Are Fortifying Our Relations." *Diplomacy and Commerce*. January 16, 2018. <http://www.diplomacyandcommerce.rs/h-e-frederic-mondoloni-ambassador-of-france-to-serbia-past-and-future-are-fortifying-our-relations/>

²¹⁰ "Central European states urge EU to speed up enlargement in west Balkans." *Reuters*. July 10, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-cee-integration/central-european-states-urge-eu-to-speed-up-enlargement-in-west-balkans-idUSKBN19V1FT>

²¹¹ "Hungary supports Serbia's EU membership." Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister. April 14, 2016. <http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/hungary-supports-serbias-eu-membership/>

²¹² "Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić." European Council. July 14, 2017. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/07/14/tusk-remarks-president-serbia-vucic/>

Tusk highlights in these remarks that Serbia is primarily important to the EU because of the stabilizing role it plays in the Balkan peninsula. The EU is betting that the accession of Serbia to the EU will provide further stabilization in the region. Serbia is the largest and arguably most powerful country in the Balkan peninsula that does not have membership in the EU. The EU faces a number of threats: Russian encroachment in the East, invigorated Euroscepticism in member-states, a widening disparity between the rich and poor member-states, a growing distrust between core members (France, Germany) and peripheral members (Poland, Hungary, Greece, Slovakia), and creeping illiberalism in some member-states.

In addition to this, the EU is aware that peace in the Balkans is a delicate affair. While tensions have not led to open conflict, the fragile peace that has existed since 1999 cannot be taken for granted. Facilitating the normalization of relations with Kosovo vis-a-vis EU integration secures the region and allows the EU to focus its energies elsewhere.

All said, the EU and many EU member-states have a positive view of Serbia joining the EU. Notable exceptions to this are Slovenia and Croatia, former constituent republics in Yugoslavia. But Slovenia protested the accession of Croatia as well, and it is likely that they will both protest Bosnia's possible accession many years down the road. Serbia has positive relationships with most EU members, and Vucic has done much more than his predecessor to placate and address concerns that Brussels voices from time to time.

How do Serbia's political parties address the potential EU accession?

This question is addressed in Chapter 4, and highlights the complicated history of the rise and fall of certain political parties within Serbia. The chapter highlights the important role that historical memory played in the development of Serbia's modern political parties.

The parties that toppled Milosevic - mainly a combination of the Democratic Party (DS) and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) were unified in their opposition to Milosevic's autocratic rule, but not much else. Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic (DS) and Federal President Vojislav Kostunica (DSS) frequently butt heads during their overlap in government, despite being former coalition partners.

The DS was and is a strongly pro-European, liberal, center-left party. Of all the major parties that flourished following the overthrow of Milosevic, the DS was probably the one influenced the least by historical memory. The DS, particularly under Djindjic, saw a path forward for Serbia that did not include nationalism, settling old scores with neighbors, or antagonizing further the Kosovo region. In Djindjic specifically, many Westerners saw a progressive, forward-thinking leader that could guide Serbia out of the darkness of the 1990s. His assassination set back those notions, and he was truly unique in not only his ideology but also in his popularity. Today, very few notable politicians that share his views wield the kind of influence he enjoyed as PM from 2001 to 2003.

Kostunica's DSS, in contrast, was influenced largely by historical memory. They held it in great esteem, which explained their vehement resistance to the beginning of the accession process. They opposed the negotiations and the Stabilization Agreement because they saw it as the first step towards the recognized loss of Kosovo. Kostunica's deference to historical memory is well-noted during the domestic debate concerning the Stabilization Agreement.

If Kostunica's DSS was influenced by factors other than historical memory in their opposition to the Stabilization Agreement, they did a poor job of showing it. At no time during the campaign against its signing did the DSS or Kostunica appeal to economic or other cultural reasons why Serbia should not join the EU. The debate was entirely framed along the lines of the

Kosovo issue. Although the DSS has not seated more than 10 members in the National Assembly since 2012, its fundamental role in the country's post-Milosevic governance warranted its inclusion in this discussion.

Briefly - the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) openly admits that its entire political program is influenced by Serbian nationalism, which is an extreme manifestation of historical memory. Vojislav Seselj is an ardent nationalist who advocates for the creation of a irrendist "Greater Serbia" at the expense of Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The ideology of the SRS is a living history of the virulent nationalism that gripped the country under the reign of Milosevic. Their opposition to the EU is precisely the same as the DSS' in that they see it as surrendering Kosovo. The negotiation of anything close to resembling the "normalization" of relations between Belgrade and Pristina is out of the question for the SRS, on the basis that it clearly violates historical memory.

Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) is in a precarious ideological position, but is no less influenced by historical memory than the DSS or even the SRS. The SNS split from the SRS chiefly over the issue of EU integration. However, the SNS' seizure of EU integration was more of a political maneuver, rather than a genuine embrace Europeanization and continental values.

The SNS and Vucic are still unafraid to stir up controversy over the status of Kosovo, and frequently do. The train incident of 2016 is one prominent example of such behavior. They do this because for either political reasons or genuine belief, the SNS is influenced by a certain degree of historical memory. They initially found success electorally by combining promises of EU integration with soft Serbian nationalism. This mixed approach grew the power of the SNS significantly, and also unleashed the possibility for Vucic to act on his autocratic tendencies and

accumulate political power through unsavory means, which he has slowly done since his days as prime minister.

As it stands currently, there is no party that comes close to challenging the power of the SNS under Vucic. The opposition is scattered and cannot coalesce around a competing ideology. The opposition candidates run campaigns of “anti-Vucic” without offering tangible solutions. Short of an economic disaster, Vucic and his party are well-positioned to continue dominating the country and establish the SNS as a cartel party that can utilize the resources of the state to strangle opposition media and keep other candidates from presenting real threats to the regime.

In that sense then we turn towards the role of the SNS and the EU. The SNS wants EU integration because they staked their political future on a promise to finish the accession process. Vucic himself has made claims (albeit not very believable) that he will resign the presidency once Serbia is in the EU. But, they are in no rush to speed through the process. Vucic, with Brussels looking the other way, can easily continue to consolidate the resources of the state and of the government while undergoing the reform process. And the EU appears willing to let him do it, or at least has shown no visible interest in stopping him so long as the vague promise of normalized relations with Kosovo is still at play.

In every sense of the word, the EU accession process has empowered Vucic and the SNS.

What are the consequences of Serbia’s accession?

I address this question at length in Chapter 5 - “The Cost of Integration.” I argue that there are profound consequences to the accession of Serbia to the EU. Vucic and the SNS will continue accumulating power and further eroding democracy in the country. The EU will also renege on its traditional role of strengthening liberal values by horse trading with Vucic:

normalization of relations with Kosovo and stability in the former Yugoslav states in exchange for EU membership.

EU integration is a political opportunity for Vucic, and he has masterfully wielded the negotiations in order to ensure that his party and person are empowered as a result. Previously, I argued that Vucic is not rushing the accession process. An elongated process means that he can deflect criticism and redirect it towards the burgeoning Brussels bureaucracy, and ensure voters that he can be entrusted to finish the task of negotiating with the EU. Indeed, even a cursory look at Vucic's negotiating strategy so far deem this to be true as he negotiates leisurely with Brussels and Pristina.

