

**Referendum Discourse in Republic of Srpska Politics 2006- 2008:
An Analysis of its Emergence and Performative Structure**

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(ABSTRACT)

Nationalist discourse has played an important role in the breakup of Yugoslavia, with particularly extensive influence on the future of the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The tensions raised by ethno-nationalist rhetoric would lead to a 1992-1995 War that effectively segregated the population of Bosnia into three ethnic camps and destroyed the country's trademark multiculturalism. Bosnia emerged from the war as a weak union of two ethno-territories; the Bosniak-Croat Federation (FBiH) and the Serb-dominated Republic of Srpska (RS). During the first post-war decade, it made considerable progress towards reconciliation and Euro-Atlantic integrations.

However, in May of 2006 the Prime Minister of RS Milorad Dodik made first of a series of comments that advocated the right of RS to hold independence referendum, signaling a major return of inflammatory and divisive ethno-nationalist rhetoric. What we can call "RS Referendum Discourse" is not exactly a new object or desire, but its articulation and expression from 2006 onwards deserves careful consideration on its own merits. This thesis seeks to document the emergence and performative structure of the RS Referendum Discourse through a textual analysis of how it was registered and recorded in two Bosnian daily newspapers. The research is an empirical study of nationalism as expressed in discourse on the future of the Bosnian state.

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Chapter I

Introduction

“Saying something”, J. L. Austin observed more than half a century ago, “often, even normally, produces certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons”(Austin, 1975: 101). When the speaker is a political leader and the audience is an imagined nation, speech acts may produce particularly extensive consequences. The potency of words was clearly perceptible during the rise of the competing nationalism that culminated into the bloody wars in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Many analysts have identified Slobodan Milosevic’s infamous 1989 Gazimestan Speech in front of approximately one million people gathered to commemorate 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo as turning point towards violent disintegration of Yugoslavia. The speech’s Serb-centered content represented a radical departure from the anti-nationalist ideology of Tito’s Yugoslavia, fueling separatist aspirations in Slovenia and Croatia. Since then and until the end of armed conflicts in the late 1990s if not beyond, ethno-nationalist discourses have dominated the political landscape across the former Yugoslavia.

At the analytical level, discourse is an important form of political action even when it does not necessarily produce new policy outcomes. The rhetorical re-assertion of an existing status is a form of identity hailing and assemblage. It ‘calls out’ an identity that does not exist independent of the act of its articulation and assertion. Speaking an identity makes the identity. One form of this hailing is to call out an identity as something under threat. A conspiracy is afoot against its status which requires action to ‘defend’ the identity against those plotting against it. V. P. Gagnon has observed that it is a purposeful activity designed to have particular effects:

Speech acts are meaningful as evidence regarding the calculations of political actors about the preferences and values of the politically relevant audiences.
(2006: xx)

This is particularly relevant to emotionally salient issues, as is the case with perceived ethnic strife in the former Yugoslavia. Drew Westen has documented a powerful role of emotions in political life. In *The Political Brain*, Westen builds a convincing argument

that when reason and emotions clash, emotions invariably prevail (2007). According to his research on the neurological basis for political behavior, political platforms are successful only when presented in manner that resonates with the passions of the targeted masses. Political discourse has to have some form of emotional appeal.

In the former Yugoslavia, the eruption of ethno-nationalist discourses was followed by a transformation of ethnic categories into palpable groups with intense feelings of ethnic solidarity. During the subsequent violence this sense of groupness was intensified and remained high throughout several years of armed conflicts. The solidarity subsided with the eventual silencing of guns, allowing for the discourses on democratization, economic reforms, euro-Atlantic integrations and other issues not rooted in ethno-nationalist agendas to recapture public attention. As the power of moderate leaders grew, the politics in the former Yugoslav republics increasingly focused on a common aspiration of joining the European Union. Signs of reconciliation between the former warring sides were manifested in interactions such as establishment of diplomatic relations, economic exchange and freedoms of movement.

A break with the violent past was evident in May of 2006 when Montenegro held a peaceful independence referendum. While independence referendums in the Yugoslav republics had served as triggers of armed mobilizations and violence in the early 1990s, the 2006 Montenegro Referendum did not result in disorder. In contrast to earlier disputed referendums in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), the political factions that had opposed independence approved of the 2006 Montenegrin referendum as a legitimate indicator of the popular will. In these circumstances, the outcome in favor of independence that met the EU-advocated threshold of 55 percent was followed by a consensual and orderly secession of Montenegro from union with Serbia.

However, the new eruption of secessionist politics presented particular dangers in ethnically divided Bosnia. During the early 1990s secessionist scenarios contributed to the outbreak of 1992-1995 Bosnian war. As Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1991, Bosnia's three ruling parties had split on the issue of whether to remain in Yugoslav federation or pursue independence. The split that followed perceived ethnic lines would be devastating for the Bosnian multi-ethnic society. Bosniak Party for Democratic Action (SDA) and Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) advocated independence,

arguing that Yugoslavia without Slovenia and Croatia would fall under Serb domination. On the other side, Serb Democratic Party (SDS) opposed the secession that would effectively separate Bosnian Serbs from Serbia.

The Serbs constituted only about a third of the Bosnian population and their votes alone were not sufficient to prevent secession at the ballot box or in multi-ethnic Bosnian institutions. In order to advance the agenda of remaining in the same state with Serbia, the SDS resorted to establishing exclusively Serb institutions that existed parallel to those of the official Bosnian government. In the fall of 1991, the SDS formed a separate Bosnian Serb assembly to look after Serb interests. The party also engaged in the process of asserting control over territories that it wished to keep in Yugoslavia. This was a process mired with practical obstacles arising from Bosnian demographic realities. The population of Bosnia had been multi-ethnic throughout the republic's territory, and the areas where Serbs constituted a majority of the population lacked territorial continuity. Furthermore, substantial populations of non-Serbs lived in Serb-majority municipalities, and many Serbs lived in municipalities where Muslims or Croats constituted a majority.

Nonetheless, the party began asserting control over territories that it regarded as "Serbian" as early as April of 1991 by engaging in the process of "regionalization". This involved the creation of mono-ethnic regional levels of governance intermediate between the republic and municipalities. In the initial stages of "regionalization", the SDS sponsored the formation of communities of municipalities, all of which had a Serbian majority or plurality (Treanor, 2002: 74). During the fall of 1991, SDS officials in municipalities where Serbs were the minority began establishing separate Serbian municipal governments. These parallel municipal organs were charged with defining areas, towns, and villages within their municipalities that were regarded as "Serbian". By the end of 1991, the communities of municipalities joined by additional "Serbian" territories of other municipalities had evolved into self-declared Serbian Autonomous Districts (Treanor, 2002: 81). In December of 1991, the Bosnian Serb Assembly appointed the presidents of Serbian Autonomous Districts to membership in a newly-established Bosnian Serb Council of Ministers. This was a major step towards the subsequent consolidation of "Serbian" regions into a single Bosnian Serb state.

The SDS claimed that the process of establishing separate institutions was necessary for realization of the will of the Bosnian Serb population to remain in Yugoslavia. To support this claim, the party organized a Bosnian Serb plebiscite that was held on November 9th and 10th, 1991, in which the participants overwhelmingly voted in favor of remaining in Yugoslavia. (Treanor, 2002: 60) However, Bosniak, Croat and multi-ethnic political parties continued the push for Bosnian independence. In order to fulfill the requirements for recognition set by the European Community, the Bosnian government organized a referendum on the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina that was held on February 28th and March 1st of 1992. Although the Serbs overwhelmingly boycotted the referendum, close to two-thirds of eligible Bosnian voters voted in favor of independence. With Bosnian independence awaiting international recognition and no compromise in sight, the SDS proceeded with creating an ethnically exclusive Serb state on multi-ethnic Bosnian territory. By spring of 1992, the Bosnian Serb institutions were no longer parallel, but separate and distinct. The SDS officials withdrew from joint organs and continued participation only in institutions of the nascent Bosnian Serb state. The continuous ethno-territory for the state would be created by expelling non-Serb populations.

The violence in Bosnia erupted in April of 1992 as independence received widespread international recognition. Throughout the following three and a half years of war, the Bosnian independence referendum would occupy a central place in wartime storylines. Thus, the Bosnian government claimed to battle for the will of the Bosnian people expressed in the referendum, while the Serb opponents alleged to fight for the interests of Serbs that the referendum disregarded and endangered. The violence would conclude in 1995 with the Dayton Peace Agreement that transformed Bosnia into a weak union of two deeply autonomous ethno-territories, one of which was a Serb dominated Republic of Srpska (RS). In this manner, the war failed to fulfill Serb nationalist ambitions of keeping Bosnian Serbs and Serbia united in the same state.

The peace agreement did not end the aspirations of many RS Serbs to secede from Bosnia. However, public articulations of such nationalist desires that were at odds with the peace agreement had declined with Bosnia's progress towards the implementation of the Dayton provisions. This changed in May of 2006 with drastic intensification of

nationalist rhetoric in the aftermath of Montenegro's independence referendum. The eruption was triggered when the RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik drew on the occasion of the Montenegro Referendum to make a first of a series of public comments discussing the possibility of the RS holding a referendum on seceding from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The idea of the RS referendum has been a topic of public debate ever since, effectively radicalizing the Bosnian political scene.

What we can call "RS Referendum Discourse" is not exactly a new object or desire in Bosnian political life, but its articulation and expression from 2006 onwards is a distinctive eruption that deserves careful consideration on its own merits. This thesis seeks to document the emergence and performative structure of the Referendum Discourse in the RS and indeed Bosnian political life through a textual analysis of how it was registered and recorded in two Bosnian daily newspapers. The research is an empirical study of nationalism as expressed in discourse on the future of the Bosnian state.

The initiator and the leading promoter of the RS Referendum Discourse is the RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik. His primary role in advocacy of the RS Referendum signified a sharp departure from non-nationalist politics that characterized his political behavior for the greater part of his career. Dodik first ascended to political prominence as a member of the Union of Reform Forces (SRSJ), a liberal Yugoslav party founded by former Prime Minister of Yugoslavia Ante Markovic. In the aftermath of the 1990 first multi-party elections in BiH, Dodik was elected to the parliament of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He also served as President of the SRSJ Regional Board for Bosnian Krajina. In April of 1991, Dodik publicly criticized the unilateralism of the SDS "regionalization" initiative in Bosnian Krajina, calling for governing institutions to refocus attention from "over-politicized" sovereignty and independence issues to economic and social concerns (Joksimovic, 1991).

However, Dodik also participated in the SDS-sponsored parallel institutions, becoming a representative in the Bosnian Serb Assembly from the time of its inception (Republika Srpska Government Online). During his war-time service in the Assembly, Dodik formed the caucus of independent members that was the only opposition to the right-wing Serb Democratic Party (SDS). Shortly after the end of the war, the caucus

was transformed into the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and Dodik was elected the party's president. In post-war Bosnia, SNSD received extensive international support as a moderate alternative to the rule of right-wing nationalists in the RS. With this assistance, Dodik ascended to the position of the RS Prime Minister in 1998, forming the government that lasted until 2001. After several years in opposition, he was appointed to the position of the Prime Minister again in 2005. Dodik's May 2006 comments discussing the RS referendum would be the beginning of his emergence as chief protagonist of Serb nationalist politics.

Why RS Referendum Discourse Matters?

This study of RS Referendum Discourse is significant in several respects. In order to present a more complete account of its impact, I first address the question of why discourse matters. In recent years, constructivist perspectives and performativity theory have exposed the power of discourse in the construction of social reality. Constructivists argue that social facts are only facts by human agreement, their existence dependent on human knowledge and language. Constructivist explanations usually reconstruct narratives to expose the validity of statements, social mechanisms and social structures, because the manner in which social facts become established is considered relevant to the way in which they exert their influence (Adler, 1997: 339). In contrast to the rational choice theorists who suggest that social actors bargain to achieve the utilities they expect, constructivists argue that agents use discourse which demonstrates the validity of their arguments and in turn promotes collective understandings. Emanuel Adler has accounted for the role of debate and persuasion in helping promote shared understandings:

Language is the medium for the construction of intersubjective meanings. The sense of right, obligation, and duty that political actors borrow from social structures depends on language that is oriented toward collective purposes (Adler, 2005: 103)

Thus, the constructivists emphasize that the power of discourse is in defining problems and posing questions accordingly.

Judith Butler (1993) has criticized constructivist arguments on grounds that they either present discourse as so deterministic that human agency is expunged, or

conversely, that human agent is dominant and engages in construction with little constraint. She suggests a solution that keeps the focus on the discursive production of meanings, identities and social relations without denying the significance of materiality or suggesting anything about the world external to thought. For Butler and other theorists who draw upon 'speech act' theory, the notion of performativity is important because it treats the discourse as involving both the ideal and material. Performativity theory argues that the social magic of discourses is that they constitute the objects of which they speak. Discourse is viewed as not something that subjects use in order to describe object, but it is that which constitutes both subjects and objects. Although materiality is not denied, discursive practices are presented as the only way of *comprehending* phenomena that are held to be outside of discourse.

As Milosevic's Gazimestan speech illustrated, words have played a major role in the outbreak of devastating wars in Bosnia and other areas of the former Yugoslavia. Although regional political complexities and demographic realities have changed significantly over the past decade, contemporary Bosnian ethnic cleavages continue to provide a potentially explosive environment in which ethno-nationalist discourse carries realistic potential of producing renewed conflict. Particularly dangerous are discursive appeals to desires of one perceived ethnic group that directly conflict with ambitions of another. This is the case with the RS Referendum Discourse. The articulation of a predominant Serb desire for an independent RS clashes with prevailing Bosniak aspirations for a unified and entity-free Bosnia. The intensification of rival rhetoric pertaining to these issues of high emotional saliency is likely to further polarize Bosnian ethnic divides. The renewed focus on perceived ethno-national objectives that were unfulfilled during the war carries the potential of drastically elevating levels of group solidarity. Consequently, the likelihood for collective action and renewed violence in a country mired by ethnic rivalries is increased.

Second, the reoccurrence of inflammatory rhetoric could jeopardize the success of intervention initiated in Bosnia in the mid-1990s and produce conditions that require renewed international troop deployments in the country. In post-Dayton years, the international community has devoted considerable resources towards building the lasting peace and a self-sustaining Bosnian state. In late 1995, close to 60,000 multi-national

troops were deployed to Bosnia as part of a NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) charged with separating the warring sides and guaranteeing the end of hostilities. Since then, the international military mission in Bosnia has gone through several phases of sharp downsizing. In December of 2004, NATO handed over the peacekeeping mission to the European Union Force (EUFOR) that presently deploys only around 2,500 troops (EUFOR Online). In comparison to earlier post-Dayton military contingents, EUFOR has a dramatically reduced capacity to enforce decisions or deter potential recurrence of violence. Although Bosnia largely dropped out of international news headlines with the end of large-scale violence, the problems that remain demand continuous attention of international policy makers and military experts. Escalation of these problems could return the country to its ill-famed recent history. The escalation of ethno-nationalist rhetoric that discussed the potentiality of the RS Referendum may be a significant step towards such deterioration and potential loss of all investments made by the international community.

Third, the potential move towards the RS referendum may have strategic implications that extend beyond Bosnian boundaries. Along with unilateral recognition of Kosovo by Western powers and Russian unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the RS secession could serve as an exemplar for separatists across Eurasia. It would demonstrate the potential of a separatist drive to succeed in Europe despite years of direct international opposition and a massive international project at integration. Regionally, it could bolster separatism in several other regions in the former Yugoslavia, such as Serbian regions of Sandzak, Presevo Valley and Vojvodina.

Fourth, the possibility of RS Referendum could also intensify broader theoretical debates over the right to internal self-determination. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights defines this right in a strict sense, providing that “every citizen shall have the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives...and to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country” (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights). If the RS was awarded the right to hold a referendum, it could be perceived as a legal precedent that interprets self-determination in a broader sense to include the right to secession of internal administrative units.

The Bosnian example already contributes to both theoretical and practical challenges against the strict definition of self-determination that defines it as the right to representative government. On the theoretical level, if western-style democracy is defined as a truly representative government the question of minority interests that may be too often overridden by a majority vote remains. This question has particular relevance in the multi-ethnic Bosnian state in which ethno-politics permeates the daily public life. The definition of ultimate constituent units has been the topic of significant political debates in BiH since the beginning of the 1990s. The 1990 Amendments constitutionally defined Bosnia-Herzegovina as a Socialist republic of three constituent nations- Muslims, Serbs and Croats, and *members* of other nations. However, as Andrew Corin observed, multiple conceptions of the meaning of constituent nations have competed for dominance. One conception identified the individual citizen as the ultimate constituent unit out of which the state was constructed. According to the opposite conception, the republic's "constituent nations" were the ultimate units and the ultimate bearers of authority (Corin, 2006: 37).

Bosnian Serb politicians have advocated the "constituent nations" concept, claiming that Serb interests could be regularly overridden in joint institutions by combined votes of Bosniak and Croat representatives if specific provisions were not made to safeguard ethnic interests. The key concept in this discourse is the notion of "out-voting" which, taken to its conclusion, is a refusal to accept the majoritarianism in normal democracies. This argument was illustrated by frequent citations of the 1992 Bosnian Independence Referendum that was opposed and boycotted by most Serbs. Despite the boycott, the combined votes of Bosniaks, Croats and other supporters of Bosnia's secession were sufficient for referendum's success, setting the country on the path of independence against the will of many but not all Serbs. Conversely, the Bosniak politicians supported the "constituent individuals" view, claiming that extensive provisions for protection of ethnic interests could allow a single ethnic group to hamper functionality of joint institutions. This conception also favored the Bosniaks at the pragmatic level considering that Bosniaks constituted a relative ethnic majority in Bosnia.

On practical level, defining self-determination in terms of representative government is particularly problematic in Bosnia where ethnically exclusive territories

were created during the war through expulsion of many potential voters. Thus, when the right to representative government is exercised after forcible demographic shifts, the elections can have the effect of validating ethnic cleansing. This can also challenge a broader definition of self-determination that includes the right to secession, since the effects of ethnic cleansing would also dictate the outcome of a potential independence referendum.

In summary, the RS Referendum Discourse may have extensive theoretical and practical implications on its own, even if no tangible steps are taken towards achieving aspirations that it articulates. This research into the performative structure of the RS Referendum Discourse will describe its deployment as a strategic political instrument. Before presenting the results of the analyses, I briefly review the political context within which the RS Referendum Discourse has emerged and consider relevant theoretical perspectives that provide a basis for proper understanding of empirical findings. Additionally, I present the research methodology and define the main discursive themes under analytical scope, providing a roadmap for the remainder of the thesis.

Bosnia's Contested State

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the Bosnian War was an outcome of painful compromises by all warring sides. The country was administratively divided into the two deeply autonomous entities; the Muslim-Croat Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Serb dominated Republic of Srpska (RS). Thus, the Bosnian government was forced to accept the creation of two ethnic mini-states that would be joined by weak central institutions. On the other side, the Dayton agreement deprived the Bosnian Serb nationalists of their goal of seceding from Bosnia-Herzegovina and uniting with Serbia. The parties present at Dayton also acknowledged the difficulty of implementing the agreement in a highly militarized war-shattered country, as they authorized the deployment of a large and heavily armed NATO-led implementation force to separate the warring armies and provide a secure environment. The agreement established the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which was to become the office of the chief diplomat of the international community empowered to supervise the DPA implementation. The DPA was eventually sufficiently implemented to

silence the guns, provide freedom of movement, and return those displaced persons who wished to return to their pre-war dwellings if they were still intact. Furthermore, the Bosnian government began functioning within its limited scope, as common institutions such as the Central Bank and the State Border Police were successfully established.

