

# **Sources of Irredentist Foreign Policy:**

## **Serbia and Albania**

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## Abstract

Irredentism in foreign policy constitutes an interesting but not quite developed field in the IR literature. This thesis discusses the background conditions and sources of irredentist foreign policies. The thesis is based on a comparative case study,- juxtaposing Serbia and Albania,- that allows for an examination of various variables and characteristics of each case. The thesis employs both the controlled comparison and process tracing methods. In the first case, it draws on Mill's Method of Difference to account for the differing variable between the cases, given the otherwise shared similarities. While the process tracing method allows to critically examine the historical processes in both countries when the *windows of opportunity* for irredentist policies open up.

The main aim of the thesis is to discuss the patterns of foreign policy toward kin in both countries and to provide an answer of why Serbia became increasingly irredentist in the aftermath of Communism, while Albania refrained from following up. The research builds up on a rationale that focuses on the role of intermediate societal ideas, interests and institutions in fomenting irredentist policies. Hence, the question that this thesis seeks to answer is: how do these societal ideas, interest and institutions shape foreign policy with regard to ethnic kin across the border. Second, why does this happens only at some periods, but not in others?

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# 1. Introduction

This thesis seeks to analyze Serbian and Albanian foreign policy with regard to their kin in neighboring states. Serbia has actively supported irredentist policies during the period that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, although with various degrees of success, while Albania has failed to behave in a similar fashion, although the initial conditions would seem apt to favor it. Irredentism can be defined as “state support for annexing neighboring territories inhabited by ethnic kin”<sup>1</sup> and is often based on prior actual or alleged historical possessions of a territory that needs to be redeemed. It has been a persistent feature in the Balkans, used as an instrument by shrewd politicians to serve electoral purposes. It has been especially salient in Serbian politics, albeit to varying degrees, both across time and space. Irredentism is widely believed to be costly, as “any effort to (re)unify territories inhabited by ethnic kin will certainly antagonize neighboring states whose lands are sought.”<sup>2</sup> Although many authors have offered different explanation of the causes that lead to irredentist politics and what influences it,<sup>3</sup> little or no systematic attention has been given to the role of “ideas, interests and institutions [that] influence state behavior by shaping state preferences that is the

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. “Inconsistent Irredentism? Political Competition, Ethnic Ties, and the Foreign Policies of Somalia and Serbia,” *Security Studies*, Vol.7, No.3, 1998. p.53.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. “Irredentism and its absence: International Pressures versus Domestic Dynamics,” in Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *War and Peace in the Aftermath of Communism*, forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Naomi Chazan (ed.), *Irredentism and International Politics*, Boulder, CO: L. Rieener Publishers; London: Admantine Press, 1991; Stephen M. Saideman. “Inconsistent Irredentism? Political Competition, Ethnic Ties, and the Foreign Policies of Somalia and Serbia,” *Security Studies*, Vol.7, No.3, 1998; Donald L. Horowitz. *Ethnic groups in conflict*. London: University of California Press, 2000; Stephen M. Saideman. *Irredentism and its absence: International Pressures versus Domestic Dynamics*, in Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *War and Peace in the Aftermath of Communism*, forthcoming; Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, “Determining the Causes of Irredentism: Logit Analyses from the 1980s and 1990s,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol.62, No.4. (Nov., 2000), pp.1126-1144.

fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, the primary question that I am concerned with is how these societal ideas, interest and institutions shape foreign policy with regard to ethnic kin across the border. Second, why this happens only at some periods, but not in others.

The arguments that account for irredentism in the existing literature, take generally, either a *top-down* approach, when the elites instrumentalize the people for their own political ends, or a *bottom-up* approach that emphasizes the role of constituencies in shaping political leaders` agendas.<sup>5</sup> But these approaches fail to tell the whole story of Serbia`s irredentism, by overlooking the salient role that the societal environment has in impacting policy-makers` agendas. Moreover, in the Albanian case, which has been characterized by a relative lack of irredentism in foreign policy, these explanations do not provide a satisfactory answer as to why irredentism did not developed in this country as well, given the otherwise similarities between these two countries. This thesis develops an explanation that focuses on the strength of domestic institutions that foster nationalism and help in turn transform nationalism into irredentism during critical moments.