This all being said, I believe that Serbia will eventually join the European Union following negotiations regarding Kosovo. Undoubtedly, Serbia will benefit economically from inclusion in the bloc and will have warmer relations with its European neighbors. Unfortunately for the EU, it is not likely that membership will turn Serbia against its traditional ally, Russia. Serbia will join the likes of Hungary in opposing new sanctions against Russia. It would not be surprising if Putin privately wished for Serbia's membership in the EU. Vucic insists that Serbia can join the EU and still maintain a friendship with Russia. Putin undoubtedly would love to have allies with voting power in Brussels.

The European Union expects a degree of conformity from its members. The EU is a project of the post-war European reconstruction that sought to increase cooperation on the continent and thus avoid another devastating European war. The EU lists its values, in order of appearance, as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights.²¹³

²¹³ "Europa - The EU in Brief." European Union. Accessed February 1, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en

Serbia is certainly not a totalitarian state under Vucic. But it is a flawed democracy, and Vucic's autocratic designs are troubling. Values of freedom, democracy and equality are all compromised by the EU if they admit Serbia into the bloc without addressing the accusations of power-grabbing by Vucic and the SNS.

If the EU is playing a game of *realpolitik* in the Balkans, admitting Serbia is a logical move because it ensures that it can de-escalate renewed tension in the region. But if the EU intends on maintaining a semblance of upholding European principles and values, it must address Vucic's grip on the country. Normalizing relations with Kosovo cannot be the only impediment to EU accession. If it is, then they will have empowered a strongman and rewarded him with EU membership.

How can Serbia maintain its traditional relationship with the East while courting the West?

Serbia will not find this task difficult. Although caught at a crossroads, it is unlikely that Serbia will ever fully integrate into an entirely Western or an entirely Eastern society. The very makeup of Serbian culture makes this impossible. Its religion, historical experience, and historical memory ultimately tie it to the east. Economically, Serbia is tied to the West.

PM Ana Brnabic said that if Serbia is forced to choose between the EU and Russia, it would choose the EU.²¹⁴ But the west so far has not pressured Serbia to end its relationship with Russia, and Russia has not put any visible pressure on Serbia to bar it from joining the EU.

Serbian membership in the EU will not stop it from pursuing its traditional "two chairs" policy, as characterized by US diplomat Hoyt Brian Yee. The EU has not pinned Serbia's

²¹⁴ Savic, Misha and Gordana Filipovic. "Serbia Will Choose EU Over Russia If Forced, Premier Says." *Bloomberg Politics*. July 3, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-03/serbia-will-pick-eu-over-russia-if-made-to-choose-premier-says>

membership on its relationship with Russia or even its questionably weak democratic institutions, but rather on the single issue of Kosovo.

Historical memory demands that Serbia retain Russia as an ally. From the beginning of the Serbian medieval state, Serbia and Russia have been linked through their common Orthodox Christianity juxtaposed to the Catholicism of the West and the Islam of the Turks. No amount of EU dollars will change hundreds of year of alliance, real or imagined, with Russia. And indeed it has not. Poll data shows year after year that high numbers of Serbs, and particularly the young, like Putin and support Serbia's relationship with the country.²¹⁵

As I wrote in the above section, Putin and Russia are more than likely privately thrilled that Serbia is on the cusp on joining the EU because it seats another country in the European Parliament friendly to Russia. Serbia would join a growing group of EU states, such as Hungary and Italy,²¹⁶ that continue to oppose EU-wide sanctions against Russia, crippling their effectiveness.

In my thesis I argue that there is a "Serbian paradox" - the country is looking westward towards the EU while retaining its eastern (i.e. Orthodox Slavic) culture and traditions. The Orthodox identity was cultivated through hundreds of years and will not be shed easily nor quickly. It will only change after decades in the EU, reinforced by EU traditions and Western European influence. But even that may not be enough to dispel the hold that historical memory has on Serbia. Only time will answer this question, but for the time being Serbia will continue its

²¹⁵ Eckhardt, Andy and Vladimir Banic. "Serbia embraces tug of war between NATO and Russia." *NBC News*. November 25, 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/serbia-embraces-tug-war-between-nato-russia-n822431>

²¹⁶ Emmott, Robin and Gabriela Baczynska. "Italy, Hungary say no automatic renewal of Russia sanctions." *Reuters*. March 14, 2016. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-eu/italy-hungary-say-no-automatic-renewal-of-russia-sanctions-idUKKCN0WG1B4>

course of sitting on two chairs. Indeed, their pocketbooks lie in the west, but their hearts continue to lie in the east.

Are Serbia's chances for membership realistic?

Throughout the thesis I state that Serbia's chances for joining the EU are good. When negotiations began, the EU presented Serbia with two key benchmarks that had to be completed before any membership was possible: 1) the apprehension of at-large war criminals believed to be residing in Serbia and 2) the beginning of normalization negotiations with Kosovo.

After 16 years in hiding, the infamous Republika Srpska (RS) wartime general Ratko Mladic was captured in northern Serbia and extradited to The Hague. As a testament to the formative eventing (crucial to the establishment of historical memory) that occurred following the end of the Bosnian War, riots broke out in cities across Serbia in solidarity with Mladic. A 2011 study published around the time of Mladic's capture showed that 78% of Serbs polled would not report Mladic to the authorities, and that 40% considered him a Serbian hero.²¹⁷

With Mladic and former RS President Radovan Karadzic in ICTY custody, the only real remaining barrier to an easy chapter process is the status of Kosovo. This was always the more difficult of the two obstacles to membership, and there is room for significant improvement on this front between both Serbia and Kosovo.

Vucic understands he is in a precarious situation involving the breakaway province. Despite Serbia's non-recognition of Kosovo as an independent country, 112 out of 193 UN member-states recognize Kosovo, including powerful members such as the United States and most states in the EU.²¹⁸ It is unlikely that Kosovo will ever return to the pre-2008 status quo.

²¹⁷ "Poll: Most Serbs Support General Accused of War Crimes." *Radio Free Europe*. May 16, 2011. https://www.rferl.org/a/poll_says_most_serbs_support_general_accused_of_war_crimes/24176617.html

²¹⁸ "Recognition of Kosovo." Kosovo Thanks You. Accessed February 2, 2018. <https://www.kosovothanksyou.com/>

But, Serbia is not backed into a corner either. China, India, Russia, Brazil, and Spain do not recognize Kosovo as independent for a variety of reasons. Although not a big player in international politics, Suriname recently withdrew its recognition of Kosovo, which other states could do in the future. The non-recognition of a UN Security Council member is a sign that recognition is far away. For reference, more countries (138) recognize an independent Palestinian state than Kosovo, and they are no closer to becoming an official state than Kosovo is.²¹⁹

The Brussels Agreement of 2013 was an important first step in the negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo. Although not officially signed by either Pristina or Belgrade, it offers an important first step towards a realistic compromise between the two entities.