However, today's Bosnia bears little resemblance of a pre-war republic characterized by a mosaic of peacefully coexisting Muslims, Serbs, Croats and other Bosnians that did not identify under any of the three dominant ethnic categories. Although the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats are nominally the constituent groups on the entire Bosnian territory, the post-war efforts did not substantially reverse the effects of ethnic cleansing. In practice, both FBiH and RS are ethno-territories, with the Republic of Srpska enshrining this principle in its official name. Despite the fact that only slightly over half of the pre-war population of present-day RS declared as Serbs, estimates indicate that Serbs constitute over 90 percent of its current population. More importantly, the political life in Bosnia is under constant strain of competition between the two entities, which is a product of the institutionalization of ethno-territorialism in the Dayton Peace Agreement. This chasm is especially pronounced between the Bosniak and Serb political elites. On the one hand, Bosniak parties have continually stressed the territorial integrity of Bosnia and called for strengthening of the central government. At times, they have also publically expressed their ultimate desire for the abolishment of the Republic of Srpska, the entity perceived by most Bosniaks as a genocidal creation. On the other side, Serb parties have stressed that the RS was a permanent unit whose non-negotiable survival was guaranteed in the Dayton Accords. Furthermore, they have resisted attempts to defer jurisdictions of entities to the state.

In the years following the signing of the DPS, the representatives of International Community (IC) in BiH perceived the nationalist rhetoric and resistance coming from the RS as principal obstacle to the agreement's full implementation. Since the start of the mandate of OHR, the high representative has replaced a number of Serb politicians for "anti-Dayton" behavior. As most of the DPS provisions were becoming implemented, it became increasingly evident that the peace agreement alone would not substantially reverse ethnic cleansing nor create a functional state capable of being integrated into the NATO and the EU. Without further reforms Bosnia faced isolation in a region where

neighboring states were inching closer to the EU. Years after Dayton, the international community continued pressuring the RS politicians to defer powers of entities in favor of strengthening the Bosnian state. In face of potential political and economic isolation, the RS political leadership reluctantly made a number of concessions, some of which extended beyond their Dayton obligations.

A shift in this trend has been noted during negotiations of constitutional reforms that failed to receive a necessary majority in the Bosnian parliament in April of 2006. After months of negotiations, the leading parties representing all three ethnic groups reached a compromise on constitutional reforms that received undivided support from the international community. However, Bosniak-dominated Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina (SBiH) of former Bosnian wartime Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic as well as several smaller parties in the FBiH rejected proposed reforms, arguing that they would cement the position of the Republic of Srpska while providing only “cosmetic” improvements to the constitution. The dissenters eventually secured enough votes in the parliament to ensure that the proposed reforms would not receive a necessary two-thirds majority. The response of major powers was a rare occurrence in the post-Dayton Bosnia: Serb parties were praised for willingness to compromise while Bosniak dissidents were confronted with sharp criticism. In the aftermath, Serb politicians accentuated that they would no longer make concessions that further weaken the entities. Only several weeks later Montenegro held a successful independence referendum, after which the RS Referendum Discourse erupted onto the Bosnian daily political stage. The failure of the April 2006 negotiations set up a dynamic in Bosnian politics with a historic precedent dating back to the 1991 public debates in the Bosnian Parliament. In October of 1991, Serb parliamentarians strongly opposed the initiative that Bosnian parliament issue a declaration of sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. After failing to reach an agreement, the Serb members walked out of the parliament and the remaining deputies adopted a declaration without their participation. In the aftermath, Serbs intensified their establishment of parallel institutions, while the Bosniak and Croat parties continued their push for Bosnian independence. The subsequent failures to reach a compromise only resulted in additional polarization that eventually culminated in successful creation of a separate Bosnian Serb republic. Although there are important differences between the

political context of these events and the radicalization of April 2006, similarities in political behavior are significant. Namely, a very public failure of a major push for compromise was followed by a retreat to more radical positions. Milorad Dodik was an observer of the 1991 events and has perhaps drawn lessons from them.

Theorizing the Breakup of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian War

There has been a significant amount of literature on the fall of Yugoslavia, the outbreak of war in Bosnia and the difficulties of building peace in a war-torn country. Most of these works discuss the breakup of Yugoslavia within the framework of ethnic nationalism, with presentation of the conflict in Bosnia as a clash of ethnic groups. This brief literature review presents alternative theoretical perspectives that move beyond perceived ethnic groups as units of analysis. These perspectives are privileged here for their ability to critically evaluate acts that constitute RS Referendum Discourse without attaching an attribute of group representation. Furthermore, their insights into the causes of bloody Yugoslav conflicts offer a promising path for understanding the underlying ambitions of calls for RS Referendum.

The ethnicized reading of Yugoslav conflicts has been challenged in recent years by various strands of constructivism which argue that identities are constructed, unstable and multifarious, and not the primordial givens that ethno-nationalists and other commentators claim they are. A constructivist perspective of Bosnian ethnicities underscores historical evolutions of self-understandings and administrative demographic categories in present-day BIH while dismissing essentialist and primordialist claims. In his account of Bosnian history since the Middle Ages, Marco Atilla Hoare shows that current breakdown of Bosnians into Serb, Croat and Bosniak ethnic groups is a product of centuries of contingent historical development. Thus, he points out that emergence of Croat and Serb nationalities among Bosnian Catholics and Orthodox Christians has been largely an import of their coreligionists from neighboring principalities (Hoare, 2007).

More generally, Rogers Brubaker points to the problem of identity as analytical concept, claiming that it entails problematic assumption that identity is something all people and groups have or are in search of (Brubaker, 2006: 37). Such assumption can be particularly harmful in analysis of a discourse that is driven by ethno-nationalist themes.

Brubaker advocates replacement of identity as an analytical tool by several less congested terms that do the same theoretical work, such as categorization, commonality, self-understandings and identification. In order to safeguard against harmful assumptions, this thesis will privilege these unbundled terms to highlight and understand the Serb, Croat and Bosniak experiences as they pertain to the RS Referendum Discourse.

While criticizing the use of identity in social analysis, Brubaker acknowledges its power as a category of practice. Brubaker argues that identity is:

used by political entrepreneurs to persuade people to understand themselves, their interests, and their predicaments in a certain way, to persuade certain people that they are 'identical' with one another and at the same time different from others, and to organize and justify collective action along certain lines (2006: 32).

V. P. Gagnon applies this view of political entrepreneurship to analyze the outbreak of violence in the former Yugoslavia. While standard elite centric perspectives tend to focus on how elites mobilize ethnicity to accumulate power, Gagnon focuses on how already entrenched elites try to demobilize political opponents in order to stay in power:

the ultimate goal is not so much ethnic homogeneity as it is the construction of homogenous *political* space as a means to demobilize challengers (2006: 9).

Thus, in Gagnon's view violence in the former Yugoslavia was not a product of appeal to ethnicity or identity that was suddenly released after decades of repression. Rather, the ethno-nationalist discourse aimed to prevent alternative mobilizations that could have occurred around a host of other issues, not the least of which were democratization, economic reform and a crackdown on corruption. I argue below that the politics of a RS referendum is having a similar demobilizing effect.

Bosnian historical experience characterized by peaceful coexistence and interaction of people that identified with various religions and ethnic categories has created numerous cross-ethnic identifiers. As Gagnon's discussion has shown, much of these were demobilized at the outbreak of war as ethno-political entrepreneurs kept ethnicity to the forefront. However, even in a deeply divided Bosnian post-war society, new intra- as well as inter-ethnic affiliations and identifications continue to emerge. Differentiations within perceived ethnic groups are well illustrated in Ioannis

Armakolis's narrative of the urban/rural divide that exists in accounts of Sarajevo Serbs who settled in villages and small towns in the RS. Armakolis observes:

The constant evocation by Sarajevo Serbs of their former urban identity can be seen as an attempt to create a boundary between themselves and the local population (Bougarel, Helms and Duijzing, 2007: 89).

Similarly, Elissa Helms' work on the status of women in the political life of post-war Bosnia shows affiliations and commonalities that transcend ethnic boundaries. Helms has documented workshops and NGO conferences where women from all parts of Bosnia came together to express their common concerns (Bougarel, Helms and Duijzing, 2007: 241).

This literature is consistent with one central effect of the RS Referendum Discourse documented in my research: demobilization of alternative issues and axes of identification. By keeping the focus on the emotional issue of the political status of RS, other major concerns such as corruption, crime and economic progress were marginalized. The leading promoter of RS Referendum Discourse Milorad Dodik, for example, has long dodged charges of corruption. The demobilization is particularly evidenced in a major eruption of the RS Referendum Discourse that occurred prior to October 2006 state wide elections, which will be discussed in this thesis at depth.

Methodology and structure

All analyses of a discourse require creativity for there are no agreed and paradigmatic "discourse analysis", but a heterogeneous mixture of approaches, perspectives and strategies (Macdonel, 1986). This section reviews particular strategies utilized in analysis of the RS Referendum Discourse by discussing fundamental analytical units and rationalizing research methodology. It also outlines main discursive themes according to which formulaic storylines were constructed and findings thematically presented.

The thesis principally relies on an archival analysis of the best selling daily newspaper in Bosnia *Dnevni Avaz* (DA)¹. This newspaper was established in 1995 by

¹ Quotations from *Dnevni Avaz* are internally cited in the format that first lists DA, followed by date and page.

Fahrudin Radoncic, a Bosniak journalist from the Sandzak region of Montenegro. *Dnevni Avaz* is located in Sarajevo and holds close to two-thirds of the market in FBiH. Although it is commonly viewed as a pro-Bosniak newspaper, *Dnevni Avaz* is a necessary resource in the study of the RS Referendum Discourse because it is the closest thing to a popular Bosnian national newspaper. *Dnevni Avaz* tends to report extensively on the RS nationalist rhetoric since it generates high levels of interest amongst its Bosniak readership. Thus, the likelihood that relevant statements by the RS politicians as well as Bosniak reactions are recorded and published is high.

It should also be noted that in a deeply divided Bosnian society it would be difficult to find a media outlet that does not have some level of ethnicized framing in coverage of national affairs. Post-Dayton media in Bosnia was as ethnically divided as the country, and in service of leading nationalist parties. Prominent Bosnian journalist Kemal Kurspahic has observed that a turn towards greater media freedom occurred in year 2000 with a rise of moderate leaders. That year *Dnevni Avaz* “broke from SDA political control and began to publish an independent line” (Kurspahic, 2003: 196). However, the vast majority of Bosnian media retained ethnic bias that international media projects unsuccessfully attempted to annul. Kurspahic summarizes the underlying obstacle that prevented the development of genuinely independent media representative of all ethnic groups:

Most of the international institutions operating in Bosnia accepted, instead of challenging, the tripartite division of everything Bosnian- including the media (2003: 197).

Since it is necessary to be cognizant of an institutional inclination towards the negative framing of the question of the RS referendum, this research is focused on reports as opposed to commentaries. To further correct against negative framing and in order to ensure against any significant omissions of relevant information, the analysis of *Dnevni Avaz* is supplemented by a review of the online edition archive of the popular RS-based independent daily *Nezavisne Novine*. This newspaper was established in 1995 by a moderate Bosnian Serb journalist Zeljko Kopanja. By June 2000, *Nezavisne Novine* has become by far more popular in the RS than once dominant *Glas Srpske*. (Kurspahic, 2003: 196). *Nezavisne Novine* is based in the capital of RS Banja Luka, and has

previously received funding from Milorad Dodik. Thus, the research relies on information published by leading newspapers in both the RS and FBiH.

My analysis has both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension. In the quantitative stage, every edition of *Dnevni Avaz* for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 was reviewed in order to record acts that pertain to the RS referendum discourse and reveal patterns in their temporal variability. This time period covers the discourse from its emergence to the end of 2008. Through private purchase I have obtained the full electronic archive of *Dnevni Avaz* starting on January 1st, 2006 along with a prescription that is valid until December 1st, 2009. The archive was initially researched by typing several keywords in the search engine. These include “referendum”, “independence”, and “secession”. After the pages containing these words were extracted, they were manually reviewed in order to sort out material that pertains specifically to the RS Referendum Discourse. Although robust, this procedure ensured that all relevant content was included in the analysis. Furthermore, main headlines of the available archive of *Nezavisne Novine* were manually reviewed for the same time period in order to reveal any additional insight into the topic.

All instances of speech acts pertaining to the discourse were recorded in aggregate on an MS Excel spreadsheet and arranged by date. The spreadsheet thus revealed daily variability in the quantity of keywords over a three year span.² This analysis has revealed three major eruptions that corresponded in timing to the Montenegro Referendum, the 2006 elections and Kosovo’s declaration of independence. The quantitative stage was extended further by unbundling the aggregate and recording the occurrence of speech acts in terms of additional categories. All statements that mentioned the statuses of Kosovo and Montenegro within the context of the referendum discourse were separately recorded and presented in the form of bar graphs to show temporal characteristics of these factors of eruption.³

The RS Referendum Discourse is analyzed here at both micro- and meso- level. Micro-level analysis involves finely focused studies of speech acts and is required to

² For more information pertaining to procedures for extracting and recording relevant information, see Appendix.

³ The words “Kosovo” and “Montenegro” were researched for this purpose and presented in Appendix as Charts II and III respectively. See Appendix for additional detail on methodology.

construct 'grammars of state action' out of the density of historical records (Miliken, 2001). In this analysis, I closely evaluated individual speech acts in order to assess their communicative function as constituents of wider RS Referendum Discourse. In contrast to traditional linguistics that focuses on sentence structure and does not concern itself with an analysis of language in use, I was interested in focused studies of larger units and structures that are recognized by speakers and hearers at the level of discourse (Mills, 2004: 120). For each discursive act discussing the potential RS referendum, I made inferences by considering the stage, the speaker, the intended audience, tones of utterances, the underlying assumptions and specific political context at the time. The analyzed acts are not necessarily sentences, but are composed of groups of words or sentences having a recognizable function. Their form is ultimately determined by social purpose, and as such they provide insight into broader discursive strategies.

These micro-level assessments are utilized to develop meso-level analysis that connects them to wider discourse processes. Meso-level analysis is concerned with how discourse helps produce lay understandings and pragmatic 'storylines' that condition routine policy practices (Ó Tuathail, 2002: 606). Storyline can be defined as the way in which events, locations, protagonists, processes and interests are organized into a relatively coherent narrative of explanation and meaning that gradually congeals around persistent public policy challenges and dilemmas (O'Tuathail, O'Loughlin and Kolossov, 2004: 285). The analysis of the RS Referendum Discourse was in large part achieved by defining distinctive storylines of political sides that are differentiated according to three distinct interests they claim to represent; those of the Serbs in the RS, the interests of Bosniaks and/or other supporters of united Bosnia, and the interests of international community in Bosnia. Additional storyline differentiations were made in case of 2006 election campaign, during which political parties with the same ethnic designation had battled for votes by frequently making competing arguments. The storylines of Croat parties were not assembled due to a relatively minor role of Croat politicians in the RS Referendum Discourse.

I was able to construct a discursive map by itemizing storylines in terms of schematic formulae. The analysis showed that referendum storylines have the following features:

1. Descriptions of international events involving referenda and claims to self-determination that offer perspectives on their legality and wider meaning. In this set of speech acts politicians take on the role of teachers and commentators of international affairs. They use international events to assert norms like 'self-determination,' values like 'democracy' and the 'rights' of 'peoples' like 'sovereignty' and 'independence' if they so desire. Ostensibly reasonable assertions, these speech acts are the ground work for their application to the specific context of the RS and its imagined nation of 'Bosnian Serbs.'
2. Assertion of what the speaker holds should be the position of all members of targeted audience. The politicians declare core values and interests of the imagined nation. Here, the RS politicians present ethnic self-rule and control of ethnic territory as a 'right' and crucial national value. More specifically, the RS politicians assert value in being part of the greater Serbian nation. They declare that the interests of the imagined 'Bosnian Serb' nation are inextricably linked to the protection of the status of RS. Bosniak leaders present territorial integrity of Bosnia as a core interest of Bosniaks.
3. Production of the threat discourse claiming that the imagined nation is in danger. Here, the politicians argue that the imagined nation has been thwarted from achieving its rights claim and that the rights it possesses are endangered by presence of active adversaries. The RS politicians assert that the imagined Bosnian Serb nation is unable to fully exercise the right to self-determination since it is constantly forced to adapt to the will of other nations within Bosnia. Bosniak politicians claim that Serb nationalism presents dangers to survivability of the Bosnian state. Evocation of rival discourses is crucial for this rhetorical behavior.
4. Presentation of referendum as a legitimate policy option for a threatened people. Here the RS politicians engage in crucial acts of classification and specification, drawing connections and analogies between international events and local context. Whereas international officials might hold that a referendum in Montenegro or an independence declaration if Kosovo has not connection to

- Bosnia or the RS, they assert connections of particular kinds. Analogies and similarities are the speech acts that define this form of rhetorical performance.
5. Response to critics who question this perspective. Affirmation of legal agreements along with claims that legal constraints have been destabilized. Here, the RS politicians affirm support for the Dayton Agreement while simultaneously warning that the agreement has been undermined. The agreement's ongoing validity is challenged by evocation of precedents in which other peoples were given a right to self-determination to include statehood, as well as by rival discourse on abolition of entities.

This schematic narrative formula is fundamental and modifies when needed to correspond to specific themes.

At meso- level, research has revealed only several sporadic and indirect mentions of right to self determination prior to May 2006. These acts occurred within the context of negotiations of constitutional reforms and were used to define particular perspectives on meanings of specific proposals. *Dnevni Avaz* has published first comments by Milorad Dodik that introduced the idea of RS referendum on May 26th, 2006. Since then, the referendum discourse has gone through periods of high and low intensity, ranging from concentrated eruptions to spans of several weeks when no mention of referendum was recorded. However, the topic would repeatedly resurface, and the discourse is ongoing to this day.

The analysis has revealed three main events of major influence on the grammar and intensity of the RS Referendum Discourse; the May 2006 Montenegro Referendum, the October 2006 General Elections, and the February 2006 Kosovo's declaration of independence (see Appendix). The alterations in international borders that were the product of Montenegro Referendum and Kosovo negotiations are significant as crucial events that trigger narration of the right to hold the RS independence referendum. The 2006 election campaign offers insight into possible utility of polarizing referendum talk in the race for votes. Since these events also correspond to three largest eruptions of the RS Referendum Discourse, the findings of this thesis are presented by devoting separate chapters for each.

CHAPTER II

“I Like This Manner of Democratic Expression of the Will of the People”: The Montenegro Analogy

A referendum on the independence of the Republic of Montenegro from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro was held on May 21st, 2006. Two days later, all five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council recognized preliminary results according to which more than fifty-five percent of voters voted for independence. This percentage also satisfied the approval threshold set by the European Union, indicating that formal declaration of independence would receive widespread international recognition. Regionally, Macedonia and Croatia welcomed the outcome, while Serbian leadership waited for verification of results before reluctantly accepting them.

Montenegro's independence was a severe blow to long-standing Serb nationalist aspirations of uniting all Serbs in a single state. Serbian right-wing political factions have stressed historical ties of Montenegro and Serbia and common ethnic identification of their populations. In their narratives, they emphasized that Montenegro was a traditionally Serb land, with Montenegrin peoples belonging to a wider Serb nationality. Although these arguments were grounded in abundant historical evidence of inextricable ties between the two peoples, the population of contemporary Montenegro came to increasingly identify as Montenegrin in a national sense. This was eventually reflected in the outcome of the referendum. With a loss of Serb-held areas in Croatia, the RS remaining part of Bosnia and Kosovo under NATO control, Montenegro's independence was another fragmentation of perceived Serb nation that incited feelings of loss amongst many Serbs. It was also a cause for concern that the referendum in Montenegro could be used as precedent by Albanians seeking Kosovo's official independence from Serbia.