Hence, the significance of this paper lies in the treatment of a well-studied phenomenon, such as irredentism in foreign policy, by looking at it from a different angle; from an institutional vantage point. It does so by exploring the root causes of irredentist policies in Serbia in the aftermath of communism and the factors that have helped incite such irredentism in the first place. Thereafter, it turns its attention toward

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<sup>4</sup> Here I use a definition first elaborated by Andrew Moravcsik. I see this paper as fitting with Moravcsik`s Liberal Intergovernmentalism theory, although I use Moravcsik insights to point out at somewhat different aspect of international relations: the study of irredentism in foreign policy. “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol.51, No.4. (Autumn, 1997), p.514.

<sup>5</sup> I further elaborate this point at the literature review section.

the relative absence of the same phenomenon in Serbia's small neighboring country, Albania and it analyses the factors that in the Albanian case worked in reverse, thus 'constraining' Albania to follow a non-nationalist path. In order to proceed with the study of Albanian foreign policy with regard to its kin during the Communist and democratic transition period,<sup>6</sup> I first give a brief account of Albania's most salient historical events of the past that have helped shape Albanian nationalism. This process tracing is important to be able to analyze the factors that have led to the absence of irredentism in Albania's more recent history. I argue that Albania's surprising lack of irredentism- in contrast to its Balkan neighbors- is mostly due to the absence of a linear nationalist development in Albania.

In contrast, nationalism has been persistently present in Serbian politics, although it has fueled irredentism only in critical moments, when a *window of opportunity* opens up. Serbian nationalism started gaining strength especially with Serbia winning independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This coincided with a well-established literacy and epic myths and gave rise to a sense of nationalist pride and a sense of belonging that proved critical for future developments. It waited only for the right *catalysts* to be transformed in a modern-day irredentism that we came to witness in the aftermath of the communist system in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>6</sup> This paper only looks at the last years of the Communist regime in both countries and the post-communist period, up to 1998. This is a decade that accounts for the abrupt change from the non-nationalist foreign policy, toward irredentism in Serbia, while nevertheless the same condition and initial rhetoric in Albania, failed to materialize. Such a time frame is important to account for the factors that were fueling irredentism in the Serbian case, but that fail to do the same in Albania.

## 1.1 Research Question and Importance

Irredentism,<sup>7</sup> which is a feature of identity and ethnic politics, draws its meaning from the Italian word *irredenta*<sup>8</sup>, referring to Italy's quest for the Austro-Hungarian occupied Italian region of Trentino during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a widespread phenomenon in today's world, with many states pursuing actively or passively irredentist agendas with regard to their neighbors' territory.<sup>9</sup> There are several different explanations for irredentist foreign policy. One explanation centers on the 'ethnic outbidding' argument, which basically stresses that political leaders try to outbid each other, while playing the ethnic card in domestic politics.<sup>10</sup> This means that politicians endeavor to enter in an ethnic competition race that radicalizes their rhetoric vis-à-vis the electorate. Another explanation used to explain the case of Serbia falls under the diversionary theories of war, which suggests that when politicians' positions are threatened, they will follow aggressive foreign policies to divert the attention of their constituency from the internal problems of the state. They are helped in this process by the public perception of a common foreign enemy. Lewis Cose captures this element when he writes: "[c]onflict with out-groups increases internal cohesion."<sup>11</sup> This was for example the case of Serbia when faced with NATO bombing. Meanwhile, Morgan and Bickers argue that politicians

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<sup>7</sup> Here I rely on a definition from Saideman, who has defined irredentism as "state support for annexing neighboring territories inhabited by ethnic kin". Stephen M. Saideman. "Inconsistent Irredentism? Political Competition, Ethnic Ties, and the Foreign Policies of Somalia and Serbia," *Security Studies*, Vol.7, No.3, 1998. p.53.

<sup>8</sup> *Terra irredenta*, in a literal translation from Italian means: 'unredeemed territory'.

<sup>9</sup> Such examples may include, *inter alia*, the Rumanian region of Transilvania, which is inhabited by a Hungarian-speaking population, Russian supported Transdnistria, Ossetia and Abkhazia, respectively in territories of Moldova and Georgia or the 'Greater Somalian' case in Africa, to mention just but a few.