In his piece “The Race for EU Membership” Ryan Heath assesses Serbia’s chances at joining the EU at 80%. He acknowledges that Serbia “could be a pro-EU stabilizing force in the region and good neighbor if kept within the EU’s orbit.”²²⁰ Regarding obstacles, Heath remarks “Serbia may also continue refusing to recognize Kosovo unless offered EU membership, which may be tactically clever but breaches the spirit of EU norms.”²²¹

Tactically clever, indeed. Serbia is standing at the threshold of EU membership and Vucic is surely aware that Kosovo is the key to get in. Serbia may well not have to formally recognize Kosovo as independent. A significant bargain could be made between the parties to allow for continued *de facto* independence under the Brussels Agreement and even further

²¹⁹ Tharoor, Ishaan. “Map: The countries that recognize Palestine as a state.” *The Washington Post*. November 7, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/11/07/map-the-countries-that-recognize-palestine-as-a-state/?utm_term=.fcee5004ba9a

²²⁰ Heath, Ryan. “The Race for EU Membership.” *Politico Europe*. December 15, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/the-race-for-eu-membership-neighborhood-turkey-uk-european-commission/>

²²¹ Ibid.

legitimizing status such as observer status at the UN General Assembly, similar to the State of Palestine.

In reference to negotiating with Kosovo, Vucic stated in 2017 that “All the paths of political cooperation and economic progress would be open to Serbia, the European Union's door, too. Otherwise, we will keep a conflict whose essence we do not understand.”²²² Vucic appears willing to negotiate with Kosovo as long as it is hinged to EU membership. His command of the bully pulpit and his practical ownership of the national media ensures that he can whip public opinion in support of a deal that recognizes parts of Kosovo sovereignty without independence in exchange for EU membership. This would keep the historical memory of Kosovo intact by symbolically refusing independent status, but in reality accepting diplomatic concessions that would hasten EU membership.

Further Questions

There are additional questions that this thesis raises which are appropriate for future or otherwise additional research. These additional questions are formatted to take into account future changes that may occur throughout the course of the accession process, given that political events in the Balkans are always unpredictable, such as the assassination of Oliver Ivanovic in Kosovo.

EU and Further Expansion

A question that I did not address in this thesis is whether expansion will help or hurt the EU in the long run. Since its initial founding the EU has undergone 7 official enlargements. Every enlargement brings controversy, especially when the candidate country has economically dubious credentials. Serbia (and Montenegro, who will likely join in the same enlargement) are

²²² “Vucic for ‘internal dialogue, realistic approach to Kosovo.’” B92. July 24, 2017. https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=07&dd=24&nav_id=101886

the strongest economies remaining in the Balkans that are outside the EU, but they pale in comparison to the other economies of the EU member-states. Often, stronger members find that Euroscepticism grows when poorer, smaller countries enter the union for fears that they may one day need bailouts from the larger bloc.

This question is important to address in future research. The EU has a number of potential future candidates they could enter into negotiations with, including states that once rested deep behind the iron curtain such as Ukraine, who almost signed a stabilization agreement with the EU. Their government's rejection of the agreement in favor of Russia sparked the Euromaidan protests and catalyzed in the Ukrainian crisis, resulting in the ouster of former President Viktor Yanukovich.

A serious discussion should occur among EU policymakers regarding future expansion of the bloc. There are benefits and drawbacks to any expansion, and further analysis into this question could help those within the EU avoid growing euroscepticism that generally accompanies expansion. Seeing how that is already such a prevalent issue, the prospects of further expansion may need to be tempered following Serbia and Montenegro's predicted accession in 2025.

Russia's Actions

Russia plays an important role in any EU expansion project, particularly as the EU expands east. Serbia counts Russia as one of their most important international relationships. While PM Brnabic has stated that Serbia would choose the EU over Russia if forced to choose, Vucic has personally never said such a thing. And Serbia will never have to "choose" between Russia and the EU because the EU has never made Serbia's relationship with Russia a point of

contention in their negotiations. And, as previously suggested, Russia and Putin may privately support the idea of a sympathetic member-state such as Serbia in the EU.

But, Russia has acted aggressively in the past against countries that it deems to be moving closer to the West. Ukraine is a perfect example: Russia pressured the government to break its association agreement with the EU, and then invaded the Donbass region when the pro-Russian president stepped down from power.

In 2016, Russian-aligned agents attempted a coup d'état in Montenegro in order to stop the country from joining NATO. Although the Kremlin rejects having any part in the plot to overthrow the pro-Western government and assassinate PM Milo Dukanovic²²³ most outside observers acknowledge that those responsible had some contact with Russian authorities. Interestingly enough, most of those sought for the attempted coup are Serbian nationalists with connections to Russia.²²⁴

Russia may act with even more aggression if they continue seeing their spheres of influence in eastern Europe fall to the West. Geopolitically, Russia perceives their greatest threat to be the West and particularly the EU. Russia continues to hold designs upon the Baltic states, all EU members. NATO and the EU both consider Poland as a critical frontier against Russian influence in the East.

A research question that must be addressed is Russia's specific reaction to Serbian accession to the EU. How will Russia respond to an ancient ally joining a rival bloc? Will they address it directly, or choose to entrench their hold in other countries that they consider to be in their sphere of influence?

²²³ "Kremlin rejects claims Russia had role in Montenegro coup plot." *The Guardian*. February 20, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/20/russian-state-bodies-attempted-a-coup-in-montenegro-says-prosecutor>

²²⁴ Ibid.

The Montenegro Connection

Montenegro and Serbia are culturally similar, both sharing the Orthodox faith, Cyrillic alphabet, and general Serbian culture. Montenegro and Serbia existed as a loose union first as rump Yugoslavia and then as the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro until Montenegro separated peacefully from Serbia in 2006.

Montenegro, like Serbia, is an official candidate country of the European Union and projected to enter the EU in 2025 with Serbia. Notably, there are no Chapter 35 special considerations, unlike Serbia which must address the Kosovo issue.

Montenegro, like Serbia, enjoyed a close relationship with Russia throughout most of its history. NATO approved Montenegro for membership in 2016, and it officially joined NATO in 2017. The decision to join NATO shocked Russia and there are credible claims that the attempted coup originated from the Kremlin.

Despite their close ties to Serbia, Montenegro chose to embark on a decisively more pro-Western program than their northern neighbors by embracing both the European Union *and* NATO. Why is that so, and what does that say about Montenegro's belief in their own historical memory, much of which they share with Serbia? Does this show that Montenegro is attempting to separate themselves from a historical Serb heritage and forge a new 21st century Montenegrin identity decisively different from that of Serbia? Researching these questions could complement the understanding of historical memory in Montenegro, a cultural cousin of Serbia with the shared Yugoslav experience.

Serbian Opposition to Vucic

Another potential research avenue that would stimulate great debate would be an inquiry into the current state of opposition to Vucic. This thesis showed that the opposition to Vucic and

the SNS is ineffective, scattered, and weak. Without a viable alternative to the SNS and Vucic, there is nothing stopping him from accumulating more power within Serbia.