However, Montenegro's successful referendum would be utilized as precedent more extensively in neighboring Bosnia than in Kosovo. It began with comments by Kosovo's separatist Prime Minister Agim Ceku, who publicly proclaimed that the referendum was “the last act of the historic liquidation of Yugoslavia...this year Kosovo

will follow in Montenegro's footsteps" (Krasniqi, 2006). This connection of the Montenegrin independence to the status of Kosovo was met by the RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik's commentary that drew additional parallels and presented the Montenegro Referendum as precedent that could be followed by others. *Dnevni Avaz* first reported on Dodik's statements in its May 26th, 2006 edition, while exact quotations were published a day later:

I like this manner of democratic expression of the will of the people to decide on that and perhaps it would be simply a formal question to hold a referendum in Kosovo on what status it desires and for that to be the foundation for making a decision (DA, 27 May 2006: 2).⁴

According to *Dnevni Avaz*, Dodik further expressed hope that the others would also have a legal right to decide on their destiny, stressing that according to the UN Charter peoples had a universal right to self-determination. These statements almost instantly provoked numerous responses by Bosniak politicians and other notables as well as the representatives of IC in Bosnia, signifying the beginning of the referendum discourse that has been felt on the Bosnian political scene ever since.

Although Dodik's initial comments did not specifically mention the referendum in the RS, the insinuation was obvious. As it was becoming increasingly clear that Montenegrins voted for independence, Dodik portrayed the occasion in terms that unmistakably related to separatist sentiments in the RS. This was the joint effect of two features of Dodik's statements. First, his use of words "democracy", "will of the people" and "self-determination" portrayed the Montenegro referendum as legal and legitimate. By opting for such a description, Dodik broke with the storyline of some Serb nationalists that presented the referendum as a defeat of the Serb nation. However, the legality and the legitimacy discussed by Dodik did not originate in Montenegrin historical experience or specific political context, but in what he described as a universal right of all peoples. The evocation of the UN Charter served to evoke an ostensible universality of self-determination, despite the fact that this concept is in actuality deeply contested because its referent is unclear. Dodik's mention of Kosovo offered an example of the referendum's possible regional application to territorial entities that were not Yugoslav

⁴ All quotations from *Dnevni Avaz* are author's translations from Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian into English

republics in the past. In this manner, specificity of Montenegro was ignored and the institution of a referendum was presented as a legitimate instrument available to all peoples. More importantly, the statement disregarded specific legal constraints, such as the Dayton Agreement that defined unilateral independence referenda in Bosnia as unlawful. Also ignored were the ambiguity of the term “peoples” and a wide range of complexities within which the term “self-determination” was discussed in the UN Charter.

The first deputy of the High Representative Lawrence Butler quickly reacted to Dodik’s statements, demanding an explanation. On May 27th, 2006, *Dnevni Avaz* published a statement by Butler in which he stated that there was no connection between the events in Montenegro and Bosnia. He further stressed the obligation of the RS politicians to respect the Dayton Agreement that had confirmed Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state. In direct reference to Dodik’s statements, Butler warned that public officials needed to focus on reforms and economic problems instead of empty rhetoric. Additional international reactions came from the European Commission and the office of the EU’s special representative for foreign affairs Javier Solana, both of which emphasized that referendum was not legally possible and that Europeans would only support the territorial integrity of BiH.

Instead of a reply to OHR, new Dodik’s comments came in the form of a written public statement that was published in *Dnevni Avaz* on May 28th, 2006:

It should be stated clearly that the foundations of BiH have been seriously undermined by unwillingness to proceed with constitutional reforms and in a much more substantial manner than my theoretical consideration of a referendum as a theoretical possibility (DA, 28 May 2006: 4).

Dodik further stated that all peoples in Bosnia had to be treated equally, and that the talk about a referendum would be unnecessary if agreement was reached on how to make the country better for everyone.

Dodik’s second statement offers an ostensibly rational justification of his initial comments to his Serb audience. However, at analytical level the statement is primarily significant for including two major traits of what would develop into a prolonged and highly structured RS Referendum Discourse. One of these traits is a presentation of the

RS Referendum idea as reactive. By underlining the need for all peoples to be treated equally, the RS Prime Minister implied the existence of structures of unfairness against Serbs. While serving to instantiate the need amongst many Serbs for defending the status of the RS, these comments did little to clarify the alleged threat and the role of the RS referendum idea in addressing it. There was also no explanation of the claim that the failure of constitutional reforms somehow undermined the foundations of BiH that proposed reforms attempted to change. While the failure of the April package of reforms revealed difficulties in reaching a compromise, it is not clear how it threatened the status of the RS that was guaranteed by the Dayton Agreement. It is even less clear how this status could be protected by discussing a right to hold a referendum that the Dayton Agreement defined as illegal. This lack of clarity enabled a statement worded in this manner to place blame for the emergence of the referendum idea to those factions that were responsible for failure of constitutional reforms.

Dodik's second statement is also significant for establishing boundaries within which the RS Referendum Discourse would be able to survive indefinitely. While Dodik initially attempted to present the manifestly anti-Dayton act of a single entity referendum as legal, his second statement pulled the referendum talk away from transgressing the boundaries of legality established at Dayton. By repeatedly stressing that the idea of a referendum was only theoretical, Dodik was capitalizing on the void left in the wake of the failure of the April package and presenting the referendum idea as merely one of many future possibilities. With speech acts publicly coded as speculative, it became difficult for the international community to make a definitive assessment on whether or not his rhetoric constituted a violation of the Dayton Agreement. With this ambiguity and without any concrete steps towards holding a referendum, the OHR could not easily justify sanctions against Dodik. This pushing of the envelope of legality followed by a pull back would persist in the future and become one of the central features of the RS Referendum Discourse. With such public articulations of latent and longstanding nationalist dreams Dodik framed and stirred public debate while presenting his ideas as innocent.

Bosniak politicians and multi-ethnic parties reacted swiftly to the surfacing of the RS Referendum idea, and a full salvo of their responses was first published in a May 28th,

2006 edition of *Dnevni Avaz*. All were united in underscoring that events in Bosnia had no connection with Montenegro and that there was no legal foundation for an independence referendum in the RS. Sulejman Tihic, then-presiding member of Bosnian presidency and the President of leading Bosniak Party for Democratic Action (SDA), elaborated on his stance by making distinctions between different regions of former Yugoslavia in which separatist aspirations existed:

It is not possible according to the Constitution of BiH just as secession of Sandzak or Vojvodina Hungarians is not possible. The positions of former Yugoslav republics, Slovenia, Croatia, BiH, Montenegro and Macedonia were different because there was a constitutional foundation. Badinter's commission said that clearly (DA, 28 May 2006: 4).

In the statement above, Tihic cited two legal principles according to which the RS did not have a right to secede. In addition to the Bosnian Constitution drafted at Dayton, he evoked the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, commonly known as the Badinter Commission. This commission was set up by the European Economic Community in 1991 to provide legal advice on issues arising from the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Its opinions would become the guiding principles for decisions to recognize Yugoslav regions that declared their will for independence. Banditer Commission decided that only constituent Yugoslav Republics were entitled to statehood. It further stated that the boundaries of republics could not be altered without consent and that the Serbian population of Croatia and Bosnia was entitled to all the rights concerned to minorities and ethnic groups (Pellet). By evoking the Badinter Commission, Tihic was able to differentiate between the independence of Montenegro, which was a former Yugoslav Republic, and the status of the RS, which was only a part of one since 1995. Not surprisingly, Tihic did not mention the aspect of the Badinter Commission judgment that might challenge his reasoning. The Badinter Commission also conditioned Bosnian independence with a referendum that would incorporate the views of all three major groups. Bosnian independence was recognized despite the fact that the independence referendum was overwhelmingly boycotted by Serbs, and one can argue that the RS was created in response.

In addition to citing legal impediments, Bosniak politicians and Social Democratic Parties of FBiH also used blunt language to criticize Dodik's comments.

Thus, Tihic characterized the idea as “political nonsense”, while the Social Democratic Party (SDP) called on all public officials to “get serious” and focus on economy and realistic goals (DA, 29 May 2006: 2). Others discredited not only the possible secession of the RS, but also utilized the opportunity to continue questioning its legitimacy as an administrative entity. Thus, the prominent Bosniak politician and member of Social Democratic Union (SDU) Nijaz Durakovic said that “Dodik should know that the RS is a genocidal creation and a war catch, it is not eternal, and cannot have future” (DA, 28 May 2006: 4). This line of reasoning would be continually used by Bosniak politicians in reactions to the RS Referendum idea.

Despite the criticism, Dodik not only continued his rhetorical exploration of the RS referendum but developed it further in ways that addressed legal restrictions underscored by Bosniak and international officials. June 1st, 2006 edition of *Dnevni Avaz* published Dodik’s comments, made to journalists in the RS Capital of Banja Luka, that he was not an adventurist and that he realized that there was no support for the RS Referendum and no possibility of it being recognized for now. He further said that “referendum was a democratic possibility for which it was necessary to gather support from the EU and others” (DA, 1 June 2006: 4). According to Dodik, the referendum talk raised far more dust than talk about abolishing the RS, which was also anti-Dayton conduct.

One striking feature of these comments is Dodik’s inconsistency with his previous statement that defined the referendum idea as only theoretical. This time, Dodik discussed practical obstacles and showed signs of strategic pragmatism. While discussing the lack of support for the referendum his use of the word “now” suggested the possibility that support may be gained at some point in the future. The statement that EU support would be needed insinuated the intention of holding a successful recognized referendum such as the one in Montenegro. Thus, he presented the referendum’s illegality and international opposition as hurdles that could eventually be overcome. In this manner, Dodik portrayed himself as a rational statesman and pragmatic national leader. At the same time, his parallel to Bosniak calls for abolition of the RS were a continuation of his depiction of the referendum talk as reactive, which served for continuous elicitation of the need amongst Serb audience to defend against the perceived

threat. The statement also accused the international officials of one-sided treatment of anti-Dayton rhetoric, implying that the blame for the surfacing of the RS referendum idea should not be assigned solely on the Serbs.

While facing criticism from international officials and Bosniak-dominated parties, Dodik's referendum rhetoric received endorsement from other Serb parties and non-government organizations based in the RS. On May 29th, 2006, *Dnevni Avaz* published the statement by the union of RS-based non-government organizations (SPONA) in which all of its members expressed support for Milorad Dodik's standpoints on the political status of the RS. Dodik's main political rival within the RS, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), also expressed approval of the referendum idea as means for protecting Serb interests. The leader of SDS and RS President Dragan Cavic rationalized Dodik's referendum rhetoric in interview to *Dnevni Avaz* published on July 14th, 2006:

In places where there is no agreement, separatism and demands for a referendum are unavoidable. I see that story as a hypothetical possibility created by the collapse of the Dayton Agreement (DA, 14 Jul 2006: 5).

The third largest Serb party, Party of Democratic Progress (PDP), and other smaller political factions also approved of a theoretical exploration of the potential referendum as a response to attacks against the RS. Thus, RS-based parties united in joining the referendum bandwagon led by Milorad Dodik.

This unity behind the idea of a referendum suggests that Serb parties had confidence in popularity of separatist sentiments amongst the RS Serbs. In turn, it is also a sign of confidence in a "yes" outcome of potential independence vote that was articulated by Milorad Dodik in his June 6th, 2006 lecture to the "Matica Srpska" cultural-scientific society, held in Novi Sad, Serbia.

If those (officials) from Sarajevo persistently repeat that the RS should not exist and that it is a genocidal creation, then they will get an answer called 'the people' and 'the referendum'. But, when they asked me what I think about the fact that 55 percent of voters were needed for Montenegro independence, I said, give us 90 percent and you will see that such is the real state of mind in the RS (DA, 7 June 2006: 2).

In this manner, Dodik included a new argument into his comparisons to Montenegro. While continuing to evoke the right to self-determination he insinuated that, from the

standpoint of the will of the people, there was even a stronger argument to hold the referendum in the RS than was the case with Montenegro. Dodik's mention of a 90 percent threshold illustrated that the will for independence was far stronger than in Montenegro, where a 55 percent threshold was barely passed. Despite clear differences in legality, no Serb politician was willing to go against such popular sentiments and criticize these attempts to connect the statuses of RS and Montenegro.

While Dodik's rhetoric swayed back and forth from discussing the referendum as only hypothetical to presenting it as a real option, reactions of Bosniaks and multi-ethnic parties ranged from affirmation of Bosnian sovereignty to demands for OHR sanctions. Virtually all Bosniak and multi-ethnic parties repeatedly stressed territorial integrity of Bosnia and seemed to energetically react to insinuations of RS independence even when they did not come from Serbs. In this context, there was a salvo of reactions to maps published by the London-based Murdoch owned newspaper "The Times" that, in wake of Montenegro Referendum, speculated on possible emergence of additional independent mini-states by year 2020. This map, in which the independence of RS was forecasted, caused numerous reactions by Bosniak politicians in which they underscored the specificity of Bosnian historical context. Thus, Nijaz Durakovic argued that "Montenegro was a federal republic within Yugoslavia, which the RS never was. Further, BiH was a sovereign republic recognized in (its Yugoslav) borders even before the Dayton agreement." (DA, 4 Jun 2006: 3). Other Bosniak politicians also reacted by reverting to the widespread Bosniak opinion that the RS was a genocidal creation that had no historical context prior to the outbreak of Bosnian war.

Within three weeks of Dodik's initial comments on referendum, the radicalization of Bosnian political scene had become obvious. In this time period, all but one edition of *Dnevni Avaz* contained articles that pertained to the RS referendum. All but four editions published such articles on the first two pages. On June 15th, 2006, the rhetoric led to peaceful street protests, as two thousand people marched through Banja Luka calling for secession of RS from Bosnia. It also led to what appeared be a policy shift, as Dodik's SNSD Party proclaimed a new approach to future negotiations of BiH constitutional reforms. On June 9th, 2006, *Dnevni Avaz* published a statement by SNSD secretary Rajko Vasic that his party would continue negotiations of constitutional reforms only if

they contained provisions for a right to self-determination. Vasic also said that Dodik had talked about a referendum only as a “democratic option, which everywhere in the world has its place in constitutions of democratic countries and in international law” (DA, 9 June 2006: 4).

The radicalization of Bosnian political dynamics was further exasperated by involvement of government officials from neighboring Serbia. The first Serbian official governmental visit since the end of the union of Serbia and Montenegro was the meeting between the Prime Minister of Serbia Vojislav Kostunica and the RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik in Banja Luka on June 9th, 2006. In a prelude to the visit, the Serbian Minister of Finance Mladan Dinkic stated that one of the topics to be discussed was “an effort by Prime Minister Milorad Dodik to hold a referendum about the status of the RS” (DA, 7 June 2006: 2). This statement was met by a fierce reaction of Bosniak officials, who portrayed it as a renewal of Serbian attempts to break up the Bosnian state. Furthermore, the High Representative Christian Schwartz Shilling issued a statement asking Dodik to stop talking about the referendum, informing him that the OHR would consider any discussion of this topic with representatives of foreign government as “a serious move” (DA, 9 June 2006: 2).

In the aftermath of the meeting, Kostunica stated that RS referendum was not a topic of discussion, adding that Serbia fully supported the Dayton Agreement as well as the UN resolution 1244 regarding the temporary status of Kosovo. A closer analysis reveals striking features of these comments. Kostunica’s mention of the Dayton Agreement and the resolution 1244 in the same sentence was a rhetorical move linking the statuses of BiH and Kosovo. Kostunica also emphasized that the Dayton Agreement guaranteed the existence of two entities, stating that any challenges to this could “cause different reactions” (DA, 10 June 2006: 2). With these comments, Kostunica conceptualized the RS and Kosovo as organic parts of a greater Serbian nation that Serbia was obliged to defend.

Considering that a prior public statement of Serbian minister of finance indicated that referendum would be discussed, it appears reasonable to speculate that Kostunica’s comments were designed to contribute to the proliferation of the idea of RS Referendum. Although Kostunica did not directly mention the referendum, his expression of pan-

Serbian solidarity at a time of high intensity of the RS Referendum Discourse was likely not a coincidence. His interchangeable reference to resolution 1244 and the Dayton agreement was perhaps an early sign that Serbian officials would employ the idea of RS referendum in Kosovo negotiations, a theme that is discussed at length in Chapter IV.

International officials in Bosnia continued to react to persistent referendum rhetoric by stressing their commitment to legal contracts and protection of Bosnian sovereignty. The criticism of Dodik's behavior came from various sources, including the OHR, the US ambassador to Bosnia and numerous officials of the European Union's central government. However, these reactions did little to curb Dodik's rhetoric. It was well known that there was no international support for RS referendum, and Dodik acknowledged that. In such a political environment, he did not take any steps towards materializing his ideas, stressing that they were only a reactive theoretical exploration. While this exploration caused political turbulence, the IC was anemic in their attempts to stop it. On several occasions, the high representative asked Dodik to stop talking about the referendum and focus on reforms necessary for bringing the country closer to the EU. However, he appeared reluctant to use Bonn Powers on the rationale that such action was necessary only if talk transformed into concrete actions. Thus, the RS Referendum Discourse was able to continue within specific rhetorical space.

In the second half of June 2006, the referendum talk lost some of the intensity it had in the immediate aftermath of Dodik's initial comments. Since June 17th, 2006 and until the end of the month, only one half of fourteen daily editions of *Dnevni Avaz* contained articles on the potential RS referendum. This reporting became even more sporadic in July of 2006, and it appeared that the eruption was largely exhausted. However, the discourse's persistent resurfacing and future eruptions would show that this was only the end of opening arguments.

The cooling of the first eruption was also the end of frequent comparisons of the status of Montenegro and the RS (see Appendix, Chart III). As time distance from Montenegrin vote grew, the focus of arguments in favor of the RS referendum shifted to other, ongoing themes. However, the independence of Montenegro served its purpose as a catalyst. Serbian sense of loss of Montenegro was a convenient time to articulate the RS referendum aspirations that Dodik skillfully managed as a political weapon without

venturing far outside the boundaries of legality. This was largely achieved by means of a strategically designed storyline in which the events in Montenegro were presented in a particular manner. Table 1 summarizes this storyline and contrasts it with rival Bosniak and IC storylines. It should be kept in mind that the storyline of Serb parties likely generated some of its appeal because of the feelings of loss in wake of Montenegro's independence that were present amongst many Serbs but not publicly articulated.

Table 1.

Montenegro Referendum and RS Referendum Discourse	Storyline of RS-based Serb parties	Storyline of SDA, SBiH and multi-ethnic parties	Storyline of International Officials
<i>Situational Description</i>	<p>Officially, the Montenegro Referendum was held because the Montenegrin peoples wanted to exercise their fundamental right to decide on their own destiny.</p> <p>(Unofficially, many Serbs felt that it was a conspiracy of global powers to further fragment the Serbian nation, but the RS-parties mainly refrained from articulating this view)</p>	Montenegro Referendum was held because all former Yugoslav republics had a legal right to do so.	Montenegro Referendum was held because all former Yugoslav republics had a legal right to do so.
<i>Location Specification</i>	Montenegro Referendum was a reflection of universal right of all peoples to self-determination that was defined in the UN Charter.	Montenegro Referendum was a product of specific context of Montenegro as former Yugoslav republic that did not wish to be dominated by Serbia any longer. The legality of referendum came only from this context.	Montenegro Referendum was a product of specific context of Montenegro as a former Yugoslav republic. The legality of referendum came only from this context and could not be replicated elsewhere. Even then, it was recognized only because there was a significant majority of over 55%.
<i>Relation to RS</i>	If the people of Montenegro had a right to referendum, Serbs in the RS should have that same right. Serbs are distinct peoples and are entitled to universal right to self-determination.	There is no relation. RS is only an entity within Bosnia that is a product of genocide and has no other historical context. There is no legal foundation for referendum in the RS, Bosnian territorial integrity is unquestionable.	There is no relation. RS is only an entity within Bosnia as defined by the Dayton Peace Agreement. There is no legal foundation for referendum. All sides must respect Dayton realities.