<sup>10</sup> For more on ethnic outbidding, see Aluinyand Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle. *Politics in Plural Societies: a Theory of Democratic Instability* Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1972; Donald L. Horowitz. *Ethnic groups in conflict*. London: University of California Press, 2000;

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Saideman, "Inconsistent Irredentism...", p.54.



are often selective when constructing their nationalist agendas and irredentist plans, responding to interests of a group whose support is necessary for retaining power.<sup>12</sup>

The *vulnerability* theory stresses that states that are prone to irredentist claims in their own territory are more reluctant to pursue irredentist policies themselves. This is mostly because of the fear that it might lead to secessionist or irredentist threats to their own territory. It has been especially the case with Africa, where the questioning of the existing boundaries can have a spill-over effect and open a Pandora's Box.<sup>13</sup>

Although many authors have offered different explanations for irredentism, and specifically state irredentism, little or no systematic attention has been given to the role of nationalist ideas, interest groups and institutions on the domestic level that “influences state behavior by shaping state preferences, that is the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments.”<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding the vast literature of Serbia's irredentist policies vis-à-vis its neighbors, which led to the breakup of Yugoslavia, most authors have overlooked the role that different segments of the society have played in fomenting irredentist foreign policy. Furthermore, little effort has been made to explore how societal factors and external influences might interact to produce irredentism.

While much has been said about Serbia's irredentist foreign policy, the relative *lack* of irredentism in the neighboring state of Albania during the same period is largely

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* This will be further elaborated in the literature review section.

<sup>13</sup> For a similar argument see I. William Zartman. *International Relations in the New Africa*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966. p.109

<sup>14</sup> Here I rely on a definition provided by Andrew Moravcsik when he formulates his theory of Liberal Intergovernmentalism. However, I narrow Moravcsik's vague concept of ideas, by pointing out solely the nationalist ideas that provide the ground for irredentist policies. Also, I do the same thing with the interests, which I use more in terms of concrete interest groups. For a more elaborated view of it, see Andrew Moravcsik. “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol.51, No.4. (Autumn, 1997), p.514.

taken for granted. No substantial work has been done on the interesting absence of aggressive foreign policy in Albania, which stands in marked contrast to Serbia. By comparing the two cases of Albanian and Serbian foreign policy in the 1990s, I hope to address this interesting puzzle. Given the similarities otherwise between the two countries, one would naturally expect the same pattern of foreign policy behavior from both countries. Nevertheless, as will be shown in this thesis, Serbia pursued an aggressive foreign policy while Albania did not. This paper seeks to answer this puzzle by showing how nationalist ideas, interests and institutions shape foreign policy with regard to ethnic kin across the border. I hope to address the more general puzzle of why irredentist foreign policy is more prevalent in some societies than others, and further, why this type of foreign policy emerges during some periods, but not in others. Hence, this paper seeks to provide an answer for the differences in irredentist patterns between Serbia and Albania, when the general conditions would suggest the same way of conducting foreign policy toward kin.

## 1.2 Literature Review

Serbian irredentism has been both selective and inconsistent,<sup>15</sup> and scholars have used different approaches to explain its underlying causes. Some of these authors have given priority to domestic factors in producing an aggressive foreign policy with regard to their kin abroad; others have emphasized external factors. V.P.Gagnon Jr. has explained Serbian aggression as part of a strategy pursued by Serb elites to maintain political power as the internal threat to their position increases in the context of political or economic transition.<sup>16</sup> He argues that Milosevic and the ruling conservatives tried to redefine the interests of their supporters and opponents in ethnic terms in order to reduce the risk of being voted out in the face of economic collapse.<sup>17</sup> To do so, they pursued a strategy of “demobilization,” which Gagnon has described as “a process by which people who had previously been politically mobilized, or who were in the process of being mobilized, become silenced, marginalized, and excluded from the public realm.”<sup>18</sup> Gagnon thus takes a top-down approach by arguing that elites influence masses by leading or misleading them when it suits their private interests.

Gagnon’s approach is in line with the general conventional wisdom that sees elites as rational, calculating actors who take advantage of their position in power to ‘instrumentalize’ the masses with a single goal in mind: retaining their positions and/or gaining power or wealth. In this way, he believes that the Serbian elites provoked ethnic

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<sup>15</sup> Saideman uses these terms to account for inconsistencies in the strength and direction of states’ foreign policies. “Irredentist states frequently seek certain territories while ignoring others, and vary in their aggressiveness over time, suggesting that ethnic identity or nationalism, by themselves, cannot explain irredentism (a constant cannot explain something that varies).” See for a more detailed explanation, Saideman “Inconsistent Irredentism...,” 54.

<sup>16</sup> V. P. Gagnon, Jr. *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004. p.87

<sup>17</sup> Gagnon, 88.