A research project that better highlights the tensions within Serbian politics would be a beneficial study for those interested in fragile, developing democracies. Serbia has never been a beacon of liberal democracy, even following the fall of Milosevic. Although it is largely going unnoticed, Vucic's rapid consolidation of power within the country shows that the possibility for another Serbian strongman politician is very real.

That type of leadership is not unique to Serbia. Throughout the EU, governments are struggling to stymie populists on both the right and left who seek to weaken liberal institutions. The obvious examples are Poland's Law and Justice Party and Hungary's Fidesz coalition. Although they are not ruling their respective states, France's Front National, Germany's Alternative for Germany and the Netherlands' Party for Freedom all fit this model of illiberal groups vying for power within democratic societies.

In a broader sense, a study on growing illiberal tendencies within the EU (and other Western democracies) would complement this thesis well. Vucic may not outwardly praise illiberal or soft-autocratic democratic systems the way Orban has, but he certainly does enough domestically to warrant concern that he is driving Serbia in that direction.

Concluding Remarks

At the height of the Kosovo War, longtime Balkan correspondent Peter Maas interviewed Slobodan Milosevic in his office in Belgrade. The two men had met before, albeit under different circumstances and during a different war. When Maas returned home he penned an opinion piece in *The New York Times* entitled "Milosevic, the Perfect Dictator." Maas characterized what made Milosevic such an unassuming man when compared to history's infamous dictators: he did not

carry outrageous notions of conquest, like Mobutu. He did not impose any ideological social engineering on his people in the mold of Pol Pot. He did not rule by wanton brutality in the likeness of Hussein. Regarding his nationalism, Maas wrote:

At the moment, he has embraced nationalism; he may discard it, as he did in 1995 when he let Croatia drive out several hundred thousand Serbs. He is not defending Kosovo because he cherishes it; he reasons, correctly, that he could tumble from power if he surrenders it without a fight.²²⁵

A common takeaway from this statement is Milosevic's non-commitment to any kind of ideology, even that of Serbian nationalism which drove him to the height of his power. But look closer: "he reasons, correctly, that he could tumble from power if he surrenders it without a fight." That hits at the central subject of this thesis project: the importance of historical memory to the average Serb. Milosevic was as much a victim of historical memory as he was a benefactor of its power: he used it as a vehicle to contribute to his power. When he plunged the country into war and debt chasing after it, he was forced to remove from office and died in the custody of an international court.

The fall of Milosevic did not spell the end of Serbian historical memory. Nor did the establishment of anti-nationalist communism in 1945. Nor did the years of Ottoman subjugation and rule which began after 1389. Serbia's historical memory is a social creation so powerful that it has withstood the test of time. It influences the current accession negotiations with the EU. Following Serbia's likely entry into the body, it will continue to influence Serbian politicians and broader regional politics.

²²⁵ Maas, Peter. "Milosevic, The Perfect Dictator." *The New York Times*. May 3, 1999. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/03/opinion/milosevic-the-perfect-dictator.html>

Bibliography

- “‘Only I have the guts to call a spade a spade,’ says Vucic.” *B92*. January 1, 2018. https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2018&mm=01&dd=01&nav_id=103164
- “An independent Kosovo can never join UN, Russia warns.” *The New York Times*. January 7, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/17/world/europe/17iht-kosovo.4.9299507.html>
- “Central European states urge EU to speed up enlargement in west Balkans.” *Reuters*. July 10, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-cee-integration/central-european-states-urge-eu-to-speed-up-enlargement-in-west-balkans-idUSKBN19V1FT>
- “Commission Staff Working Document: Serbia 2016 Report.” European Commission. September 11, 2016.
- “Croatia Protests Due to Serbia’s Jasenovac Exhibition at UN.” *Total Croatia News*. January 26, 2018. <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/24850-croatia-protests-due-to-serbias-jasenovac-exhibition-at-un>
- “Defying Court Ban, Republika Srpska Goes Ahead with 'Statehood Day.'” *Radio Free Europe*. January 9, 2018. <https://www.rferl.org/a/republika-srpska-statehood-day-defying-court-ban/28964699.html>
- “EU Deal Signature Will Be Annulled.” *B92*. May 2, 2008. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2008&mm=05&dd=02&nav_id=49912
- “Europa - The EU in Brief.” European Union. Accessed February 1, 2018. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en
- “European Orientation of Serbian Citizens.” Serbian European Integration Office - Republic of Serbia. December 2016. http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnenja/opinion_poll_december_16.pdf
- “European Union Common Position: Chapter 35 Other Issues.” Conference on Accession to the European Union - Serbia. November 30, 2015.
- “Facts about DSS.” Democratic Party of Serbia. Accessed November 2017. <http://www.dss.rs/fact-about-dss/>

- “GDP - Current US Dollars.” World Bank. Accessed December 1, 2017.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=RS-HR-BA-ME-MK-SI-XK>
- “GDP (current US\$) 2000-2016” World Bank. Accessed January 2, 2018.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2016&locations=RS-HR-SI&start=2000>
- “How do Serbians generally feel about America?” *Quora*. Accessed January 2, 2018.
<https://www.quora.com/How-do-Serbians-generally-feel-about-America>
- “Hungary supports Serbia’s EU membership.” Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister. April 14, 2016. <http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/hungary-supports-serbias-eu-membership/>
- “Important Years in City History.” Belgrade Official Website. Accessed March 1, 2018.
<http://www.begrad.rs/index.php?lang=cir&kat=beoinfo&sub=201239%3f>
- “Juncker expects Montenegro and Serbia to join EU before 2025.” *European Western Balkans*. November 8, 2017. <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/11/08/juncker-expects-serbia-join-eu-2025/>
- “Karadjordjevo Meeting.” *World Heritage Encyclopedia*. Accessed January 18, 2018.
http://www.worldheritage.org/articles/eng/Karadjordjevo_meeting
- “Key Figures of the Cases.” International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. November 2017. <http://www.icty.org/sid/24>
- “Kremlin rejects claims Russia had role in Montenegro coup plot.” *The Guardian*. February 20, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/20/russian-state-bodies-attempted-a-coup-in-montenegro-says-prosecutor>
- “Milosevic extradition unlocks aid coffers.” *BBC News*. June 29, 2001.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1413144.stm>
- “Milosevic Supporters Protest Extradition to War Crimes Court.” *Los Angeles Times*. July 3, 2001. <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jul/03/news/mn-18110>