<i>Action to be taken in response</i>	Hold a referendum on independence of RS when there is enough international support and/or if Bosniaks continue to question the status of RS.	None	None
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The Montenegro referendum was thereby an opportunity for the initial deployment of the RS Referendum Discourse. During this initial eruption, the three main participants in the debate on the RS referendum introduced main themes to which they would continuously revert. For Serbs, these were self-determination, will of the people and protection of the RS against threats. For international community, the legalities of the Dayton Agreement and Bosnian sovereignty were emphasized. Along with legal agreements, Bosniaks evoked the historical context of Bosnia and lack thereof for the RS.

Although there was a period of relative lull between the two events, it is likely that the structure and intensity of the initial eruption of the RS Referendum Discourse was also influenced by the 2006 pre-election campaign. While the extent of this influence is difficult to assess, the campaign was clearly the main catalyst for the discourse's second distinct eruption. I turn to analysis of this eruption next.

CHAPTER III

“Not a Single Person Will Be Humiliated Any Longer”: The 2006 State-Wide Elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The second eruption that coincided with the 2006 pre-election campaign has displayed extensive utility of the RS referendum idea in Bosnian election races. The distinctness of this eruption was evidenced by a drastic increase in density of relevant articles in *Dnevni Avaz* during the official pre-election campaign that began one month prior to the October 1st, 2006 elections. As part of my quantitative analysis, I have recorded appearance of a total of twenty-six keywords determined to pertain to the RS Referendum Discourse in July 2006 editions of *Dnevni Avaz* (see Appendix). The numbers were somewhat larger for August of 2006, with forty-two total keywords recorded. However, a sharp increase was recorded during the official pre-election campaign, as *Dnevni Avaz* published one hundred and twenty-five keywords in its September 2006 editions.

The influence of the election race is also evidenced by the sudden lull in the RS Referendum Discourse that began almost immediately after the conclusion of October 1st vote. The quantity of keywords dropped in October of 2006 below their August levels, with several of these publications referencing the RS referendum talk only in a reflective manner. The discourse continued to cool down in November and December, as keywords appeared in *Dnevni Avaz* only thirteen times during these last two months of 2006.

In a democratic system, one of primary motivators of political activity is competition for votes. Although this factor typically becomes more pronounced as elections approach, the politicians are at all times conscious of the fact that their authority depends on support of the electorate. Thus, it is likely that Milorad Dodik decided to deploy the RS Referendum Discourse a little over four months prior to elections with cognizance of its potential to maximize support amongst the electorate. The case of the discourse's second eruption that corresponded precisely to the pre-election campaign strengthens this suspicion. However, the qualitative analysis has shown that many

themes that have intensified to form the second eruption originated months earlier. In order to isolate the effect of 2006 elections as much as it is empirically possible here, the analysis presented in this chapter followed these themes back to their initial appearance.

The theoretical perspectives on the outbreak of Yugoslav wars discussed in Chapter I exposed the role of national rhetoric in demobilization of alternative axes of identification. The 2006 pre-election campaign has indicated that the RS Referendum Discourse produced similar effects in an already divided Bosnian society. Previous election campaigns in post-war Bosnia were not always monopolized by nationalist themes. While deep ethnic cleavages remained, the post-Dayton political efforts primarily focused on implementation of the peace agreement, economic progress and reforms required for integrations into EU and NATO. Significant mobilization around issues not rooted in ethnic rivalries was evidenced during the 2000 parliamentary elections in which non-nationalist SDP won the largest share of votes in FBiH (IPU, 2000). On the RS side, the support for nationalist Serb Democratic Party (SDS) weakened in favor of the more moderate SNSD led by Milorad Dodik.

However, Dodik's deployment of the RS Referendum Discourse would signify a transformation of the moderate politician into the chief orator of Serb nationalist aspirations. This transformation occurred at a time when it could profoundly influence the 2006 general elections. The referendum idea spoke to long-lasting Serb aspirations for independent RS on one side and Bosniak worst case scenario of demise of the Bosnian state on the other. Once the idea was presented, political parties could not ignore its emotional saliency, while their reactions could not deviate from dominant sentiments of perceived ethnic groups they claimed to represent. Thus, the positions regarding the RS referendum served as rallying points around which the already high feelings of groupness in ethnically divided Bosnia would further increase to potentially dangerous levels. In this environment, the RS referendum idea became the main theme of the 2006 pre-election campaigns for Bosniak and Serb parties as well as the declaredly multi-ethnic political factions.

The RS Referendum Discourse threatened to marginalize a host of major existential issues that were affecting the daily lives of Bosnians of all ethnic affiliations. Corruption had been a major concern in Bosnia, as evidenced by Transparency

International 2006 Corruption Perceptions Index that designated the country as highly corrupt (2006). The economy was still struggling to reach pre-war levels despite of years of progress. Bosnian Gross Domestic Product for 2006 was at 85 percent of 1991 levels (EU Business Online, 2008). According to the aggregate data of the 2007 Labour Force Survey, unemployment remained high, with true unemployment estimated at 29 percent (Agency for statistics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2007).

The IC officials have recognized the potential of inflammatory referendum rhetoric to overshadow genuine concerns as early as May of 2006. In a joint statement published by *Dnevni Avaz* on May 31st, 2006, Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Erhard Busek, Coordinator of Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, said that “a message needs to be sent to those talking about a referendum that they need to study statistics and per capita GDP in the RS, and after that concern themselves with better life of people living in that entity” (DA, 31 May 2006: 5). Christian Swartz Shilling also periodically warned of distraction it created. One such remark was published by *Dnevni Avaz* on June 26th, 2006:

The referendum talk diverted attention from urgent reforms that will help create jobs and improve standard of living. Referendum talk will not eliminate poverty, will not secure investments, will not create a single job, and will not feed people (DA, 26 June 2006: 9).

Nonetheless, nationalist themes persisted and intensified as elections approached. All major Serb parties supported the idea of a ‘reactive referendum.’ The only dissent came from small parties, whose alternative standpoints were likely developed in attempt to emerge out of political shadows. Most vocal of these was the right-wing Democratic People’s Alliance of RS, which criticized nationalism of leading Serb parties and called on them to start addressing real needs of citizens. Major Bosniak and multi-ethnic parties actively engaged in the RS Referendum Discourse with numerous condemnations of Dodik’s rhetoric. In addition, they frequently employed the discussion of potential RS referendum to renew calls for the abolishment of RS and underscore its genocidal origins. Such forceful engagement against the existence of RS created opportunities for Serb parties to escalate revanchist rhetoric, thus contributing to further ethnic polarization. Three weeks before the elections, the UK Ambassador to BiH, Mathew Rycroft

expressed his dissatisfaction with Bosnian political developments in an interview with *Dnevni Avaz*:

Inflammatory rhetoric simply must stop. The dominant issues of the campaign thus far concern the past, not the future, they do not give answers to problems that all people of this country have (DA, 7 June 2006: 8).

Rycroft further remarked that all reforms towards EU integration were stopped and that 2006 was a “wasted year”. However, these warnings achieved little in moderating ethnic rivalries that dominated the campaign until Election Day.

While having a common effect of radicalizing the 2006 pre-election campaign, the RS Referendum Discourse assumed two distinctive roles in campaign themes of Bosniak and multi-ethnic parties on one side, and Serb parties on the other. In Bosniak areas, SDA, SBiH and multi-ethnic parties competed by blaming each other for political strategies that facilitated the calls for referendum. The primary split occurred between factions that supported the failed constitutional reforms of April 2006 and those who opposed it. On the RS side, major Serb parties were relatively united in legitimizing the potential RS referendum, competing amongst each other for leadership in promoting the right to hold the potential referendum.

The campaign of Bosniak SBiH, led by a prominent Bosniak politician and wartime Prime Minister of Bosnia Haris Silajdzic, was primarily build around Silajdzic’s leadership in bringing down the April 2006 Constitutional Reforms. SBiH, whose campaign motto was 100% BiH, presented the failure of constitutional reforms as a victory of Bosnian patriots who managed to protect the country from destructive forces. Dodik’s referendum talk was portrayed as evidence of a plan to disintegrate Bosnia, while proposed constitutional reforms were faulted for offering a legal framework for RS independence. In public speeches, Silajdzic claimed credit for foiling this alleged secessionist strategy:

We have rejected (constitutional reforms) because they were bringing referendum and secession of RS. The Dayton Agreement is not good, and constitutional reforms are similar to Dayton, the same story that was just altered a bit, with a difference that Dayton had been made in one chaotic situation. By keeping entity voting, BiH would be in hands of those who don’t want it (DA, 17 July 2006: 4).

This statement was worded in a manner that raises more questions than answers. Silajdzic did not explain how the proposal for constitutional reforms that confirmed Bosnian sovereignty and did not include a right to a referendum would create conditions for the referendum to be held. Furthermore, by saying that the proposal was “the same story” as Dayton, Silajdzic implied that continuation of status quo, which was the outcome of failure to change the constitution, would also lead to a referendum. Despite these ambiguities, this and related assessments and campaign themes put forth by Silajdzic were shared by the “Patriotic Bloc”, a union of smaller leftist parties who also participated in bringing down the 2006 Constitutional Reforms.

The SBiH opposition to proposed reforms was built around the argument that the proposal offered only “cosmetic” changes and solidified internal divisions without substantially strengthening the central government. Particular criticism referred to the proposed continuation of a system of voting in Bosnian parliament that required a share of votes from each entity to pass legislation. SBiH contended that this would allow the RS to continue to obstruct the functioning of the state, accusing its main Bosniak rival the SDA and the multi-ethnic SDP of consenting to the plan for the eventual demise of Bosnia. The SBiH campaign advocated reforms that would strengthen the state and weaken the entities in a more fundamental manner. It also appealed to Bosniak aspirations for the abolition of RS, presenting itself as a political option most capable of achieving that ultimate aim. The SBiH further argued that the abolition of entities was a political agenda that could legally be pursued within the existing state institutions, while calls for the RS referendum constituted an attack against those very institutions. With these themes, SBiH incorporated the RS Referendum Discourse into its campaign strategy designed to present the party as a true guardian of Bosnian state. It appealed to general Bosniak aspirations for the abolition of the RS, but failed to offer a clear strategy for overcoming the Dayton provisions that guaranteed the existence of entities.

The SDA also attempted to build voter’s trust in its ability to defend Bosnian sovereignty, albeit on sharply different premises. Contrary to SBiH, SDA campaign contended that April 2006 constitutional reforms would have confirmed Bosnian international status, strengthened central institutions, and made any talk of referendum irrelevant. Bakir Izetbegovic, a prominent SDA politician and the son of the first

president of Bosnia Alija Izetbegovic, articulated this stance in an interview given to *Dnevni Avaz* two days prior to elections:

Constitutional reforms were unfortunately not adopted, and I think that Alija Izetbegovic would have been puzzled by naivety of certain Bosniak politicians and intellectuals who scored an own goal and are still celebrating it. If the constitutional reforms were adopted, Dodik's talk about referendum and independence of RS would be silly... (DA, 29 September 2006: page 5).

Despite sharing support for proposed constitutional reforms with RS parties, the SDA was not willing to surrender leadership in promoting abolition of the RS to the SBiH. In pre-election speeches, the SDA President Sulejman Tihic reacted to SBiH's frequent campaign rhetoric that envisioned a future entity-free Bosnia:

Whenever they appear, they talk about abolishing the entities. SDA does not say that it will abolish entities. We are abolishing entities every day. What else is it other than abolition of entities when after my initiative the constitutional court of BiH declares the anthem and emblem (of RS Serbs) void, as well as the emblem of Federation, then abolishment of (separate) armies of Federation and RS... (DA, 20 September 2006: 9).

Thus, two leading Bosniak parties ran highly negative campaigns in attempt to discredit each other's strategies for achieving a declared common political objective. In this manner, the ethnically polarizing RS Referendum Discourse also served as a point of contestation that created the intra-Bosniak political divide.

In contrast, the political campaigns in the RS showed a smaller gap between the positions of Serb parties on the perceived national issues. The campaigns of the three leading parties, SNSD, SDS and PDP employed comparable rhetoric that defended the right of RS to hold a referendum if threats against Serb interests continued. This stance was evidenced in two public statements of then-SDS president Dragan Cavic and PDP president Mladen Ivanic. On June 28th, 2006, *Dnevni Avaz* published Cavic's comments that mirrored Dodik's presentation of reactive referendum. According to Cavic, if attacks against the internal arrangement of BiH defined at Dayton continued, "this would mean a referendum for the RS, period" (DA, 28 June 2006: 4). Similarly, Mladen Ivanic stated that "our calls for referendum will certainly follow if demands for abolishment of the RS continue" (DA, 23 August 2006: 9). Ivanic added that the three largest Serb parties were united on this issue.

The issue of constitutional reforms that divided the Bosniaks caused little disagreement amongst Serb parties. All three parties had been participants in drafting a proposal of April 2006 and all three insisted that it could no longer be changed in order to meet the requests of Bosniak dissenters. These commonalities were reflected in an interview that Dragan Cavic gave to *Nezavisne Novine* three days prior to elections:

We in the RS, with smart politics, which I do not want to connect only to myself and SDS, but also to political consensus that at a critical time achieved Dodik, Ivanic (PDP President) and I, knew how to use this opportunity (of negotiating constitutional reforms)...the finale of this whole story is that today in the RS we have political relations of respect between parties, there are no quarrels as in the past, we have achieved necessary political unity, and opinion of the RS is sought for everything (Nezavisne Novine Online Edition, 28 September 2006).

Throughout the pre-election campaign, the RS Referendum Discourse retained much of the performative structure that characterized it during the initial eruption. Thus, Milorad Dodik continued to toy with boundaries of legality, framing the calls for the anti-Dayton independence referendum as a reaction to challenges against the status of the RS guaranteed at Dayton. The three leading Serb parties continued to depict the potential referendum as expression of the “will of the people” and right to self-determination. The reactions of parties dominant in Bosniak areas were based on continuously stressing Bosnian sovereignty and legal obligations while presenting the RS as genocidal creation. The IC representatives repeated their calls to all parties to re-focus on reforms and economy, declaring ambitions to hold the RS referendum unfeasible and illegal.

However, there were several notable alterations in storylines, with certain themes being developed at greater detail and others diminishing in importance. The Montenegro referendum appeared to have lost its utility, and by July of 2006 its mention within the RS Referendum Discourse had become minimal (see Appendix, Chart III). One likely explanation lay in the difficulty to sustain parallels between Montenegro, which was a former Yugoslav republic, and the RS, which had been created only after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Second, the Montenegro independence was undisputed, with even Serbia accepting the outcome and moving to establish diplomatic relations with a newly independent state. Thirdly, with Montenegro referendum fading away from headlines and losing emotional appeal, the focus shifted to a much more disputable and emotional

issue of political status of Kosovo. Such use of Kosovo as a potential legal precedent was evidenced in a statement that Dragan Cavic gave in Belgrade two weeks before the elections in the aftermath the meeting with President of Serbia Boris Tadic:

I am convinced that it is political nonsense to live in illusion that Kosovo could get forced independence without other places going down that path and encouraging separatist movements in many countries (DA, 14 September 2006: 4).

Milorad Dodik's referendum storyline continued to emphasize perceived threats against the RS and Serb interests. In pre-election speeches, Dodik often charged that Serbs had been disrespected and even humiliated in Bosnia while portraying himself as a leader capable of putting an end to the alleged mistreatment. This was shown in his speech at SNSD's first official campaign rally held in the town of Dobojo:

I want the RS to enjoy even treatment within BiH in the future. If not, it will be independent. Not a single man will be humiliated any longer (DA, 02 September 2006: 9).

As elections approached, Dodik further developed portrayal of himself as a guardian of Serb people. At a rally held in Brcko only a few days prior to Election Day he stated:

We have said decisively that if only once more they mention the abolishment of the RS we are going to have a referendum, and you will see how it will turn out. This has had an effect, even Sulejman Tihic withdrew his lawsuit against the RS several days ago. Do not be scared of Tihic, or Haris, or arrogant (SDP leader) Lagumdzija, let me deal with them (DA, 27 September 2006: 10).

These two comments deserve a closer investigation. First, stirring attributes such as "humiliation" and "disrespect" served for enhancement of a Serb self-image as victims of perceived injustices. Dodik implied that Serbs could be protected only if the RS retained its legal status defined at Dayton, thus labeling all parties who called for abolishment of entities as adversaries. In this manner, Dodik spoke to emotional attachment of Serbs to the RS, disregarding possibilities for protection of Serb interests outside of framework of ethnically exclusive territories. Since the abolition of RS was a central theme of campaigns in Bosniak areas, Serb audience was exposed to daily Bosniak rhetoric that reinforced fears and substantiated presence of adversaries described by Dodik.

Along with a vivid description of threats, Dodik's storyline presented his political option as a counterforce that has already managed to repel threats coming from rival Bosniak parties, and would continue to foil future plots against the RS. This rhetoric was likely to evoke both the emotional connection that Serbs felt towards the existence of RS, as well as animosity that many of them felt towards the Bosnian state. The scenarios where Serbs were threatened by others served to present the idea of RS independence and effectual demise of Bosnia as having the same level of legitimacy as calls for changes in the country's internal arrangements that involved abolition of entities. In this manner, Dodik's audience heard a devaluation of Bosnia as an internationally recognized country, while the RS was elevated towards a state-like status. Dodik also praised rhetoric itself as an effective tool, as evidenced above in his observation that referendum talk had forced Tihic to withdraw his lawsuit against the RS. Thus, as the individual who launched the RS Referendum idea, Dodik claimed credit for its alleged protective effect.

Another feature of Dodik's rhetoric was its design to create emotional appeal without obliging him to transform words into concrete action. Dodik was aware that a move towards the illegal referendum would likely trigger decisive reaction of international officials charged with implementation of the Dayton Agreement. Thus, his discussion of themes that pertained to the idea's implementation was minimal.

This disregard of practical considerations is reflected in open-endedness and vagueness of Dodik's above mentioned definition of a trigger event, "...if once more they mention the abolishment of the RS we are going to have a referendum". The statement worded in this manner raises several practical questions that Dodik never addresses. First, who is "they"? Does it refer to all political parties calling for the abolition of RS regardless of their ethnic designation, size and influence, or is he talking about two dominant Bosniak leaders, Tihic and Silajdzic? Second, what is the context of "once more"? Can that mention occur anywhere and any time, or only within certain official activities? Third, does it mean that as soon as the mention of abolishment of entities is heard some sort of action to initiate a referendum will be taken? Throughout the pre-election period, calls for abolishment of the RS were coming from Bosniak areas repeatedly. Dodik was thus provided with multiple trigger events he never acted upon.

The RS Referendum idea continued to occupy a primary place in Milorad Dodik's campaign speeches and press releases until Election Day. With a suitably designed rhetorical game, Milorad Dodik remained referendum's leading advocate despite the fact that other major Serb parties also campaigned in its favor. In turn, once-moderate Dodik emerged as the leading guardian of perceived Serb national interests, a place that had been usually occupied by the right-wing SDS. In this process, Dodik never lost sight of legal constraints, as evidenced in an interview he gave to *Nezavisne Novine* late in the election campaign:

I am prepared and able to act in all situations for the purpose of protecting dignity of myself and of the RS. My referendum talk was reaction, not action. I am not an irrational man who would be able to do anything that was not useful for the RS. In any case, we got assurances regarding the RS, the US and British ambassadors have stated that the RS cannot be abolished without the will of our people (Nezavisne Novine Online Edition, 24 September 2006).

Dodik was also not willing to surrender his party's trademark leadership on economy and social issues. Along with the discussion of the referendum and "national interests", Dodik's campaign offered a strategy for economic progress that corresponded to its main campaign slogan "Charge ahead Srpska". In this context, Dodik claimed credit for revitalization of entity's power company "Elektroprivreda RS" and for passage of a number of legislative acts designed to stimulate businesses and foreign investments. Further, he promised economic growth and major new investments, particularly focusing on plans to privatize the energy sector.