<sup>18</sup> See for a more elaborated account of this “demobilization” strategy at Gagnon’s Introduction.

conflict to shore up their positions in the face of domestic challenges.<sup>19</sup> However, he does not explore whether a third variable might not have triggered both irredentism and elite behavior; candidate variables include domestic constituencies, third-party interventions and other societal factors. Another shortcoming of his theory is pointed out by Saideman, who notes that Gagnon's account of irredentism does not predict variation in irredentist foreign policy,<sup>20</sup> which in Serbia has been considerable.

Kaufman, too, takes an instrumentalist position that in itself is *rationalist*, when he argues that politicians find a 'fertile soil' in these 'emotionally laden' masses, which they use to serve their political ends. In fact, Kaufman seems to share most of his views and assumptions with Gagnon, in taking a straight-forward rationalist position. Both Kaufman and Gagnon highlight the causal impact of *power-seeking elites* on irredentist foreign policy. Moreover, in both Kaufman and Gagnon's view, elites pursue their goals instrumentally through the use of emotional appeals to the masses.

While I concur with Kaufman concerning the relevance that myths and symbols have in fomenting irredentist claims<sup>21</sup>, I depart with him when he argues that they are used by political elites apparently unconstrained by intermediary institutions or other societal actors. My view is that certain institutions play a crucial role in transmitting these 'ideas' into the political arena, and vice-versa. In the case of Serbia, as will be demonstrated in the second chapter, such institutions include the Academy of Science or the Orthodox Church. Without the first, Milosevic would probably have lacked a political agenda that would have enabled him to seize power in the first place, while the support of

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<sup>19</sup> V. P. Gagnon jr., "Ethnic nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security* 19, no.3 (winter 1994/95): 135-137. p.135

<sup>20</sup> Saideman, "Inconsistent Irredentism," 60.

<sup>21</sup> For the purposes of my paper, I classify such myths and symbols under the ideas, which often affect politicians' agendas.

the second served as a crucial seal of legitimacy for his irredentist administration. Powerful interest groups meanwhile, like the Serbian diaspora, helped in securing external support for his regime in critical periods, as will be shown in this essay. Similarly, the lack of such intermediary institutions or their ineptitude-- as in the case of the Albanian Academy of Science-- explains the lack of irredentism in Albania.

The vulnerability theory, on the other hand, stresses that states that are the object of potential irredentism, are less willing to pursue irredentist agendas themselves. It simply means that states will not engage in irredentism if they are vulnerable to retaliation.<sup>22</sup> The problem with this theory is that empirically this was not proven the case. There are many countries in the world which have chosen to pursue irredentism, although they face secessionist or irredentist threats to their own territory.<sup>23</sup>

Saideman on the other hand, emphasizes the preeminence of ethnic ties in determining policy-makers agendas.<sup>24</sup> These ethnic ties have in a way a primordial attachment to the constituencies, who in turn influence politicians. The logic behind this is that constituents of a particular country empathize with their kin in a neighboring country and therefore push politicians in undertaking policies on their behalf.<sup>25</sup> Politicians in turn do not fail to grasp such 'signals' from their constituencies, because failure to do so might result in their replacement. Therefore, politicians support

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<sup>22</sup> See for example, Jeffrey Herbst. "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa," *International Organization* 43 (4), 1989. pp. 673-692.

<sup>23</sup> Such a country is for instance, Somalia in Africa. Africa is an interesting case, because the former colonial powers draw the borders there, with little regard to ethnic, geographical conditions or existing political realities. The fear expressed by many authors (i.e. Herbst), is that if one African state seeks a revision of the *status-quo* and becomes irredentist; other states might soon follow up. Nevertheless, common interest in this case, does not explain why states would not choose to free ride, like the Somalian case.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. "Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability Versus Ethnic Ties," *International Organization* 51, 4, (Autumn 1997), pp.725-726.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. pp.22-25.

intervention policies on behalf of their kin, because they serve as a “litmus test for a politician’s sincerity on ethnic issues at home.”<sup>26</sup>