- “Mladic Arrest Removes Stain from Serbia.” *NPR*. May 26, 2011.
<http://www.npr.org/2011/05/27/136672883/man-believed-to-be-war-crimes-fugitive-arrested>
- “Operation Deliberate Force.” NATO Fact Sheets. December 16, 2002.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20081110153404/http://www.afsouth.nato.int/factsheets/DeliberateForceFactSheet.htm>
- “Opposition figure ‘won’t let Vucic end up like Ceausescu.’” *B92*. December 1, 2017.
https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=12&dd=01&nav_id=102941
- “Parliament calls on all EU countries to recognize Kosovo.” *Euractiv*. July 9, 2010.
<https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/parliament-calls-on-all-eu-countries-to-recognise-kosovo/>
- “PM: We shouldn't be asked to choose between EU and Russia.” *B92*. November 20, 2017.
https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=11&dd=20&nav_id=102839
- “Poll: Most Serbs Support General Accused Of War Crimes.” *RadioFreeEurope*. May 16, 2011.
https://www.rferl.org/a/poll_says_most_serbs_support_general_accused_of_war_crimes/24176617.html
- “Population, total.” World Bank. Accessed January 2, 2018.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=RS-HR-SI>
- “Profile: Vojislav Seselj.” *BBC News*. November 7, 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2317765.stm>
- “Quotes by Aleksandar Vucic.” *Euronews*. April 3, 2017.
<http://www.quotes.euronews.com/people/aleksandar-vucic-1WmR19x3>
- “Recognition of Kosovo.” Kosovo Thanks You. Accessed February 2, 2018.
<https://www.kosovothanksyou.com/>
- “Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić.” European Council. July 14, 2017.
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/07/14/tusk-remarks-president-serbia-vucic/>

- “Republic of Serbia Election for President.” Election Guide. February 3, 2008.
<http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2062/>
- “Resolution 781.” United Nations Security Council. October 9, 1992.
[https://undocs.org/S/RES/781\(1992\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/781(1992))
- “Russia is our true friend, Serbian president says.” *B92*. September 20, 2017.
https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=09&dd=20&nav_id=102360
- “Russian media about Nikolic's victory.” *B92*. May 21, 2012.
http://www.b92.net/info/izbori2012/vesti.php?yyyy=2012&mm=05&dd=21&nav_id=611120
- “Serbia, Montenegro seen as frontrunner candidates to join EU in 2025.” *Central European Financial Observer*. September 14, 2017. <https://financialobserver.eu/recent-news/serbia-montenegro-seen-as-frontrunner-candidates-to-join-eu-in-2025/>
- “Serbia.” Observatory of Economic Complexity. Accessed January 5, 2018.
<https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/srb/>
- “Serbian Nationalist Train Halts at Border with Kosovo.” *The New York Times*. January 14, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/14/world/europe/kosovo-serbia-train.html>
- “Slobodan Praljak suicide: War criminal 'took cyanide' in Hague court.” *BBC*. December 1, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42204587>
- “The European Union congratulated Tadic.” *B92*. February 4, 2008.
http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=04&nav_category=418&nav_id=283431
- “The Latest: NATO urges restraint after Serb leader's death.” *Daily Mail*. January 16, 2018.
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-5274003/The-Latest-Leading-Serb-politician-Kosovo-shot-death.html>
- “The Promise is Given, Kosovo is Serbia as Long as We Live.” Serbian Orthodox Church. February 25, 2008. http://www.spc.rs/eng/promise_given_kosovo_serbia_long_we_live

- “Transitional Justice in the Former Yugoslavia.” International Center for Transitional Justice. 2009. <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-FormerYugoslavia-Justice-Facts-2009-English.pdf>
- “Two new chapters opened, one closed in EU accession talks.” *B92*. December 14, 2016. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2016&mm=12&dd=14&nav_id=99952
- “United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/1.” United Nations. September 19, 1992. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r001.htm>
- “Views on European Union enlargement.” Eurobarometer - European Commission. January-February 2009.
- “Vojislav Seselj in his own words.” *BBC News*. November 7, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2793899.stm>
- “Vucic for ‘internal dialogue, realistic approach to Kosovo.’” *B92*. July 24, 2017. https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=07&dd=24&nav_id=101886
- “Vucic on Hague suicide, reactions, and ‘double standards.’” *B92*. November 30, 2017. http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=11&dd=30&nav_id=102929
- “Vucic Says Serbia Must Resolve Dispute With Kosovo 'Together.'” *RadioFreeEurope*. July 25, 2017. <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-vucic-kosovo-dispute-eu-negotiations/28636381.html>
- 12th Regular Press Conference of the Republic Electoral Commission.” Republic of Serbia Electoral Commission. April 18, 2017. <http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/english/aktivnosti-konferencije.php#a12>
- Abazi, Haki. “The Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue is Just Lose-Lose.” *Balkan Insight*. November 13, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-kosovo-serbia-dialogue-is-just-lose-lose--11-13-2017>
- Agence France-Presse. “CONFLICT IN THE BALKANS; Serb Threatens West With Retaliation.” *The New York Times*. October 2, 1998. <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/02/world/conflict-in-the-balkans-serb-threatens-west-with-retaliation.html>

- Anastasijevic , Dejan. "Vucic's Latest 'Historic' Promise: A Deal with Kosovo." *Balkan Insight*. July 25, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/blog/vucic-s-latest-historic-promise-a-deal-with-kosovo-07-25-2017>
- Anastasijevic, Dejan. "These Blasts from Serbia's Past Scare Me." *Balkan Insight*. October 2, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/blog/these-blasts-from-serbia-s-past-scare-me-10-02-2017>
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983. 5-6.
- Andic, Vesna. "Serbia Calls EU Pressure to Join Russia Sanctions 'Unacceptable.'" *Radio Free Europe*. October 20, 2016. <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-calls-eu-pressure-join-sanctions-against-russia-absolutely-unacceptable/28064425.html>
- Bancroft, Ian. "Serbia's Anniversary is a Timely Reminder." *The Guardian*. March 24, 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/mar/24/serbia-kosovo>
- BBC News Staff. "Serb 'no' to foreign mediation in Kosovo." *BBC News*. April 23, 1998. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/kosovo/82713.stm
- Bellamy, Alex J. *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream?* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Biondich, Mark. *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Birch, Sarah. "The 2000 Elections in Yugoslavia: The Bulldozer Revolution." *Electoral Studies* 21, no. 3 (2002)
- Biserko, Sonja and Edina Becirevic. "Denial of genocide - on the possibility of normalising relations in the region." Bosnian Institute. October 23, 2009. http://www.bosnia.org.uk/news/news_body.cfm?newsid=2638
- Bjelotomic, Snezana. "Presidential election: Conflict in SNS between Vucic and Nikolic." *Serbian Monitor*. February 17, 2017. <http://serbianmonitor.com/en/politics/30031/presidential-election-conflict-sns-between-vucic-and-nikolic/#.WhW5zIWnHIU>

- Bran, Mirel. "Nobody wants us, the pariahs of Europe" *The Guardian*. May 2, 1999.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/may/03/balkans2>
- Brown, Michael. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001
- Brunwasser, Matthew. "Serbia's Brand of Reconciliation: Embracing Old War Criminals." *The New York Times*. November 23, 2017.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/23/world/europe/serbia-war-crimes-russia.html>
- Buchanan, Patrick J. "Why is Kosovo's Rebellion Our War?" *The Global Politics*. September 20, 2017. <http://global-politics.eu/kosovos-rebellion-war/>
- Bugajski, Janusz. "Serbia's slow EU path." Center for European Policy Analysis. April 25, 2016.
<http://cepa.org/Serbia-slow-EU-path>
- Burg, Steven and Paul Shoup. *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.
- Cavoski, Aleksandra. "Perceptions of the EU in Serbia." *Europe for Citizens - European Commission* (2012)
- Cohen, Roger. "CIA Report on Bosnia Blames Serbs for 90% of the War Crimes." *The New York Times*. March 9, 1995. <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/09/world/cia-report-on-bosnia-blames-serbs-for-90-of-the-war-crimes.html>
- Cosic, Dobrica. "Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum 1986."
- Crabtree, David. "The Importance of History." Gutenberg College. November 1993.
<http://msc.gutenberg.edu/2001/02/the-importance-of-history/>
- Crisp, James. "Hard Brexit will hurt EU more than Britain, warn university researchers as divorce talks begin in Brussels." *The Telegraph*. September 25, 2017.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/25/hard-brex-it-will-hurt-eu-britain-warn-university-researchers/>
- Cvijic, Srdan. "EU the biggest loser in Serbia's elections." *Politico*. April 5, 2017.
<https://www.politico.eu/article/aleksandar-vucic-eu-the-biggest-loser-in-serbia-elections-eu-the-biggest-loser-in-serbias-elections/>