With the campaign that appealed to both national aspirations and economic needs of RS Serbs, SNSD was well-positioned for achieving a decisive electoral victory. By initiating and remaining at the helm of the ethnically polarizing RS Referendum Discourse, Dodik annulled the traditional advantage that the SDS had held on issues pertaining to Serb national interests. In these dynamics, SDS had little choice but to support referendum rhetoric, while occasionally referencing its superior history of nationalist activism in order to challenge Dodik's leadership. One such challenge came from Dragan Cavic in his speech late in the election campaign that evoked the leading role of SDS in the 1992 creation of RS:

...it was an act of bravery to create the RS in 1992 in conditions when Bosnia received international recognition, this could have also been done by (RS) politicians who have waited until now to show pride in the RS (Nezavisne Novine Online Edition, 25 September 2006).

In this manner, the SDS leaders decided to persist with ethnically salient issues as their best chance for electoral success. Dragan Cavic openly articulated that for SDS “protection of national interests and resolve of national question are priority, and after that solutions to economic and social questions will follow” (DA, 28 September 2006: 10). However, the SDS was ultimately unable to find solutions for high emotional energy amassed by Dodik’s rhetorical referendum adventure. During the campaign, even the leader of opposition party PDP Mladen Ivanic conceded that the SNSD victory was inevitable.

The radicalization of Bosnian political dynamics was easily palpable during the 2006 election campaign. Three weeks before the elections, for example, the Bosniak returnees to the town of Visegrad complained about posters inviting residents to sign a petition for secession of RS had been plastered throughout the town (DA, 7 September 2006: 9). Elsewhere in the RS, symposiums were held in which participants identified the RS referendum as the only solution to Serbian national question. In Bijeljina, Serb Radical Party (SRS) plastered posters with large headings “For Referendum”, while SNSD and PDP campaign posters talked about the RS as having sovereignty. In response to these developments, Bosniak parties filed complaints with the Central Elections Commission (CIK) demanding punishment for provocative behavior.

In the months preceding the elections, SDA, SBiH and multi-ethnic parties have occasionally asked CIK to remove from ballots those candidates who advocated the RS referendum. Although CIK was authorized to sanction behavior that incited hatred, the commission’s decision-making capabilities were mired with internal debate on what constituted such behavior. Some members argued for sanctions of only those officials who called for referendum, while others contended that calls for abolishment of RS should warrant comparable sanctions. With CIK assessing options, the boldest warning came on September 18th, 2006 when High Representative threatened to remove Milorad Dodik if he continued to talk about the RS referendum. However, Dodik was undeterred

and his rhetoric resumed. In the end, no action was taken against Dodik or any other participant in the inflammatory discourse. Moreover, the unrealized warning against Dodik issued late in the campaign after radicalization has long become evident likely served only to enhance his image as a defiant leader prepared to persist in his fight for Serb cause.

The campaign has shown that leading political parties in both entities aspired to win votes only of ethnic groups they claimed to represent. The outcome of elections signaled that Bosnia would remain deeply entrenched in ethno-politics. The SNSD swept the elections in the RS, winning 45 percent of RS assembly seats compared to 19 percent for SDS. In FBiH, Haris Silajdzic won a landslide victory to become Bosniak member of BiH Presidency, while the SDA retained relative majority in the parliament (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, 2009). Thus, the leaders of movements for referendum on one side and abolishment of entities on another, Milorad Dodik and Haris Silajdzic, emerged as dominant political figures in their respective ethnic corps.

At the core of these 2006 campaign storylines were the descriptions of problems facing the targeted audience. Presentation of adversaries of the imagined nation in a particular manner was critical for problem description and subsequent advocacy of a specific solution. In his development of a ‘grammar of motives’, Kenneth Burke has asserted that “any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answer to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where was it done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency) and why (purpose)” (1945, xvii). I have adapted these question to the content discussed in this chapter in order to summarize the main themes of 2006 campaign storylines. These include: what (problems facing the audience), who (the agent causing these problems), how (the manner in which the problem is brought about), why (purpose), what should be done (preferred solution) and what next (the next step to be taken in the absence of preferred solution). Table 2 offers this itemized summary of major campaign storylines, highlighting the specific role of the RS Referendum Discourse.

Table 2.

Parties	SDA/SDP	SBiH/Patriotic Bloc	RS-based Serb Parties
<i>What?</i>	Bosnian state is not functioning properly. The results of ethnic cleansing have not been reversed, the RS remains an exclusively Serb territory and poses a threat to Bosnian territorial integrity.	Bosnian state is not functioning properly. The results of ethnic cleansing have not been reversed, the RS remains an exclusively Serb territory and poses a threat to Bosnian territorial integrity	Interests of Serbs living in Bosnia are endangered. The existence of the RS as the separate Serb entity and the only guardian of Serb interests has been continuously contested.
<i>Who?</i>	The leadership of RS.	The leadership of RS.	Bosniak leadership and declaredly multi-ethnic parties dominated by Bosniaks.
<i>How?</i>	The RS representatives are able to utilize entity veto powers to obstruct the workings of joint institutions. They oppose reforms towards a stronger and more viable Bosnian state and continue to advocate stronger entities. More recently they have directly attacked Bosnian international status by calling for the RS Independence Referendum.	The RS representatives are able to utilize entity veto powers to obstruct the workings of joint institutions. They oppose reforms towards a stronger and more viable Bosnian state and continue to advocate stronger entities. More recently they have directly attacked Bosnian international status by calling for the RS Independence Referendum.	Since the Dayton Agreement, the Bosniak politicians have been working on weakening the RS. Along with the IC they have pressured the RS into transferring many powers to the Bosnian state against the will of Serbs. Their political pressure continues. More recently, they have become more vocal and transparent in calling for abolition of RS.
<i>Why?</i>	The RS Serbs have never accepted Bosnia as their state and their ultimate desire of is to secede from Bosnia.	The RS Serbs have never accepted Bosnia as their state and their ultimate desire of is to secede from Bosnia.	The Bosniaks aspire to dominate Bosnia and place the Serbs in a secondary role. They have never accepted the RS as an equal and legitimate entity of BiH
<i>What should be done?</i>	Abolition of entities and new decentralization of Bosnia according to non-ethnic criteria	Abolition of entities and decentralization of Bosnia according to non-ethnic criteria	Return full capacities of RS as provided in the Dayton Accords. Alternatively, RS

			Independence.
<i>What now?</i> ⁵	Accept the fact that abolition of entities is unfeasible at the time. Adopt the April 2006 Constitutional Reforms that confirm the existence of entities but also constitute a significant step towards strengthening the central government. The reforms would make any discussion of referendum nonsensical.	Insist on new constitutional reforms that would fundamentally strengthen the state and weaken entities by abolishing entity voting in BH parliament as a step towards entity-free Bosnia. April 2006 Reforms were only cosmetic, offering a framework for RS referendum to be held.	Immediately end any future transfer of powers from RS to the central government. Agree to constitution reforms that confirm the status of RS. If Bosniaks continued challenging the legal status of RS, seek independence referendum as a legitimate reaction.

Unsurprisingly, the referendum rhetoric drastically placated both in quantity and structure immediately after the elections. First post-election statements of main political actors only confirmed the suspicion that the second eruption of referendum discourse served primarily as a campaign strategy. Thus, within a discussion of reforms that laid ahead on political agenda, Dodik briefly mentioned that “pre-election referendum talk was only a reaction to calls for abolishment of the RS” (DA, 24 October 2006: 9). The attribute “pre-election” to his reflections is indicative of the context that Dodik attached to eruption of referendum discourse that ended on Election Day. Another example of a rhetorical change was Dragan Cavic’s statement that Dayton Agreement had to be respected and that the RS referendum would thus be undesired (DA, 22 October 2006: 2). However, this lull in nationalist rhetoric was only temporary. The next chapter studies the relationship between the RS Referendum Discourse and the issue that triggered its future eruptions- the status of Kosovo.

⁵ Note that SDP/SDA storyline does not venture into explaining how the constitutional reforms would make referendum nonsensical and that SBiH/Patriotic Bloc storyline does not tell us how the same reforms would constitute a framework for RS independence.

CHAPTER IV

“Why can Kosovo do it and the RS cannot”: The Kosovo Parallelism

While the second major eruption of the RS Referendum Discourse subsided with the casting of ballots in October of 2006, the political utility of referendum rhetoric was far from exhausted. The election results coupled with anemic IC reaction had confirmed that nationalist rhetoric continued to reap political benefits. In the months following the elections, Milorad Dodik had occasionally repeated his arguments in favor of the RS referendum as a response to any future demands for abolition of entities. As Bosnia's political actors returned to immediate tasks that lay ahead, particularly renewed negotiations of police reforms and constitutional changes, the RS-based negotiators now readily resorted to referendum warnings as their new political weapon. Tactical political use of the RS referendum idea was evident on October 25th, 2006 in a joint statement by Dodik and Cavic in which they rejected the possibility of abolishing entity voting. Cavic elaborated that entity voting could be abolished only if the new constitution included a clause that "RS will get the right to referendum about self-determination if it is unsatisfied with its status in BiH" (DA, 26 October 2006: 2).

This rather sporadically used tactic did not instigate new eruptions of the referendum debate. SDA and SBiH now criticized the RS politicians primarily for obstructing the Bosnian path to the EU, with less direct engagement into the referendum discourse per se. The articulation of arguments defining the right to potential referendum as a legitimate defensive mechanism of RS continued periodically, but they caused significantly less upheaval than during the election campaign. Although any allusions to the RS referendum were still sufficient to provoke almost reflexive reactions of Bosniak and multi-ethnic officials, the responses came in smaller quantities and with less energy than in the pre-election period. Furthermore, the international officials, who did not resort to executive powers to extinguish inflammatory pre-election rhetoric, were now even less likely to react to a milder nationalist discourse coming from clear winners of free elections. In practical terms the Bosnian public was becoming accustomed to the RS referendum idea framed as a defensive response to international and local political affairs. While this may have given it a degree of legitimacy as a rhetorical tool in Bosnian

politics to some, to others it was the type of secessionist thinking and ‘endgame’ scenario thinking that had caused war in the past.

However, the catalyst for new escalation of the RS Referendum Discourse would come from ongoing negotiations regarding the status of Serbian province of Kosovo. The issue of Kosovo had been present in discussions of potential RS referendum from the time of Dodik’s initial statement that contrasted Montenegrin Referendum with Kosovo’s desire for independence. During the pre-election campaign, Serb politicians have made occasional statements warning that Kosovo’s potential independence could have extensive regional consequences. This induction of Kosovo into Bosnian political dynamics carried a particular ability to stir nationalist passions. Kosovo occupies a central place in Serbian concepts of heritage and national identity, with many Serbs considering it a cradle of Serb nationhood. With separatist ambitions of Kosovo’s majority Albanian population enjoying Western support, Serb nationalists in both Serbia and RS have evoked epic battles and related historical heritage to call for defense of their perceived national birthplace. Furthermore, Serbian moderate democratic leaders have opted for a political fight for Kosovo, ruling out any possibility of recognizing its independence.

Despite the extensive emotional saliency of Kosovo, Serb arguments in favor of RS referendum during 2006 were primarily based on parallels to Montenegro independence and Bosniak agenda to abolish entities. As negotiations of the final status of Kosovo approached a conclusion in 2007, parallels between the statuses of the RS and the disputed Serbian province provided new occasions for rhetorical performance of the RS referendum talk, emerging as its dominant and most explosive theme. The first distinct intensification of the discourse in the post-election period occurred in January of 2007 as a result of statements linking the secessionist demands of Kosovar Albanians to Serb aspirations for RS independence. There were also several other periods of increased discursive activity in 2007 and 2008, with Kosovo providing a catalyst for each. The most significant event was Kosovo’s declaration of independence in February of 2008, which constituted one of the three major discursive platforms for performance of the idea of RS referendum.

The temporal analysis has shown that a first post-election cluster of intense discussion of RS independence occurred in the second half of January 2007. The escalation began with statement by Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Draskovic's linking the statuses of Kosovo and the RS.

The citizens of the RS have a right to self-determination and independence if the UN Security Council accepts the same request by Kosovo Albanians (DA, 16 January 2007: 2).

Considering that the statement occurred only several days prior to January 21st, 2007 Parliamentary Elections in Serbia, it is likely that this rhetoric served Draskovic's campaign strategy to attract radical voters. Nonetheless, it was sufficient to cause a salvo of reactions in Bosnia. Bosniak officials did not wait long to respond, with Haris Silajdzic calling Draskovic's intrusion into Bosnian affairs "an aggression through a microphone" (DA, 16 May 2007: 2). The response also came from high officials of international community, with EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana and High Representative Christian Swartz Shilling releasing a joint statement reiterating Bosnian sovereignty and Serbia's obligation to respect the Dayton Agreement (DA, 18 January 2007: 2).

The response of RS-based politicians was much more ambiguous. In their initial comments, Serb officials contended that there was no relation between the issues of Kosovo and RS Independence. Thus, Mladen Ivanic said that "BiH will continue resolving its problems on its own" and that "Kosovo is an internal problem of Serbia" (DA, 18 JAN 2007, pg 2). However, two statements by Milorad Dodik less than two weeks apart fully displayed ambiguity of official RS perspective on the link between Kosovo and RS. On January 25th, 2007, Dodik and the US Ambassador to Bosnia Douglas McElhaney made a joint statement that a "decision on the final status of Kosovo will not have any significant impact on the situation in BiH. RS is conscious of its obligations..." (DA, 26 January 2007: 3). In contrast, on February 6th, 2007 Dodik said that future events in RS and BiH would depend on the final status of Kosovo. (DA, 07 February 2007: 4).

This contradictory rhetoric was a continuation of Dodik's tactic used since the beginning of the RS Referendum Discourse, which now became embodied in the theme

of Kosovo. It was a new version of rhetorical cycles that pushed against limits of legality at one occasion, and refrained from it at another. In this manner, Dodik has played a dual political role. On the one hand, by declaring respect for Dayton realities he portrayed himself as a legalist and a responsible local partner of international community. On the other hand, his evocation of parallelism with Kosovo served for his identity-affirmation with the Serb public.

Overall in 2007, the RS politicians discussed the idea of RS referendum rather sporadically and in a carefully worded manner. While refraining from outright calls for RS secession, their rhetoric was characterized with vague warnings that Kosovo's independence would be a destabilizing precedent with wider regional consequences. Conversely, the RS politicians asserted that legal restrictions would be obeyed and that the RS would remain peaceful regardless of the Kosovo resolution. As seen before, rhetoric structured in this manner did not provide solid evidence of Dayton violations that would warrant the use of OHR sanctioning powers.

While the RS politicians balanced separatist ambitions with legal obligations, right-wing Bosnian Serb NGOs were more forthright in tying the status of RS to the outcome of Kosovo negotiations. These NGOs operated with fewer legal limitations than public officials who were the subjects of potential OHR removal. Thus, NGOs had more freedom to articulate nationalist aims. A closer analysis of discursive acts of some RS-based NGOs has suggested that they occasionally served as more than just the voice of their member citizens. The timing of some NGO's public releases has indicated that their statements may have been coordinated to support political strategies of RS leaders.

Particularly interesting was the timing of May 14th, 2007 press conference by a "Serb People's Movement- the Choice is Ours". In post-war Bosnia, this right-wing NGO based in the RS capital of Banja Luka has been the boldest and most outspoken advocate of RS independence. It has a history of organizing public gatherings, petitions and press conferences throughout the RS in favor of secession from Bosnia, and its activists have occasionally plastered posters in support of indicted Serb war criminals. During the May 14th conference, the NGO's President Dane Cankovic stated that if RS parliament decided not react to potential Kosovo secession by declaring RS independence, it would organize "a Pan-Serbian Assembly that will declare RS an

independent state” (DA, 15 May 2007: 2). By wording the statement in this manner, the NGO appeared to be inspired by events that preceded the 1992 formation of RS, namely the establishment of a separate Serb Assembly under the leadership of the current war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic. The assembly eventually proclaimed the Republic of the Serb people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was a predecessor of RS.

The statement by “Serb People’s Movement- the Choice is Ours” appeared to be isolated, with no evidence of discursive activity regarding the RS referendum or independence in its temporal proximity that could have provoked it. However, it is indicative that on the same day the member of the main board of SNSD Rajko Vasic held the press conference in Banja Luka in order to present his party’s agenda for future negotiations of constitutional reforms. At that occasion, Vasic introduced the SNSD’s proposal that called for further division of Bosnia into a federation of three ethno-territorial units.

While it is difficult to prove the link between the proposal and the NGO’s statement, several considerations suggest that coordination between the two was likely. Dodik was well aware that proposed divisions would place Bosnia one step away from disintegration and, as such, had virtually no chance of receiving Bosniak support. However, SNSD’s proposals could potentially shift the leverage of negotiations away from further centralization and closer to Serb maximalist goals. A bold statement underscoring a desire of many Serbs for independent RS could have bolstered the proposal by reminding rival parties that they may stand to lose more than what was offered. Independence warnings by “Serb People’s Movement- The choice is Ours” had potential to achieve this without implicating the RS leadership. The possible effect of simultaneous launch of the proposal and NGO’s statement may have been to send the message that Kosovo’s independence might create spontaneous secession in the RS, thus presenting the Serb proposal to Bosniaks as a less harmful option.

While RS leadership primarily linked the statuses of RS and Kosovo in a tacit or vague manner, some Serbian officials occasionally repeated explicit and direct parallels reminiscent of the ones drawn by Draskovic in January of 2007. Such behavior by representatives of neighboring Serbia was responsible for most escalations of referendum and independence rhetoric in BiH throughout 2007. Although virtually all Serbian

political factions were united in a general stance that Kosovo's independence would be a dangerous precedent for the entire region, opposition nationalist parties were vocal in drawing parallelism specifically to the situation of the RS. While Serbian reformist government led by President Boris Tadic limited rhetoric to cautioning against regional destabilization, the opposition occasionally called for a direct compensation of Kosovo with RS. This was evidenced in a statement by Ivica Dacic, the leader of Serbian Socialist Party, made at a session of Serbian Parliament:

Serbia should decisively defend Serbs on the other side of the Drina river...why wouldn't Serbia unilaterally declare independence of RS if Kosovo unilaterally declares independence, and why couldn't RS hold a referendum (DA, 17 July 2007: 4).

Similar arguments were made by the opposition in the RS. This is shown in a contention by SDS President Mladen Bosic that if Kosovo was allowed the right to secede "SDS will seek the same right for Republic of Srpska" (DA, 23 May 2007: 2). It thus appeared that elected leaders played a careful rhetorical game, while the bluntest rhetoric came from parties that had the least to lose politically by stirring nationalist passions.

Involvement of Serbia in Bosnian affairs dramatically intensified in October of 2007, only weeks before the December 10th deadline for conclusion of negotiations on the final status of Kosovo. The pretext was the political crisis that developed in the aftermath of the OHR decision to strengthen the central government by amending the Council of Ministers Law and changing regulations pertaining to activities of Bosnian parliament. It was the first bold public move by the new OHR, and the response of RS politicians was fierce. Dodik demanded that High Representative retract his decision, threatening with withdrawal of Serbs from joint institutions. In the ensuing weeks, numerous international actors would become involved in the crisis, with Serbia and Russia giving support to the RS stance. During this period, the intensity of discourses on RS referendum and independence was elevated, reflecting the main argument of RS parties that the OHR decision critically threatened Serb interests.

As Serbian leadership participated in Bosnian political crisis by defending the position of RS, it also utilized the occasion to bolster arguments against the Kosovo independence. The discontent of Bosnian Serbs was an opportunity for Serbian officials

to emphasize emotional affection between Serbia and RS Serbs, instantiating a link between the aspirations of RS population and the status of Kosovo. Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica applied this tactic in a bold statement made only a couple of days into the crisis. Kostunica drew direct parallels between the OHR decision and UN-brokered Ahtisaari Plan that called for conditional independence of Kosovo.