Saideman’s argument of constituents that value kin ties over all other interests is problematic for two main reasons. First, ethnic ties cannot explain why voters in Serbia care more about their ethnic brethren than Albanians do about theirs- when both Serbian and Albanian kin groups were threatened by their national governments. Albanians abroad were just as threatened as Serbs abroad, and yet Albania chose not to ethnically rescue their kin. Second, by taking the constituents’ views and feelings with regard to their ethnic kin across the borders as inherently given, Saideman fails to recognize the influence of intervening variables, such as the influence of different ideas or interests that might shape constituents’ views.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, in contrast to Gagnon, Saideman takes a bottom-up approach when he argues that electoral constituencies influence the actions of elites and not vice-versa. These include “selectorates,”<sup>28</sup> which in democracies are the electoral base for the political party in power. Saideman argues that the interests of these salient constituencies influence the decision-making of the elites and irredentist policies are therefore undertaken because they reflect the preferences of these constituencies. The politicians’ main goal then becomes one of preventing constituents from defecting to the opponents’ camp, which may ‘upgrade’ its agenda, to better satisfy these voters’ demands. According to Saideman, politicians tend to be more aggressive if the hawkish

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>27</sup> Such intervening ideas and/or interests can be seen, when flows of ethnic kin refugees, driven away from their homes, went to find refugee at their homelands and to their surprise found themselves looked down and abused psychologically from their ethnic brethren, with whom they share ethnic ties. This was the case with Muslims going to Sarajevo, or Serbs going to Belgrade, or Croatians going back to Zagreb.

<sup>28</sup> Saideman and Ayres, forthcoming. 3-4. \* See for a more elaborated view on the concept of “selectorate,” Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

constituents threaten to defect. While, “[i]f, instead, more dovish supporters threaten to abandon politicians, foreign policy will become more cooperative”<sup>29</sup> But despite their differences, what Gagnon and Saideman have in common is that both focus on *domestic* causes of Serbian irredentism, although Saideman also recognizes the importance of the external factors, such as third-party interventions.

Other authors, such as Carment and Harvey, focus more on external factors, arguing that variation in the credible threat of external intervention had a crucial impact on Serbian foreign policy. When the level of external coercion increased, backed by credible threats from international actors, Belgrade became less supportive of irredentist policies and at least in the official discourse, seemed to moderate its tone toward Serbian minorities abroad. They note, *inter alia*, that “[s]ince the outbreak of the conflict in Bosnia, there was always much greater support to use air strikes as a negotiating “tool” to force the Serbs to the bargaining table.”<sup>30</sup> This means that the international community, acting on the presumption that one can deal with Serbia only through force, advocated the preliminary use of ‘air strikes’ as a way of convincing the Serbs to take the negotiation process seriously and also try to get them bargaining to reach a peace deal. Moreover, the authors make the point that were it not for NATO intervention in Bosnia, “the stalemate could not have been broken and subsequently, the Dayton compromise, not achieved.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, they conclude that third party intervention is a key constraint on a country’s ethnic foreign policy.

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<sup>29</sup> Saideman, “Inconsistent Irredentism,” 63.

<sup>30</sup> Carment, David and Frank Harvey. *Using Force to Prevent Ethnic Violence*. London: Praeger, 2001. p.30.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*

Carment and Harvey correctly identify the role that international intervention plays, in getting combatants to the negotiating table. Without the credible threat of the sanctions and the actual use of bombing to deter the Serbian army and its associated paramilitaries, it is unlikely that the Serbs would have agreed to a third-party brokered compromise. However, the authors fail to explain the emergence of irredentist agendas. Nor do they explain the different degree of irredentism in Albanian and Serbia.

While much of this literature above draws on the case of Serbia, relatively little has been written on lack of irredentism in Albania. The scant literature on this topic is entirely Albanian. Second, almost all the literature on Albania's pacifism toward its neighbors<sup>32</sup> is descriptive; it does not seek to explain *why* Albania has not been irredentist to any great degree. Paulin Kola, in his historical overview of Albanian foreign policy during the communist and post-communist periods, argues that "the creation of 'Greater Albania' has never been official policy in Tirana....," adding tangentially that Kosovo "may, indeed, overtake Albania as the hub of nationalist development."<sup>33</sup> Elez Biberaj, another prominent Albanian scholar on this topic, similarly points out that communist Albania, "preoccupied with its own formidable domestic problems, was not playing on Kosovar [Albanians'] nationalist feelings."<sup>34</sup>

Although few would argue against this, I seek to answer the question of *why* Albania failed to follow an irredentist track, while most of its Balkan neighbors, most especially Serbia, engaged in periodically virulent irredentism. Seen in this light, my contribution is significant, because it looks at the root causes of this lack of irredentism,

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<sup>32</sup> This literature is mainly authored by Albanian scholars and publicists, with only a handful of foreign authors writing on the issue.