- De Launcey, Guy. "Serbia transforming from pariah to EU partner." BBC. January 21, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25808463>
- De Launey, Guy. "Serbia elections: Radical Seselj back in parliament." *BBC News*. April 25, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36128489>
- Dhumieres, Marie. "In the search for justice in the former Yugoslavia, are we ignoring the Serbian victims of war crimes?" *The Independent*. December 17, 2012. <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/in-the-search-for-justice-in-the-former-yugoslavia-are-we-ignoring-the-serbian-victims-of-war-crimes-8422169.html>
- DiCaprio, Lisa. "The Betrayal of Srebrenica: The Ten-Year Commemoration." *The Public Historian* 31, no. 3 (2009)
- Djilas, Aleksa. "Tito's Last Secret: How Did He Keep it Together?" *Foreign Affairs* 24, no. 4 (1995)
- Duraskovic, Stevo. "Nation-building in Franjo Tudjman's Political Writings." *Croatian Political Science Review* 51 no. 5 (2014)
- Eckhardt, Andy and Vladimir Banic. "Serbia embraces tug of war between NATO and Russia." *NBC News*. November 25, 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/serbia-embraces-tug-war-between-nato-russia-n822431>
- Editorial Board. "A Serbian Election Erodes Democracy." *The New York Times*. April 9, 2017. <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/04/09/opinion/a-serbian-election-erodes-democracy.html?referer=>
- Ejdus, Filip. "The long shadow of Byzantium over Serbia's entry into international society." *International Relations* 28 no. 4 (2014)
- Ejdus, Filip. *Memories of Empire and Entry into the International System*. Taylor and Francis, 2017.
- Emmert, Thomas. "The Kosovo Legacy." Excerpt from *Kosovo* by William Dorich. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://www.njegos.org/orthodoxy/kosovo.htm>
- Emmott, Robin and Gabriela Baczynska. "Italy, Hungary say no automatic renewal of Russia sanctions." *Reuters*. March 14, 2016. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-eu/italy-hungary-say-no-automatic-renewal-of-russia-sanctions-idUKKCN0WG1B4>

- European Commission. "Accession Negotiations." June 12, 2016.
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-negotiations_en
- EWB. "Hahn: The next two years will be good for enlargement of the EU." December 11, 2017.
<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/11/12/hahn-next-two-years-will-good-enlargement-eu/>
- Filipovic, Gordana and Misha Savic. "Serb President Sees Second Term Unlikely After EU Work Ends." *Bloomberg*. December 26, 2017.
<https://www.bloomberqint.com/politics/2017/12/22/serb-president-sees-second-term-unlikely-after-finishing-eu-work>
- Galanopoulos, Antonis and Benjamin De Cleen. "Populism, Nationalism, and Transnationalism." *European Green Journal*. November 17, 2016.
<https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/populism-nationalism-and-transnationalism/>
- Gall, Lydia. "A Difficult Profession: Media Freedom Under Attack in the Western Balkans." Human Rights Watch. July 15, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/07/15/difficult-profession/media-freedom-under-attack-western-balkans>
- Gerwath, Robert. *The Bismark Myth: Weimar Germany and the Legacy of the Iron Chancellor*. Oxford: Ovford University Press, 1999.
- Glaurdic, Josip. "Inside the Serbian War Machine: The Milosevic Telephone Intercepts, 1991-1992." *East European Politics and Societies* 23, no. 1 (2009)
- Goldstein, Ivo. "Ante Pavelić, Charisma and National Mission in Wartime Croatia." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7, no. 2 (2006)
- Gruska, Ulrike. "Who owns the Media in Serbia?" Reporters Without Borders. June 21, 2017.
<https://rsf.org/en/news/who-owns-media-serbia>
- Headley, Jim. "Sarajevo, February 1994: the first Russian-NATO Crisis of the post-Cold War era." *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 2 (2003): 209-227.
- Heath, Ryan. "The race for EU membership." *Politico*. December 15, 2016.
<https://www.politico.eu/article/the-race-for-eu-membership-neighborhood-turkey-uk-european-commission/>

- Inglehart, Ronald F. and Pippa Norris. "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash." *Harvard University Faculty Research Working Paper Series*. August 2016.
- Ivekovic, Ivan. "Nationalism and the Political Use and Abuse of Religion: The Politicization of Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam in Yugoslav Successor States." *Social Compass* 49, no. 4. (2002)
- Janjevic, Darko. "Who was Oliver Ivanovic, the murdered Serb politician in Kosovo?" *DW*. January 16, 2018. <http://www.dw.com/en/who-was-oliver-ivanovic-the-murdered-serb-politician-in-kosovo/a-42168200>
- Jovic, Dejan. "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches." *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 1 (2001)
- Judah, Tim. *The Serbs: History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. Yale University Press, 1997.
- Kaplan, Robert D. *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*. St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- Karadzic, Radovan. "Address to Bosnian Assembly." October 5, 1991. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Makxe0PLB_8&t=24s
- Karnitschnig, Matthew. "Aleksandar Vučić: 'Tito was a very smart guy.'" *Politico Europe*. April 6, 2017. <https://www.politico.eu/article/q-and-a-with-aleksandar-vucic-serbia-prime-minister-president-election/>
- Karnitschnig, Matthew. "Serbia's latest would-be savior is a modernizer, a strongman – or both." *Politico Europe*. April 14, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/aleksandar-vucic-serbias-latest-savior-is-a-modernizer-or-strongman-or-both/>
- Kaufman, Michael T. "The Dangers of Letting a President Read." *The New York Times*. May 22, 1999. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/22/books/the-dangers-of-letting-a-president-read.html>
- Kifner, John. "Yugoslav Army Reported Fighting In Bosnia to Help Serbian Forces." *The New York Times*. January 27, 1994. <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/27/world/yugoslav-army-reported-fighting-in-bosnia-to-help-serbian-forces.html>