(OHR) Measures and Ahtisary Plan are designed to undermine Resolution 1244 and Dayton Agreement, that is, to declare Kosovo's independence and abolish the RS. This is an open endangerment of fundamental interests of Serb peoples. I have informed Prime Minister Dodik that he can count on full support from Serbia, and we will defend both the Resolution 1244 and the Dayton Agreement with equal resolve (DA, 26 October 2007: 3).

This interchangeable discussion of events in Kosovo and Bosnia was a continuation of a tactic that implicitly connected the two issues, which had been used by Kostunica in the past and recorded in Chapter II. However, these connections were now made more transparent. Kostunica's alleged willingness to defend the statuses of RS and Kosovo "with equal resolve" sent a clear message that Serbia was ready to deeply engage into Bosnian political affairs despite their occurrence in a foreign sovereign state. In this manner, Bosnia became a part of revanchist discourse initiated by Serbian politicians in response to arguments in favor of Kosovo's independence. Serbia had argued that Kosovo's independence would be a dangerous legal precedent that could encourage separatist ambitions elsewhere. The constant parallelism between the statuses of RS and Kosovo served for specification of this general argument to the case of RS. Although there is no evidence that Serbia was prepared to trade Kosovo for the RS, the discursive presentation of the link between the two was a warning of potential adverse effects of Kosovo's independence. Furthermore, Kostunica's reassertion of Serbian support for both the Dayton Agreement and the UN Resolution 1244 that confirmed Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo presented Serbia as a party that obeyed standing agreement, while accusing the IC of violating them in both Bosnia and Kosovo.

Bosnian political crisis also exposed deep cleavages within the Peace Implementation Council, Euro-Atlantic powers and the UN Security Council regarding Kosovo and, in turn, its relationship to events in Bosnia. While EU leaders offered unreserved support to OHR, Russia voiced opposition to imposing any measures against

the will of RS. Furthermore, Russian officials echoed a Serbian position regarding the effects of possible Kosovo independence, as reflected in comments made by the Russian Ambassador to BiH Konstantin Suvalov.

Recognition of Kosovo independence if it is not recognized by Belgrade is a violation of international law. Such recognition would undermine the norms of international law that protect territorial integrity of BiH. Unilateral recognition of Kosovo will have a destabilizing effect on the region. But we are not making such a move and do not ask us about its consequences (DA, 12 November 2007: 5).

Dissent from the majority position of Euro-Atlantic powers has demonstrated Russia's determination to maintain an independent line in regards to the Bosnian problem and even engage in discursive confrontation with the West. In turn, it has bolstered the attempts of RS to challenge the OHR decision.

During the October 2007 crisis, the RS officials remained focused on the status of RS within Bosnia, largely leaving the parallels to Kosovo to their allies in Serbia. This appeared to be a tactical division of political labor intended to benefit both Serbia and the Serbs in Bosnia. On one side, Serbia utilized the Bosnian political crisis to display pan-Serb solidarity by coming to rhetorical defense of its perceived co-nationalists in the RS. This approach of regarding Bosnian Serbs as part of a greater Serb nation evoked the scenario of RS seeking its right to self-determination in response to Kosovo's possible secession from Serbia. On the RS side, Serbia's support bolstered the attempts of RS officials to overturn the OHR decision and enhance their political position within Bosnia. With Serbia managing analogies to Kosovo, the RS politicians could focus their arguments on protection of powers that the Dayton Agreement awarded to entities.

Bosniak and multi-ethnic parties voiced their opposition to Serbian interference, but it appeared that there was little they could do to stop it. Their responses revisited standard themes of reasserting Bosnian territorial integrity and refuting any connections between RS and Kosovo. However, Bosniaks and other supporters of a unified Bosnian state escalated their rhetoric at times, showing signs of possible frustration with unrelenting Serbian revanchist discourse. Particularly memorable was a message sent to Kostunica by a member of SDP and Bosnian presidency Zeljko Komsic that ventured out of diplomatic etiquette. Komsic warned that Kostunica should "keep his fingers off BiH,

because he could ‘get it’ across both the fingers and the nose” (DA, 27 October 2007: 4). Western officials also maintained that Kosovo negotiations and RS were unrelated, warning Serbia that its progress towards the EU could be hindered by intrusion into affairs of other sovereign states.

The Bosnian political crisis was eventually diffused in late November 2007 with a compromise on a somewhat diluted version of OHR proposal. Although the RS leaders ultimately made significant concessions that enabled the compromise, their political rebellion bolstered the position of RS in several ways. First, it displayed Serb unity on perceived national issues and readiness to oppose imposed measures by paralyzing the central government. Second, Serbia and Russia proved to be significant allies of the RS, with both demonstrating willingness to support the Bosnian Serbs at a price of confrontation with the West. Further, turbulence in the aftermath of mild measures served to make the OHR more reluctant to impose more substantial decisions. Resolve of the West to refocus on Bosnia while being consumed with Kosovo negotiations was also suspect. The Serbian rhetorical offensive indubitably showed that shockwaves of Kosovo question would be felt in Bosnia. With Kosovar Albanians preparing to declare independence in February of 2008, any action that could further agitate the RS carried high risks for Bosnian stability. These circumstances provided RS politicians with significant maneuver space. Thus, it was not surprising that Dodik’s SNSD officially launched its platform that called for transforming Bosnia into a federation of three ethno-territorial units in January of 2008. According to the proposal, all three units had a right to secede from the union.

These developments set the stage for the third major eruption of the RS Referendum Discourse that corresponded to Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence. The discourse intensified in mid-February 2008 as RS parties contemplated a joint approach to Kosovo’s imminent announcement. The parties agreed to hold an extraordinary session of RS parliament that would coordinate the response. The RS leadership argued for a balanced response, which would reject Kosovo’s independence while staying within the Dayton obligations. However, it came under intense pressure of radical nationalist demands by opposition parties that utilized the opportunity to test the resolve of SNSD. Thus, the right-wing SDS depicted the

developments in Kosovo as a cause for RS secession from Bosnia, calling on RS leaders to fulfill their campaign promise of holding the RS independence referendum. These demands were bolstered by support from a Serb Movement of Independent Associations, or SPONA, which is an umbrella organization of eleven leading RS-based NGOs that notably bring together Bosnian Serb war veterans and former prisoners. In a February 12th, 2008 press statement, SPONA's chairman Branislav Dukic called for outright "secession of RS without referendum" as a response to possible Kosovo independence (Nezavisne Novine Online Edition, 14 February 2008: Dogadaji).

Kosovo unilaterally declared independence on February 17th, 2008. The decision heightened nationalist tensions in Bosnia, triggering street protests throughout the RS. In addition to voicing opposition to Kosovo's independence, protesters demanded RS independence referendum and outright secession from BiH. The occasion was also used by the right-wing SDS as well as the Serb Radical Party for renewal of their calls for RS secession. In contrast, the initiator of RS Referendum Discourse Milorad Dodik was more measured. On the day of declaration, he stated that politicians were faced with a difficult task of answering the question of "why can Kosovo do it, and RS cannot" (DA, 18 January 2008: 10). However, Dodik also rejected nationalist demands and called for restraint, as evidenced in his February 20th, 2008 press release.

Radicalization sought by SDS and SRS in the aftermath of illegal declaration of Kosovo's statehood with demands that RS government declare independence is only nationalist opportunism. SNSD and the current government have been, for the past two years, working rationally and systematically for protection RS rights based on the Dayton Agreement (DA, 21 February 2008: 9).

A closer inspection of the statement brings a twofold effect to light. Dodik's use of two impact words with negative connotation, "radicalization" and "nationalist opportunism", discredited the right-wing opposition as agitators who were trying to inflame passions for political benefit. This was contrasted to a presentation of SNSD as the true guardian of RS that did not act on impulse but through a well-designed strategy that had been proven as effective. Thus, Dodik portrayed himself as the statesman who called out the opposition for their cynical overreaction. He did not object to a political goal of independent RS but to the strategy SDS and SNSD employed in its name.

Additional comments made by Dodik on the same day in an interview with *Glas Srpske* (Voice of Srpska) indicated that his intentions did not change.

Of course, I am not a man without emotions, who wouldn't wish many things to happen immediately, but some of them are unrealistic. In any case, we have to do many things slowly, in a measured manner, and smartly (DA, 21 February 2008: 9).

Considering that the comments were made in response to increasing demands for RS independence referendum as well as outright declaration of independence, they visibly implied that Dodik shared the same ambitions. The difference was Dodik's judgment that Kosovo's independence would not alone be sufficient for realization of those ambitions. Furthermore, when pressed to act on his promises of independence referendum Dodik revisited his long-standing theme that tied the potential referendum to threats against the RS. He argued that SNSD would proceed with a referendum if the existence of the RS continued to get contested, which had not been done by Kosovo's independence. In this manner, Dodik presented himself as a voice of reason while staying in touch with nationalist objectives.

At an extraordinary session of RS parliament held on February 21st, 2008 the RS parties reached a compromise on the text of resolution regarding Kosovo's declaration of independence that bore marks of tactical political maneuvering. The resolution claimed that possible recognition of Kosovo by a majority of UN members would set a legal precedent that would give the RS a right to hold independence referendum. An assertion worded in this manner was fittingly designed to maximize political benefits in the existing circumstances. In particular, it navigated around the contradiction of simultaneously treating Kosovo's independence as illegal and as a precedent to be followed. The RS officials chose not to move towards a referendum at the time, which was a decision bolstered by several considerations. The referendum would have been a clear violation of the Dayton Accords that would prompt a direct confrontation with the IC. Such extensive violation of the only agreement that guaranteed the existence of RS would have undermined legal foundations upon which the RS existed, creating uncertainty about its future. Furthermore, the RS referendum as a reaction to Kosovo's

unilateral independence would imply that the declaration had power of a legal precedent. This would contradict the official RS position defining Kosovo's secession as unlawful.

Instead, the RS politicians opted to strengthen their position by looking towards the distant future. By defining the right to hold a reactive referendum in response to widespread recognition of Kosovo, the RS pursued dual political benefit. On the one hand, adaption of the resolution in the parliament that contained the referendum clause assuaged nationalist demands by attempting to lay first legal foundations for a future potential referendum. On the other hand, it served to discourage potential recognition of Kosovo's independence, assisting Serbia in its upcoming legal attempts to dispute the unilateral secession. In this manner, the RS politicians treated Kosovo's declaration of independence as a decision of great political but little legal significance.

Furthermore, the resolution demanded that Bosnian parliament confirm the status of RS as one of Bosnia's two equal constituent entities. This was a new and somewhat unusual demand since the RS was already confirmed in the Dayton Agreement. Having it reaffirmed appeared to be a way to have the RS's status underlined and highlighted. It is also difficult to logically justify the presence of such a demand within the resolution on Kosovo. Considering the timing and political context, the motivation appears to be pure political opportunism. The IC was absorbed by the situation in Kosovo at the time, attempting to defuse anger of Kosovar Serbs that had begun to erupt into violence. In these circumstances, threats of deeper escalation coming from perturbed nationalist passions of RS Serbs commanded particular vigilance. In order to moderate this state of heightened emotions, the IC representatives were more likely to be responsive to Bosnian Serb nationalist demands. The time was right for RS politicians to seek more than usual, and the resolution reflected astute use of the moment to re-iterate their concerns and agenda. Until the resolution, the Serbs linked the cease of referendum talk with the end of calls for RS abolishment. This was no longer enough. The RS now used shockwaves from Kosovo as an opportunity to demand parliamentary confirmation of RS.

The international officials in Bosnia responded to parallels between the RS Referendum and Kosovo's independence by calling for restraint and reaffirming support for the Dayton Agreement. In accordance to this stance, they contested the portion of the RS Parliament resolution that advocated the right to referendum. Although the IC

remained united in opposing referendum as a reaction to Kosovo's move, rationalization for this opposition revealed a drift that lay beneath the surface. Western powers claimed that Kosovo's independence was a unique case with specific context that could not be replicated by others. This included the RS, which could exist only within the Dayton limitations. On the other hand, the opponents of Kosovo's independence led by Serbia and Russia argued that the declaration was unlawful, and that previously defined legal statuses of both the RS and Kosovo were still in effect. This meant that all sides were obliged to continue respecting the Dayton Accords, which protected the existence of RS but did not grant it a right to hold independence referendum. In these dynamics, the High Representative Miroslav Lajcak limited his rhetoric to rejecting any links between situations in Kosovo and BiH without giving a perspective on the legality of Kosovo's decision. However, he showed signs of retreat in face of Serb demands that were now bolstered by regional nationalist turbulence. In contrast to a previous stance that the RS referendum rhetoric had to cease immediately, Lajcak now expressed support for Serb demands for confirmation of RS. On March 15th 2008, *Dnevni Avaz* printed Lajcak's comments made in a "Telering" Show of the OBN Television.

Dodik is right when he asks his coalition partners (FBiH parties) to recognize the RS, since it would contribute to the cessation of calls for organizing the RS independence referendum (DA, 15 March 2008: 2).

Bosniak officials and multi-ethnic parties responded to Kosovo's unilateral independence by reiterating the position that events in Kosovo and Bosnia were unrelated. The Bosniak storyline presented the declaration of independence as the end product of Kosovo's specific context as a former Serbian province that had endured decades of oppression and nine years of interim UN administration. According to this perspective, the RS could not lay claim to the line of arguments that advocated Kosovo's independence. The Bosniak parties particularly emphasized that the RS came into existence only with the 1995 Dayton Agreement that placed it within Bosnian statehood. This storyline echoed the position of Western countries that supported Kosovo's independence, with one notable difference. Bosniaks and other proponents of the unified Bosnian state were not prepared to further escalate the country's internal political tensions by pushing for recognition of Kosovo. Their approach to unilateral

independence of Kosovo was limited to emphasizing that it was a foreign issue, agreeing with the RS parties not to place its recognition on the political agenda. Table 3 summarizes major storylines pertaining to the role of Kosovo’s independence in the RS Referendum Discourse.

Table 3.

Kosovo’s Independence Declaration and RS Referendum Discourse	Storyline of Serb parties	Storyline of Bosniak and multi-ethnic parties	Storyline of International Officials in Bosnia
<i>Situational Description</i>	Kosovo’s independence was an illegal act by Kosovar Albanians to fulfill their long-lasting secessionist ambitions. It was a “theft” of territory that has historically been Serbian.	Independence was the end product of Kosovo’s historical context as a former Serbian province. Serbia had oppressed the Kosovar Albanian population, and after a decade of interim UN rule it could not be returned to Serbian Sovereignty	Independence of Kosovo was a decision by Kosovar Albanians based on specific circumstances. Because Serbia is not willing to relinquish the province, the Kosovars were forced to declare independence. The decision on recognition is left to individual countries
<i>Location Specification</i>	Kosovo’s independence is an illegal act that could destabilize other disputed areas. It encourages other separatist ambitions and sets a precedent that destabilizes national boundaries.	Kosovo’s independence was a product of specific circumstances, involving years of oppression and UN Interim rule. The legality of independence came only from this context and could not be replicated. The ongoing dispute is an internal matter of Serbia and Kosovo.	Kosovo’s independence was a product of specific context, with disputable legality that is still debated. It is an internal matter between Serbia and Kosovo, and its outcome does not have the power of a precedent.
<i>Relation to RS</i>	If Kosovo could get independence, then RS should have the right to claim this status too as part of a final settlement of boundaries in the wake of the breakup of Yugoslavia. If one ‘illegal act’ is recognized (Kosovo’s independence) then another ‘illegal act’ (RS referendum and independence) can be accepted. The difference underscores the ‘double standards’ of the international community	There is no relation. RS is only an entity within Bosnia and has no other historical context. There is no legal foundation for referendum or outright independence of the RS, Bosnian territorial integrity is unquestionable.	There is no relation. RS is only an entity within Bosnia as defined by the Dayton Peace Agreement. There is no legal foundation for referendum or independence. All sides must respect Dayton realities.

	when it comes to Serbs, the most victimized of peoples. <u>Paradox: Kosovo's declaration is defined as illegal, therefore it should not be a precedent to be followed.</u>		
<i>Action to be taken in response</i>	Prevent BiH recognition of Kosovo. Reassert status of RS in Bosnian Parliament. Call for RS independence referendum if majority of UN members recognize Kosovo or if status of RS is threatened.	None. Serbs oppose recognition of Kosovo by BiH, and, therefore, it is not on the political agenda.	None, unless all parties in BiH agree on joint action.

The major eruption of RS Referendum Discourse subsided in the second half of March 2008, more than a month after it began. Nationalist passions aroused by Kosovo's decision seemed largely depleted, giving way to diplomatic battles regarding the recognition of self-declared independence. A particular boost to diplomacy occurred in May of 2008, with the victory of pro-EU reformist forces over the radicals in Serbian parliamentary elections. While the victors led by President Tadic insisted on Kosovo remaining under Serbian sovereignty, their arguments were milder than those of the radicals. Tadic argued against Kosovo's recognition on the grounds of respect for international borders, while the radicals were more concerned for territories in Kosovo with Serb majority. The radicals were more likely to call for a partition of Kosovo along ethnic lines, which would draw new boundaries and serve as a dangerous precedent that could have been followed by minorities elsewhere. In this manner, the victory of pro-EU forces bolstered the paradigm of constitutional states over the paradigm of ethno-territories as applied to the Kosovo question.

In Bosnia, the RS Referendum Discourse continued with sporadic rhetorical exchanges that only reiterated opposing standpoints regarding the link between Kosovo and BiH. A brief but notable intensification occurred in the aftermath of October 2008 speech that Haris Silajdzic gave at the UN General Assembly without consent of RS representatives. The RS Parliament responded by holding an extraordinary session that intensely debated the right to hold independence referendum. During the session, SNSD

called for a resolution that would define attempts to transfer powers from entities to central government as an act of endangering the RS. Furthermore, it advocated a return of dozens of powers that had already been transferred.

The parliament ultimately adopted a resolution that called against additional transfer of powers from entities to the state and confirmed the provisions of February 2008 Kosovo resolution regarding the right to referendum. Although this was a more temperate version than most advocated during the debates, it was still a rather excessive response to Silajdzic's speech. In this context, the speech served as an occasion for RS politicians to loudly articulate their maximalist aims. The resolution also showed that the referendum rhetoric had begun leading to parliamentary decisions. Along with the preceding Kosovo resolution, the resolution created more maneuver space for future activities, possibly serving as a legislative precedent for gradual legitimization of RS referendum.

The emergence of status of Kosovo as a dominant theme of RS Referendum Discourse has altered its performative structure in several ways. First, the right to hold a referendum was now separated from Bosniak calls for abolishment of entities. Although the RS officials continued to portray the potential referendum as a defensive reaction, the parallels to Kosovo discussed legal precedents and outright compensation for the Serb nation for all the border changes of the last few decades. This implied that the referendum no longer depended on Bosniak reactions; it was framed as part of a region-wide grand settlement. Second, debate over the status of Kosovo was a modality for direct Serbian contributions to the discourse. While the primary advocates of the RS referendum and independence during the 2006 eruptions had been Serbs in the RS, much of the parallels between the statuses of RS and Kosovo were made by high public officials from neighboring Serbia. RS Referendum Discourse had been successfully exported into the political scene there. Third, the idea of RS referendum was no longer discussed only in campaign speeches and press releases. The referendum now appeared in RS Parliamentary resolutions in response to Kosovo's declaration of independence, which was likely an attempt to give the idea first outlines of a legal dimension.

With Kosovo surfacing as its main theme, the referendum rhetoric was bolstered by increasing difficulties in coordinating a unified IC response. The international

community has demonstrated a split regarding the recognition of Kosovo, and in turn, its relationship to events in Bosnia. On the international plane, major supporters of Bosnian territorial integrity also supported Kosovo's secession. This was a stance mired with seeming inconsistencies that the rival sides exploited for their political advantage.