- Kinzer, Stephen. "Germans Follow Own Line on Yugoslav Republics." *The New York Times*. December 8, 1991. <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/12/08/world/germans-follow-own-line-on-yugoslav-republics.html>
- Kumar, Isabelle. "EU membership remains Serbia's priority, says PM Aleksandar Vucic." *EuroNews*. May 19, 2015. <http://www.euronews.com/2015/05/19/membership-of-the-european-union-remains-a-priority-for-serbia-says-prime>
- Lambeth, Benjamin. "NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment." RAND Corporation (2001)
- Lampe, John. "Serbia." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. September 13, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Serbia>.
- Maas, Peter. "Milosevic, The Perfect Dictator." *The New York Times*. May 3, 1999. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/03/opinion/milosevic-the-perfect-dictator.html>
- Malcom, Noel. "Seeing Ghosts." *The National Interest* no. 32 (1993)
- Mason, Paul. "Croatia's election is a warning about the return of nationalism to the Balkans." *The Guardian*. September 12, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/12/croatias-election-warning-nationalism-balkans-eu-government-second-world-war-fascism>
- Matthias, John. "The Battle of Kosovo: Serbian Epic Poems." Internet Library of Serb Culture. 1987. https://web.archive.org/web/20141104103214/http://www.rastko.org.rs/knjizevnost/usmena/battle_of_kosovo.html
- Medlicott, William N. *The Congress of Berlin and After: A Diplomatic History of the Near Eastern Settlement, 1878-1880*. Archon Books, 1963.
- Meier, Viktor. *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Milosevic, Slobodan. "St. Vitus Day Speech." June 28, 1989. https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/SLOBODAN%20MILOSEVIC_speech_6_28_89.pdf
- Milosevic, Žikica. "Ambassador of France to Serbia: Past and Future are Fortifying Our Relations." *Diplomacy and Commerce*. January 16, 2018.

<http://www.diplomacyandcommerce.rs/h-e-frederic-mondoloni-ambassador-of-france-to-serbia-past-and-future-are-fortifying-our-relations/>

Mitrovich, Mirco M. "Serbian Participation in European History and Civilization from Early Times to 1389." *East European Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1975)

Mizokami, Kyle. "In 1999, America Destroyed China's Embassy in Belgrade." *The National Interest*. January 21, 2017. <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/1999-america-destroyed-chinas-embassy-belgrade-many-chinese-19124>

Morelli, Vincent L. "Serbia: Background and US Relations." Congressional Research Service. September 19, 2017.

Mueller, John. "The Banality of Ethnic War." *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000)

Mujanovic, Jasmin. "The EU is Watching the Balkans Come Undone." *Balkan Insight*. January 24, 2018. <https://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-eu-is-watching-the-balkans-come-undone-01-23-2018>

Naughton, Philippe. "Milosevic cast as peacemaker: Serbian leader invited to Yugoslav peace talks." *The Independent*. January 9, 1993. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/milosevic-cast-as-peacemaker-serbian-leader-invited-to-yugoslav-peace-talks-1477450.html>

Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. Routledge, 1996.

O'Toole, Shannon. "A Cry for Help from Serbia's Independent Media." Freedom House. October 5, 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/blog/cry-help-serbia-s-independent-media>

Obradovic, Sandra. "Don't Forget to Remember: Collective Memory of the Yugoslav Wars in Present-Day Serbia." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2016): 12-18.

Pantovic, Milivoje. "Dispute Over Cyrillic Raises Tensions Between Croatia, Serbia." *Balkan Transitional Justice*. August 15, 2016. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/tensions-continue-to-raise-between-serbia-and-croatia-08-15-2016>

Parenti, Michael. *To Kill a Nation: The Attack on Yugoslavia*. New York: Verso Books, 2002.

- Peskin, Victor. "After Zoran Djindjic: The Future of International Criminal Justice." Open Democracy. March 28, 2003. https://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/article_1107.jsp
- Poggioli, Sylvia. "Milosevic: The Life and Death of a Strongman." *National Public Radio*. March 11, 2006. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5257846>
- Prodanovic, Ksenija. "Serb church urges state of war over Kosovo." *Reuters*. February 17, 2008. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSHAM738779?irpc=932>
- Prosecutor v. Karadzic*. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. March 1, 2010. <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/karadzic/trans/en/100301IT.htm>
- Rauch, Robert. "Vojislav Kostunica." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Accessed October 30, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vojislav-Kotunica>
- Ricchiardi, Sherry. "Confused Images: How the Media Fueled the Balkan War." *The Journal of the International Institute* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1996)
- Rinke, Andreas and Gulsen Solaker. "Cyprus remains stumbling block in Turkey's EU ambition: Merkel." *Reuters*. February 25, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-eu/cyprus-remains-stumbling-block-in-turkeys-eu-ambition-merkel-idUSBRE91O10L20130225>
- Rizman, Rudi. *Uncertain Path: Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Slovenia*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006.
- Robinson, Matt and Jaksa Scekcic. "Milosevic-era minister shakes off dark past on path to power in Serbia." *Reuters*. March 13, 2014. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/milosevic-era-minister-shakes-off-dark-past-path-144051698--business.html>
- Robinson, Matt. "In Serbian election, the comedy candidate is no joke." *Reuters*. March 21, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-election-satirist/in-serbian-election-the-comedy-candidate-is-no-joke-idUSKBN16S139>
- Rossi, Michael. *Resurrecting the Past: Democracy, National Identity and Historical Memory in Serbia*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 2009.

- Rudic, Filip. "Serbia Poll Runner-up Jankovic to Form Political Movement." *Balkan Insight*. April 13, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-presidential-runner-up-jankovic-to-form-political-movement-04-13-2017>
- Rudic, Filip. "Serbia Seeks Russian Role in Kosovo Talks." *Balkan Insight*. December 20, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-russia-willing-to-mediate-serbia-kosovo-talks-12-20-2017>
- Rudic, Filip. "Serbia to Open New Chapters in EU Negotiations." *Balkan Insight*. December 11, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-opens-two-more-chapters-in-eu-negotiations-12-11-2017>
- Rudic, Filip. "Serbia's Anti-Vucic Protests: Key Facts." *Balkan Insight*. April 12, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-s-anti-vucic-protests-key-facts-04-12-2017>
- Rudic, Filip. "Serbia's Vucic Seals Kremlin Summit With Gas Deal." *Balkan Insight*. December 19, 2017. <https://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-meets-putin-serbia-to-re-export-russian-gas-12-19-2017>
- Sadkovich, James J. "Father of His Country? Franjo Tudjman and the Creation of Contemporary Croatia." The Wilson Center. July 7, 2011. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/304-father-his-country-franjo-tudjman-and-the-creation-contemporary-croatia>
- Sadkovich, James. *The US Media and Yugoslavia, 1991-1995*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.
- SANU Memorandum. 1986. http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/archive/files/sanu_memo_e3b3615076.pdf
- Savic, Misha and Gordana Filipovic. "Serbia Will Choose EU Over Russia If Forced, Premier Says." *Bloomberg Politics*. July 3, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-03/serbia-will-pick-eu-over-russia-if-made-to-choose-premier-says>
- Saxon, Dan. "Exporting Justice: Perceptions of the ICTY Among the Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim Communities in the Former Yugoslavia." *Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 4 (2005)