CONCLUSION

The eruption of nationalist discourse in the former Yugoslav republics during the 1980s represented a radical departure from anti-nationalist ideology of Socialist Yugoslavia that had been celebrated under the motto of “brotherhood and unity”. The subsequent tide of nationalism would subside only years later with full dissolution of Yugoslavia and the conclusion of armed conflicts in its former republics. Electoral victories of moderate forces in Bosnia and Serbia in the early 2000s seemed to provide solid evidence that ethnic solidarity retreated in the face of common desires for economic progress and EU integrations. However, the emergence of the RS Referendum Discourse in 2006 was a major reversion to old nationalist cartographic fantasies and has demonstrated the ongoing power of ethnicity to overshadow other axes of identification.

Although the political context is different, the RS Referendum Discourse contains several features that are reminiscent of Slobodan Milosevic’s nationalist rhetoric of the 1980s. Serb nationalism communicated by Milosevic was energized primarily by allegations of mistreatment of Serb minorities in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia. Similarly, the demands for RS referendum were justified by the alleged desire of Bosniaks to dominate the RS Serbs. In this context, Milorad Dodik’s campaign statement “not a single man will be humiliated any longer” seems to echo Milosevic’s well-known phrase “no one is allowed to beat you anymore”. Such rhetoric helped both Milosevic and Dodik win a large share of votes amongst their respective constituencies while radicalizing wider political dynamics.

Even the career paths of the two leaders had similarities that provoke curiosity. As one-party system gave way to political plurality, Milosevic transformed from a communist official and opponent of Serb right-wing factions to a leading Serb nationalist. Comparably, Milorad Dodik began his ascent as a self-declared Social Democrat who received Western support as a moderate alternative to the right-wing SDS. After the launch of the RS Referendum Discourse, Dodik’s political stance on perceived national issues became no less radical than the position of SDS. Thus, both leaders appeared as clever pragmatists with questionable ideological consistency. These considerations raise

the suspicion that their political activity was primarily motivated by a self-serving desire to rise to and secure for themselves a long presence in power.

The RS Referendum Discourse should also be treated as a distinct outbreak with performative structure that has been shaped by a particular political context. While Milorad Dodik succeeded in rallying the voters around nationalist ambitions, he lacked several resources that Serb nationalists had at their disposal during the 1980s. First, Milosevic controlled the overwhelming firepower of former Yugoslav Army and Serbian police that had enabled him to suppress the opposition and bolster nationalist agenda with corresponding military successes. In 2006, the RS did not have its own army, the negotiations were under way to integrate its police under a common Bosnian police force, and the overwhelming military strength was in the hands of EU and NATO peacekeepers. Furthermore, Milosevic has obtained full control of the media in Serbia during the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the voice of opposition had been largely muted. The RS leadership did not have such monopoly over the sources of information in 2006, as Bosnian Serbs had greater exposure to outlets that offered alternative perspectives. However, the referendum discourse benefited from ethnicized framing in Bosnian media, with most RS-based outlets supporting the views of RS leaders.

How could Dodik manage to demobilize his opposition and dangerously radicalize Bosnian rivalries in the absence of resources that Serbian and Croatian elites had at their disposal prior to the outbreak of Yugoslav wars? I suspect that the answer can be found in the differences between the ethnic consciousness within the Yugoslav state in the early 1990s and the state of a divided contemporary Bosnian society. In the late 1980s and the first years of 1990s the Yugoslav ethno-political entrepreneurs were faced with a task of magnifying ethnic divides and even inventing ethnic identities where they did not readily emerge. On the other hand, ethnicity permeates the daily lives of contemporary Bosnians. The legacy of the war is a continued powerful ethnic differentiation and a general adversarial relationship between the Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. Thus, the threshold for placing the ethnic agenda at the forefront in a manner that demobilizes other agendas is significantly lower than it was at the time of the fall of Yugoslavia. A strategic design of Milorad Dodik's discursive appeal to Serb aspirations

for a strong and potentially independent Republic of Srpska was sufficient to generate widespread popular support.

Dodik's role should thus be evaluated in the context of larger structures that had developed in post-war Bosnia. William Connolly has contributed to understanding of the relationship between the agent and structure in his account of the contemporary US political condition. Connolly has identified the Republican Party, evangelical Christians, certain media and "cowboy capitalists" as elements of a machine that reinforced a particular political direction. Although individuals such as President Bush and news commentator Bill O'Reilly dramatize the reinforcement effect, Connolly argues that "they would merely be oddball characters unless they triggered, expressed and amplified a resonance machine larger than them" (Connolly, 2005: 877). Connolly's idea of a 'resonance machine' is relevant to Bosnian political dynamics. In Bosnia, extensive tripartite divisions have created ethnically exclusive institutions that could be viewed as elements of a machine within which particular ethno-nationalist discourses resonate. Dodik is a catalyzing agent who intensifies this resonance effect. However, the machine goes on irrespective of the agent who is sitting at the controls, and Dodik's exit will weaken it only if a new persona does not emerge to replace him.

My analysis has suggested that the RS Referendum Discourse occupied a narrow rhetorical space from which it could reap political benefit while assuming minimal risk. This space was marked with two principal features that have remained constant throughout the discourse. First, the possibility of holding the RS referendum was presented as a reactive measure. During the pre-election campaign and in the aftermath of the Montenegro's referendum, Serb politicians mentioned the RS referendum almost exclusively as a possible reaction to Bosniak calls for the abolishment of RS. During the Kosovo eruption, the RS referendum was frequently evoked by Serbian officials as a legitimate response to Kosovo's independence, but the RS politicians continued to connect its legitimacy primarily to threats against the existence of RS. This approach served to further enhance the idea's emotional appeal amongst the Serbs, who were more likely to offer unreserved support to a referendum framed as a response to perceived injustices. It also addressed legal impediments established in the Dayton Agreement and offered a justification to wider domestic and foreign audience.

The Montenegro and Kosovo analogies also contributed to the portrayal of the potential RS Referendum as reactive. The secession of Montenegro was regarded by many Serbs as a continuance of fragmentation of Serb lands that had begun with independences of Croatia and Bosnia. Kosovo's declaration of independence was perceived as a major step towards the full secession of the imagined cradle of Serb nationhood, which would constitute the ultimate territorial defeat. These perspectives were consistent with a long standing self-image of Serbs as victims who pursue agency only in response to wrongs inflicted on them. Many RS Serbs, who for the most part consider themselves a part of the greater Serb nation, could relate to these analogies of victimization to rationalize demands for RS referendum. This seems to be a renewal of the earlier 'victim' discourse that was launched by Milosevic in the early 1990s to justify military engagements in Croatia and BiH. Milosevic claimed to act on behalf of the endangered Serb populations that were threatened by Bosniak and Croat desires for domination. In late 1990s, the violence against Albanians in Kosovo was rationalized as a struggle against Albanian terrorists and separatists who were trying to take away the ancient Serb land and dominate local Serbs. Thus, the main message of the 'victim' discourse has been that Serbs never initiate trouble, but only respond to it.

The related approach of cyclical pressing against the envelope of legality followed by a retreat from it was the second principal feature that has characterized the RS Referendum Discourse. Any discussion of a referendum carried the potential of provoking intense and incongruous feelings amongst Bosniaks and Serbs, thus impeding Bosnia's progress towards reconciliation. Furthermore, the Dayton Agreement did not provide for a right of entities to hold a referendum, and advocacy of such a right by public officials constituted an illegal act subject to OHR sanctions. However, Milorad Dodik and other Serb officials who have articulated the RS referendum desire have placed their rhetoric in a space where it was able to toy with boundaries of legality. Although some speech acts have at times appeared to be clear violations, they were balanced with subsequent retreats and expressions of support for legal restrictions. Thus, Milorad Dodik has frequently reaffirmed his support for the Dayton agreement, emphasizing that his referendum talk had only been a theoretical exploration. Even in the midst of most intense eruptions of RS Referendum Discourse, Dodik followed his bold

threats of holding the RS Referendum with expression of support for the Dayton Agreement. Furthermore, he accused Bosniaks who called for abolishment of RS of violating the Dayton provisions. Discourse structured in this manner enabled Dodik to benefit from aroused nationalist passions without providing clear evidence of misconduct that would force OHR to sanction him.

The idea of performativity has much to offer for understanding the impact of the RS Referendum Discourse on identity formation. Merje Kuus has observed that “the stability of identity cannot be traced to a stable ontological ground- a subject, the focus of study is not the subject (doer), but enactments of one (deeds)” (Kuus, 2007: 93). The significance of Dodik’s talk, then, is not what it tells us about Serbs as an imagined national community, but what effect it has on identity claims of its audience. To say that his behavior is inspired by aspirations for independent RS is not to say that Serbs desire RS independence, but that Dodik’s behavior is animated by enactment of such an ambition. By delinking the ambition and identity, we are able to expose the effect of the performative act on identity formation.

Merje Kuus has utilized this line of reasoning to discuss performative acts in Estonian politics as they pertain to the country’s Russian-speaking populations. Kuus has observed the change from russophobia that had in the past portrayed Russian speakers as a national threat to more recent advocacy of multiculturalism that was inclusive of the Russian minority. As a result, even the parties that had held most russophobic positions in the past have reformed their stance. According to Kuus, these developments signaled the erosion of the link between identity and threat and a move towards more inclusive identities (2007: 96). Conversely, the key aspect of the RS Referendum Discourse is its perpetual production of the RS as under threat. It serves for continuous affirmation and deeper entrenchment of ethnic identity based on the binary Serbs/Other, and enables Dodik to secure the role of the guardian of RS. In this manner, Dodik produces himself as the Serb father figure. Since repetition is crucial, this production can be altered at the level of discourse. This exposes the critical role of public discourse for the direction of future political developments in Bosnia.

The three eruptions analyzed in this research each served a specific purpose and were crucial for understanding the overall structure and underlying motives of the RS

Referendum Discourse. Thus, the Montenegro Referendum was a regional event of secession that served as a catalyst for launching the initial discussion of RS referendum. It was an opportunity for drawing parallels between the status of RS and Montenegro's right to self-determination in wake of discontent of many Serbs caused by the loss of former Yugoslav republic. Such parallels could not provide solid arguments for long due to sharp differences in legality and universal acceptance of Montenegro's independence. As Montenegro dropped out of headlines, the RS Referendum Discourse temporarily lost in intensity while the example of Montenegro as a major discursive theme was permanently abandoned. Nevertheless, the example served its purpose for exposing the idea of RS Referendum that has largely been an unexpressed desire of many RS Serbs since the signing of the Dayton Accords.

The initial eruption was also an occasion for assessing the reaction of international representatives to the emergence of the RS referendum idea. The IC responded in a rather restrained manner that was limited to condemnations and rhetorical affirmations of Bosnian sovereignty. By failing to react decisively and display willingness to use the Bonn Powers, the OHR and other international officials missed a critical opportunity for curbing inflammatory rhetoric. Furthermore, their anemic approach was a sign of encouragement to Serb leaders, which has likely contributed to recurrence of referendum discourse. With little likelihood of OHR sanctions, Dodik and other Serb officials were able to continue discussing the RS referendum and utilize it for political advantage during the 2006 pre-election campaign.

On the other side, the referendum talk also became the main campaign theme of Bosniak parties competing for votes of their constituents. With inflammatory rhetoric coming from both sides, escalation of Bosnia's rivalries was inevitable. Such a radicalized and emotionally salient environment marginalized other concerns and served the advantage of political actors that had the most success in appealing to nationalist sentiments. Convincing victory of Milorad Dodik in the RS has demonstrated the ongoing utility of secessionist scenarios in Bosnian politics. The victory was also powerful evidence of widespread popular endorsement of Dodik's political agenda. Dodik could now legitimately claim to represent the democratic voice of a vast majority

of RS Serbs, making it more difficult for OHR to sanction him in case of future nationalist behavior.

Another factor that hindered the OHR's ability to act decisively in face of threats to Bosnian stability was the approaching decision on the final status of Kosovo. The dispute regarding the status of Serbia's former province had already stirred emotions of Serbs across the region that were likely to reach dangerous levels if Kosovo was awarded independence. In these conditions, any action against the RS leaders risked further escalation. This in turn created additional maneuver space for Dodik to strengthen the position of RS within Bosnia. The ongoing Kosovo dispute was well suited as a premise for continuation of RS referendum warnings that were used to bolster the position of RS as an entity and reject any future transfer of powers to the Bosnian state. The RS Referendum Discourse also provided Serbia with an opportunity to strengthen its position in Kosovo negotiations by drawing effective parallels that could powerfully illustrate the dangers of Kosovo's secession.

In this sense, the RS Referendum Discourse appears to have transpired at a time and in a manner well suited for producing most political benefit for both the RS and Serbian leadership. Towards this goal, the eruptions have provided specific themes, with all three major participants developing distinct storylines that rationalized their perspectives. For RS politicians, these were specialized storylines utilized to enhance their underlying storyline in which the political position of RS was presented in terms that justified the right to referendum.

However, performative structure and storylines do not offer a thorough explanation for the emergence of RS Referendum Discourse. Until 2006, nationalist speech had not been able to escalate antagonisms in the post-Dayton Bosnia to a comparable degree even during the reign of the right-wing SDS in the RS. It would be simplistic to identify the pretexts of Montenegro Referendum and Kosovo dispute as sufficient for reversal of the trend towards integration and reconciliation that had lasted for a decade after the end of the Bosnian War.

The examination of wider political context points to the failure of April 2006 Constitutional Reforms as the critical event that had likely created space for forthright articulation of Serb maximalist aspirations. First, the failure of the proposal was

characterized by two features that had raised the value of Serb nationalist discourse. The proposed reforms were brought down primarily by Bosniak politicians, which was a relative novelty in post-Dayton Bosnian political dynamics. Since the Dayton Accords, the international officials had supported numerous proposals for strengthening the state at the expense of entities. The resistance to this process typically came from RS politicians, who would subsequently become the subjects of intense criticism. As a result of political pressure and OHR's occasional removal of officials the RS frequently yielded to demands and reluctantly relinquished dozens of powers. However, the RS parties actively participated in drafting the 2006 proposal that earned widespread international praise. Dissenters led by Haris Silajdzic came under a barrage of international condemnations for insistence on more radical reforms that called for elimination of entity voting in BiH parliament. The articulation of such a rather uncompromising stance that was able to foil the reforms, along with frequent calls for abolishment of entities, enabled Dodik to claim that fundamental interests of RS Serbs had been endangered. Furthermore, the IC clearly demonstrated that it was not prepared to back radical changes and Bosniak maximalist desires. These conditions created a favorable environment for Serb politicians to launch converse rhetoric that would simultaneously articulate Serb aspirations and Bosniak fears.

Secondly, the negotiations of constitutional reforms were characterized by discord and friction amongst Bosniaks. Two leading Bosniak parties, SDA and SBiH approached the negotiations from conflicting angles. While the SDA was prepared to agree to more moderate reforms, SBiH called for fundamental changes. This intra-Bosniak dispute developed into an intense and divisive debate, and, as discussed in Chapter III, would be decisive for the outcome of Bosniak votes in 2006 Elections. On the other side, the negotiations of constitutional reforms have shown an uncharacteristic unity of Serb parties. Both the moderates and the right-wing SDS supported the failed April 2006 proposal, and in its aftermath were united in asserting that no further concessions would be made. This unanimity would continue as the RS Referendum Discourse emerged several weeks after the failure of proposal. Thus, the negotiations that ended in April of 2006 created political conditions that appealed to Serb commonalities and exposed Bosniak differences.

A related development that also enhanced the opportunities for emergence of the RS Referendum Discourse was a significant reduction of international involvement in Bosnian affairs. Throughout the 1990s the United States had been a chief international supporter of Bosnian territorial integrity and opponent of Serb nationalism. However, since the events of September 11, the focus of US foreign policy has shifted away from the Balkans towards the Middle East. In 1996, the US contingent in Bosnia numbered 16,500 troops, or almost a third of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) (Bowman, 2003). Although reduced, powerful NATO military presence under the Stabilization Force (SFOR) mission continued until December of 2004 when it was replaced by a European Union Force (EUFOR). This move relinquished command of peacekeeping activities from NATO to the EU, leaving only a symbolic US military presence. Subsequently, EUFOR would undergo reductions to a small force that in 2007 numbered approximately 2,200 personnel for the entire country.

The ability of a reduced EUFOR mission to suppress a significant outbreak of disorder in the deeply divided Bosnia was questionable at best. These conditions of diminished IC involvement coupled with tension between global power centers have had an adverse effect on OHR's abilities. Any use of executive powers that could alarm the Serbs now carried dangers of uncontrollable radicalization. Instead of bold measures to punish misbehaving officials, the OHR activities have become increasingly limited to vague warnings and other rhetorical pressure. The crisis of October 2007 had demonstrated that even the OHR itself could now be placed under intense and effective pressure by the RS and its international allies to refrain from using executive powers. In this environment, the political risks for discussing the right of RS to hold independence referendum were lower than at any other time in post-Dayton Bosnia.

Ultimately, the RS Referendum Discourse was only a symptom of a fundamental internal divide that originated in the Dayton decision to solve the Bosnian dispute by creating ethno-territories. The Dayton Agreement confirmed the creation of RS on what was largely a multi-ethnic territory before the war, effectively endorsing ethnic cleansing. While the agreement's provisions called for a return of all refugees to their pre-war homes, the establishment of two entities counteracted this process. Individuals who were expelled based on their perceived ethnic affiliation were now invited to return to the

territory that was *de facto* awarded to rival ethnic groups. This meant the acceptance of authority of some of the same institutions that had been implicated in the cleansing during the war. More than a decade after the end of the war, the results of the return process remained modest, solidifying the forcible demographic shifts. Bosniak parties often evoked this reality in advocating the abolishment of RS. However, the IC was not prepared to support radical changes of the *de jure* status based on the *de facto* results of return. On the other hand, these results enabled the RS leadership to threaten with holding a referendum. The confidence in a positive outcome has made the referendum rhetoric a valuable political weapon. The outcome of the potential referendum would be much less certain if the majority of non-Serb prewar population returned to the present-day RS.

Furthermore, the IC approach towards building a stable and functional post-war Bosnia capable of EU integrations was riddled with flaws that safeguarded the political utility of nationalist rhetoric. A rather simple introduction of elements of a developed democracy, such as free speech, political pluralism and civil society was alone not sufficient to transform Bosnia into a progressive democratic state. Much of the Bosnian media, for example, remained dependent on self-serving leaders, and in these conditions free press was vulnerable to nationalist hijackings. The IC's attempts to reform the media did not incorporate plans for rebuilding the all-Bosnian outlets, falling into what Kemal Kurspahic has called the "the trap of automatic tripartite classification" (2003: 198).

In order to strengthen the joint government and bridge the divides, Bosnia required a carefully crafted strategy that would moderate levels of ethnic groupness by strengthening the axes of identification common to all Bosnians. In *Electing to Fight*, Mansfield and Snyder have advocated proper establishment of democratic institutions before encouraging mass participation in countries undergoing transition to democracy. Considering deep ethnic chasms, Bosnia was primarily in need of democratic institutions that assumed a multi-ethnic character. In this context, Mansfield and Snyder have observed that post-Dayton Bosnian elections have come too soon and have merely locked in the dominance of illiberal elites (Mansfield and Snyder, 2007: 17). More specifically, Roland Paris has observed the problem in Bosnian electoral system that reinforced

tendency for popular mobilization to follow the existing lines of ethnic separation (2004: 192). Bosnian constitution established at Dayton provided little incentives for candidates to seek political support of voters of different ethnic affiliation. In these conditions, elections were won by candidates who succeeded in appealing to ethnic sentiments within their constituencies. In 2006, Milorad Dodik was successful in doing so by means of the RS Referendum Discourse.

Roland Paris has advocated electoral arrangements that would be adopted to particular circumstances. Along these lines, he proposed a solution for moving beyond the Bosnian ethnic impediments.