- Sekularac, Ivana. "Serbia says Kosovo wants war as neighbors row over Serb nationalist train." *Reuters*. January 15, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-kosovo/serbia-says-kosovo-wants-war-as-neighbors-row-over-serb-nationalist-train-idUSKBN14Z0NS>
- Sekularac, Ivana. "Serbia's first female PM pledges education reform, EU membership." *Reuters*. June 28, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/serbia-government/serbias-first-female-pm-pledges-education-reform-eu-membership-idUSL8N1JP2JM>
- Sengupta, Somini. "Russia Vetoes U.N. Resolution Calling Srebrenica Massacre 'Crime of Genocide.'" *New York Times*. July 8, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/09/world/europe/russia-vetoes-un-resolution-calling-srebrenica-massacre-crime-of-genocide.html>
- Seselj, Vojislav. "Felon and War Criminal Javier Solana." Serbian Radical Party, 2006.
- Shalal, Andrea. "Germany's Gabriel supports Serbia's EU bid, says protests 'part of democracy.'" *Reuters*. April 12, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-germany/germanys-gabriel-supports-serbias-eu-bid-says-protests-part-of-democracy-idUSKBN17E2B0>
- Silber, Laura. "Serbia Loses More Than a Leader." *The New York Times*. March 14, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/14/opinion/serbia-loses-more-than-a-leader.html>
- Simic, Julija. "Survey: Serbia's Heart is in the East, Pocket in the West." *Euractiv*. September 6, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/survey-serbias-heart-is-in-the-east-pocket-in-the-west/>
- Simic, Julija. "Survey: Serbia's heart is in the East, pocket in the West." *Euractiv*. September 6, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/survey-serbias-heart-is-in-the-east-pocket-in-the-west/>
- Simons, Marlise. "Vojislav Seselj, Serbian Nationalist, Is Acquitted of War Crimes by Hague Tribunal." *New York Times*. March 31, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/01/world/europe/vojislav-seselj-war-crimes.html>
- Sivaramakrishnan, Arvind. "Kashmir issue clouds Indian view of Kosovo." *The Hindu*. September 26, 2016. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/Kashmir-issue-clouds-Indian-view-of-Kosovo/article14670496.ece>
- Sotirovic, Vladislav. "Bosnian Muslim Genocide Over the Serbs in Srebrenica and Its Vicinity in 1992-1995." *The Global Almanac*. March 31, 2016.

<http://www.sotirovic.eu/almanac/2016/03/31/bosnian-muslim-genocide-over-the-serbs-in-srebrenica-and-its-vicinity-in-1992-1995-photo-album/>

Sowards, Steven W. "Lecture 5: The Serbian Revolution and the Serbian State." *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History*. May 1996.

<http://staff.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lecture5.html>

Stephen, Chris. "Lure of EU Membership Led to Arrest of Mladic." *The Irish Times*. May 27, 2011. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/lure-of-eu-membership-led-to-arrest-of-mladic-1.583418>

Stevanovic, Vidosav. *Milosevic: The People's Tyrant*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Stojanovic, Dusan and Danica Kirka. "Clashes Erupt in Belgrade Against Mladic Arrest." *NBC News*. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43209344/ns/world_news-europe/t/clashes-erupt-belgrade-against-mladic-arrest/#.WgDyJVtSzIU

Stojanovic, Dusan and Jovana Gec. "AP Interview: Serbia's leader vows to lead nation into EU." *AP News*. October 13, 2017.

<https://www.apnews.com/feca5204089b49ee91107ac3ed58114d>

Stojanovic, Dusan. "Serbia says it won't impose sanctions on Russia." *San Diego Union-Tribune*. August 22, 2014. <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-serbia-says-it-wont-impose-sanctions-on-russia-2014aug22-story.html>

Stojanovic, Dusan. "Serbian Radical Party Riding High." *Washington Post*. January 24, 2007.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/24/AR2007012401340.html>

Stojic, Marko. "The changing nature of Serbian political parties' attitudes towards Serbian EU membership." *European Parties Election and Referendum Network Working Paper* No. 24 (August 2011)

Strabreit, Immo. "Yugoslav Breakup: Don't Blame Germany." *The Washington Post*. June 29, 1993. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1993/06/29/yugoslav-breakup-dont-blame-germany/cbbc1514-f078-4c7b-bd8a-b6f7d9690a97/?utm_term=.f67221a2ba98

- Surk, Barbara. "As China Moves In, Serbia Reaps Benefits, With Strings Attached." *The New York Times*. September 9, 2017.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/09/world/europe/china-serbia-european-union.html>
- Taggart, Paul. *Populism*. Open University Press: Philadelphia. 2000. pp 2-4.
- Tharoor, Ishaan. "Map: The countries that recognize Palestine as a state." *The Washington Post*. November 7, 2014.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/11/07/map-the-countries-that-recognize-palestine-as-a-state/?utm_term=.fcee5004ba9a
- Toal, Gerard and Carl T. Dahlman. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 186.
- Troch, Pieter. "Yugoslavism between world wars: indecisive nation building." *Nationalities Papers* 38 no. 2 (2010)
- Vasovic, Aleksandar. "Belgrade protest against Mladic arrest turns violent." *Reuters*. May 29, 2011. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-mladic-protests/belgrade-protest-against-mladic-arrest-turns-violent-idUSTRE74S1GR20110529>
- Vasovic, Aleksandar. "Serbia Prepares for Key Presidential Vote." *Balkan Insight*. February 2, 2008. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-prepares-for-key-presidential-vote>
- Vasovic, Aleksandar. "Serbian foreign minister rejects U.S. call to choose between Russia and the West." *Reuters*. November 2, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-minister/serbian-foreign-minister-rejects-u-s-call-to-choose-between-russia-and-the-west-idUSKBN1D22OK>
- Verheyen, Dirk. *The German Question: A Cultural, Historical, and Geopolitical Exploration*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1999.
- Vukojcic, Smiljana. "Poll: Serbs unwilling to go to war over Kosovo." Euractiv. February 14, 2017. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/poll-serbs-not-willing-to-go-to-war-over-kosovo/>
- Vulliamy, Ed. "Ratko Mladic's arrest is a hollow victory in a country that refuses to apologise." *The Guardian*. May 28, 2011.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/may/28/ratko-mladic-bosnia-ed-vulliamy>

Weitz, Richard. "Russia, NATO, and the Yugoslav Wars." *Second Line of Defense*. Accessed January 5, 2018. <http://www.sldinfo.com/russia-nato-and-the-yugoslav-wars/>

Zalan, Eszter. "Bulgaria calls for West Balkan EU integration after Brexit." *EU Observer*. November 7, 2017. <https://euobserver.com/enlargement/139808>

Zivanovic, Maja. "Serbian President Nikolic 'Confident' of Re-Election." *Balkan Insight*. January 31, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/nikolic-claims-he-has-support-for-presidential-race-01-31-2017>

Zivanovic, Maja. "Serbian President Nikolic Abandons Bid for Second Term." *Balkan Insight*. February 20, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/still-no-agreement-between-serbian-president-and-prime-minister-02-19-2017>

Zivanovic, Maja. "Serbia's Vucic Plans Lavish Inauguration Ceremony." *Balkan Insight*. June 14, 2017. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vucic-to-be-inaugurated-on-the-special-event-06-13-2017>