An alternative to the Dayton plan might have been a *one*-person presidency with a dual requirement for victory: a plurality of votes cast in the entire country and a given percentage of votes cast in each of the ethnic communities or geographical regions of Bosnia (Paris, 2004: 194).

Although sensible, the implementation of such a solution faced major obstacles. The Bosnian constitution was established at Dayton, and any changes to the agreement would require approval of the RS. Considering that the RS politicians placed great value on extensive autonomy of ethnic territories, it is likely that they would fiercely resist such proposals that eroded the lines of ethnic separation. Nevertheless, the IC wasted ample opportunities in post-Dayton years to advocate reforms that would move the country beyond ethno-politics. Without such reforms, political utility of nationalist rhetoric was retained, and its potential for propelling candidates to electoral victories would be released in 2006 in the form of the RS Referendum Discourse.

In addition to implications for Bosnia and for the region, the RS Referendum Discourse is also a phenomenon of interest for wider theoretical debates. As Yugoslavia was breaking up, the process of international recognition of new states followed the principle that only former Yugoslav republics were entitled to statehood. However, the 2008 was a year of international events that have bolstered claims of other regions to self-determination. In February 2008, Kosovo declared independence despite fierce opposition by Serbia and its Russian allies. The unilateral move was subsequently recognized by most Western powers who claimed that Kosovo's independence was a legitimate product of unique circumstances. According to this perspective, Kosovo's

statehood was justified by its history of oppression and years of interim international rule that had made the province's *de facto* independence irreversible. Ironically, Russia evoked a similar argument for its August 2008 recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, further claiming that legitimacy of their secession had been bolstered by Kosovo's precedent.

These events have presented new questions pertaining to stability of international borders. Do they signalize a new trend according to which regions may secede unilaterally based on oppression and *de facto* independence? Who decides what regions and what extent of oppression is sufficient for a legitimate claim, and how long does the region have to be *de facto* independent before its secession is deemed irreversible? Taiwan has, for example, enjoyed *de facto* independence for decades without receiving full fledged international recognition. The examples of Kosovo and Georgia's breakaway regions have suggested that this judgment would be made by major powers in consistence with their political strategies. Such foreign involvement in secession of territories is also controversial from the standpoint of Chapter I of the UN Charter that discourages member states from actions that endanger territorial integrity of other member states (United Nations, 2008-2009).

Furthermore, what do these disputes tell us about relevance of national states in wake of globalization processes? The model of nation-state that first emerged with the Peace of Westphalia consists of states regarded as independent actors who exert influence over a given territory and make decisions in order to preserve and expand their own power. Many theorists had observed that importance of nation-states has been on a sharp decline in recent decades as a result of economic globalization. In this context, Jurgen Habermas has observed the following:

...the growing interdependencies of a world society challenge the basic premise that national politics, circumscribed within a determinate national territory, is still adequate to address the actual fates of individual nation-states (Habermas, 2001: 70).

However, recent claims to self-determination and controversy over their recognition seem to signify that perceptions of a common nation continue to frame dominant popular ambitions. In case of Kosovo and Georgia's two breakaway regions, major *states* are at

odds regarding the recognition of three new claims to *national statehood*. The RS Referendum Discourse has demonstrated the presence of additional desires for independence, which exist despite of their hindrance to the processes of EU integrations. This continuing importance of national politics has been vividly illustrated in a statement by RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik in which he demanded the survival of a separate RS police within BiH “even if it means non-accession to the EU” (Javno Online News Portal, 2007). These examples contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the place that militant particularism occupies in an increasingly globalized world.

What do the unilateral declarations of independence by Kosovo, Abkhasia and South Ossetia signify for separatist ambitions in the RS? Although Serb nationalists often cite these cases as precedents, the RS is not able to evoke a “unique case” argument used by Kosovo, South Ossetia and Abkhasia. The RS has not been a subject of oppression in post-Dayton Bosnia, nor has it been *de facto* independent. On the contrary, it enjoyed deep autonomy within BiH as defined in the Dayton Agreement. In his attempt to bolster the case in favor of RS referendum, Milorad Dodik has particularly emphasized the alleged political oppression. However, in their reactions to the RS referendum idea the international powers have not demonstrated readiness to further move the threshold of a right to secession to include such arguments. Although the stability of international borders has been disturbed by partial recognitions of Kosovo, Abkhasia and South Ossetia, the limitations of the “unique case” argument and lack of UN approval serve to discourage separatist activities in other areas. It appears that global actors have recognized the potential RS secession as capable of producing a far more dangerous scenario, and are, at least for now, not prepared to expand the areas of disputed sovereignty.

Despite these practical obstacles for achieving the ambitions it articulates, the RS referendum talk has generated extensive political benefit to the RS leadership and enhanced the position of RS within BiH. Although the idea of holding the RS referendum is a political tactic that may remain in the realm of discourse, it elevates tensions within Bosnia and maintains the potential of producing devastating consequences. As of this writing, the Kosovo question and debates pertaining to internal reorganization of BiH continue to provide a foundation for new debates regarding the RS referendum.

Kosovo's statehood has not received sufficient recognition for UN membership, and Serbian leadership continues a diplomatic fight to prevent it. If Serbia loses that battle, the RS leadership will then be faced with a challenge of fulfilling the RS parliamentary resolution in which it claimed the right to RS independence as a response to Kosovo's UN membership. Consequently, any such move towards the RS secession is likely to reopen wounds from the recent Bosnian War and possibly return the country to violence.

In order to ensure against a renewed conflict at EU's borders, the international community needs to reenergize its efforts for developing a functional Bosnian state. The mistakes that have been made in the past provide lessons for future action. In this context, the escalation of the RS Referendum Discourse has demonstrated the power of nationalist behavior to radicalize political dynamics if not addressed at early stages. The IC can successfully pressure Bosnian factions to act in a constructive manner by reclaiming its internal unity on the Bosnian question. Without this unity, political leaders may have little incentive to end their divisive behavior. In this regard, the RS Referendum Discourse demands particular attention and powerful curbing measures. The advocacy of RS referendum presents dangers not only for its power to radicalize ethnic divides but also for the message of ambitions that it articulates; that the result of ethnic cleansing can be rewarded with statehood.

APPENDIX

Chart 1

Remarks:

The word count shown in Chart 1 below includes words “referendum”, “separation” and “independence” in Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian language that were published in *Dnevni Avaz*. These are “referendum”, “otcjepljenje”, “samostalnost” and “nezavisnost”. Due to grammatical changes of these words when in contextual use, I have searched for their stems that remain constant and that are detected by the available search engine. These include “referendum”, “otcjep”, “nezavisn” and “samostaln”.

After electronically extracting pages of *Dnevni Avaz* that contain these words, I have visually inspected them for relevance to the RS Referendum Discourse. For these purposes, I have found electronic search to be unreliable. In order to standardize my approach, I have counted words that contain “referendum”, “otcjep”, “nezavisn” and “samostaln” only if the RS was referenced in the same paragraph. Word occurring in the title is counted only when the title also references the RS. I have further defined reference of RS to include the occurrence of abbreviation “RS” or at least one of the following Serbo-Croatian words or phrases:

- “Republi Srpsk”, stem of the name “Republika Srpska”
- “manj entitet”, stem of “manji entitet” (smaller entity)
- “manj bh. entitet” stem of “manji bh. entitet” (smaller BiH entity)

Additionally, I have found that Fall 2007 debate pertaining to police reform referendum introduced a significant amount of information of little relevance to the topic discussed here. In order to maximize reliability, I have not counted the occurrence of “otcjep”, “nezavisn”, “referendum” and “samostaln” if the stem of Serbo-Croatian/Bosnia word for police (Policija), “policij” occurred in the same paragraph or title.

While this method excludes some keywords that clearly referred to the RS Referendum Discourse in an implicit manner and is not immune to inclusion of irrelevant material, it maximizes reliability of patterns of discursive intensity that are displayed in the chart.

Variation in Intensity of RS Referendum Discourse 2006-2008; Monthly Quantities of Keywords Published in Dnevni Avaz

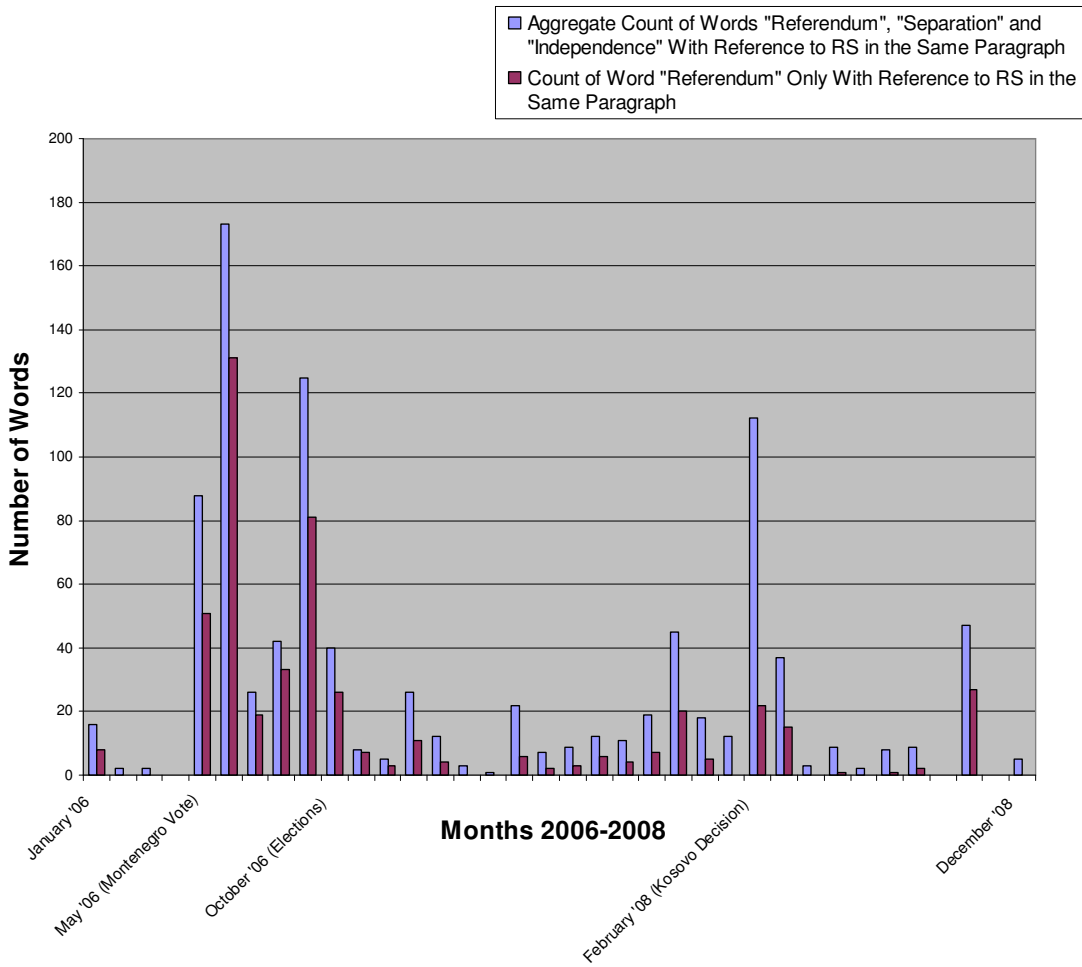


Chart II

Remarks:

Chart II below records temporal variability of reference to Kosovo within the RS Referendum Discourse. This is measured by counting the quantity of occurrences of the word “Kosovo”. Since the word “Kosovo” may change in accordance to grammatical rules of Serbo-Croatian/Bosnian language, its stem that remains constant “Kosov” is used for search purposes. Word “Kosovo” or its variations are then counted only if occurring within the *Dnevni Avaz* article that also contains at least one word that has been counted in Chart I. Due to periods of several months with little or no reference to Kosovo, three-month intervals are used.

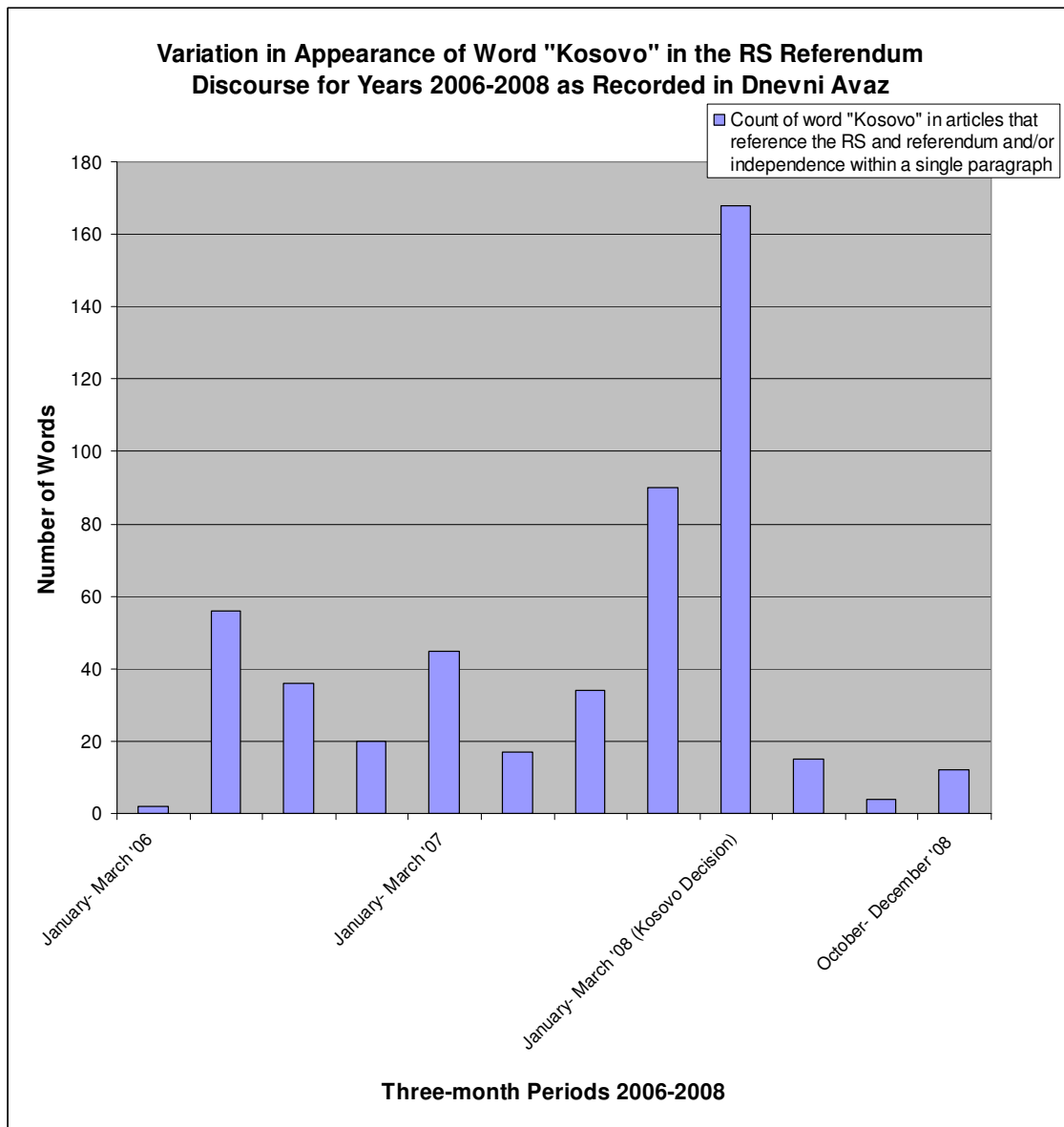
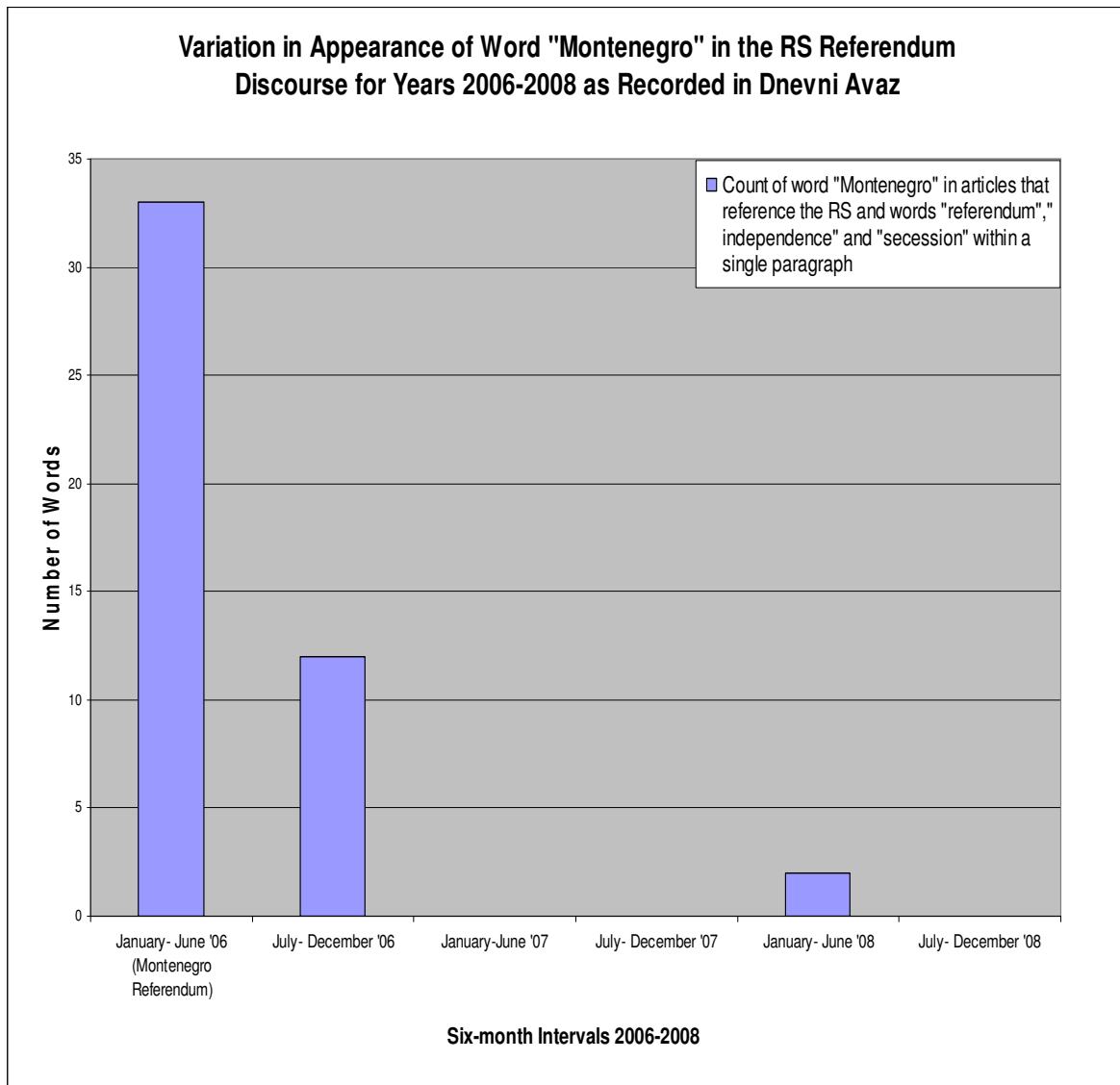


Chart III

Remarks:

Chart III below records temporal variability of reference to Montenegro within the RS Referendum Discourse. This is measured by counting the quantity of occurrences of the the word “Montenegro”, which is the Serbo-Croatian word for Montenegro. Since the word may change in accordance to grammatical rules, the stem that remains constant “crn gor” is used here for search purposes. It is counted only if occurring within the article that also contains at least one word that has been counted in Chart I. Due to extended times of low frequency of reference to Montenegro, six-month intervals are used.



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