<sup>33</sup> Paulin Kola. *The Myth of Greater Albania*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. p.394.

<sup>34</sup> Elez Biberaj. *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*. Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990. p. 112.



which may cause us to reevaluate our understanding of the presence of irredentism in Serbia.

This thesis thus develops a new model to explain for the root causes of irredentist policies. Chapter 2 introduces the model that I use to account for the sources of irredentism in foreign policy and also presents my initial hypotheses. In addition, this chapter outlines the methodology and the criteria used for case selection. Chapter 3 discusses the domestic and external factors that have accounted for Serbia's irredentist policies, in the post-communist era. Chapter 4 focuses on the Albanian case, beginning with a short overview of the Albanian most salient historical periods, in order to demonstrate the relative absence of the Albanian irredentism. This serves as a framework, which will test my hypotheses of modern Albania's lack of irredentism. Chapter 5 delineates the factors that explain the presence of irredentism in Serbia and absence in Albania. The conclusion encapsulates the most salient points drawn from this analysis, outlining theoretical and policy implications.

## 2. Theory and hypotheses

### 2.1 ‘Social informed’ irredentism and foreign intervention

What this paper argues is that Serbian irredentist foreign policy is neither the sole product of a single leader or of an oligarchic group of decision makers, nor of the ‘dictate of the masses’ at large, where grass roots constituencies (or *selectorates*) have the final say in politicians’ actions. Rather, I seek to demonstrate that there are many other factors that have been overlooked in the existing literature that may also have influenced the course of Serbian foreign policy. Drawing on Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism,<sup>1</sup> this thesis argues that the role of nationalist ideas, interests and institutions are crucial in affecting the variation in irredentist foreign policy over time and across cases. This is because they serve as catalysts in converting popular dissatisfaction with the state of the economy, for example, toward ethnic scapegoating. They are inextricably linked to each other, since ideas and interests often create institutions, while institutions are in turn shaped by ideas and interests.<sup>2</sup> In Serbian politics, the foundational national ideas underlying Serbian foreign policy-making include *inter alia*, the Nacertanije draft of the

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<sup>1</sup> Here I draw on the core assumptions of Moravcsik’s Liberal Intergovernmentalism. The first of these focuses on the primacy of societal actors in international politics: “The fundamental actors in international relations are individuals and private groups, who are on the average rational and risk-averse and who organize and exchange a collective action to promote differentiated interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity, conflicting values, and variations in societal influence.” The second assumption is: “States (or other political institutions) represent some subset of domestic society, on the basis of whose interests’ state officials define state preferences and act purposively in world politics.” The final assumption of LI theory states that: “The configuration of interdependent state preferences determines state behavior.” See Moravcsik, pp.517-520. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I rely only on the first two assumptions, which open the “black-box” of the state and help us see the interaction of societal actors and their influence on states’ foreign policy.

<sup>2</sup> Interests here can be seen as embedded in various societal actors that have a stake in policy-making.

19<sup>th</sup> Century, outlined by the Foreign Minister at the time, Ilija Garasanin,<sup>3</sup> and the recent Memorandum of 1987<sup>4</sup> authored by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. As for institutions, the Academy is one of the main institutions in the modern period that has consistently had a considerable influence on Belgrade politics and that has generally taken a more radical position on ethnic issues than government officials at most times. The Orthodox Church is another such institution that has greatly influenced Belgrade's decision-making by sometimes pushing it to the right on nationalist issues. As regards the interest groups in the Serbian case, these are groups that are close to power centers, without actively participating in decision-making. What I mean here, is that these groups influence politicians' agendas, without being officially part of the mechanisms of power. For the purposes of this thesis, the two most important of these are diasporas and mafia groups.

This paper argues that there are two main mechanisms by which institutions, nationalist ideas and interests produce irredentism. The first mechanism is the *agenda-setting* role that institutions and interest groups have on the political outcomes. Drawing on the liberal intergovernmentalism insights, I make the following proposition: societal actors (individuals, lobbies or institutions), shape policy toward ethnic kin abroad by setting the foreign policy agenda for the political leadership and policy-makers. Political elites, in turn, may have little choice but to follow through on a commitment they have publicly endorsed, because failure to do so would result in a breakdown of their "winning

<sup>3</sup> See among others, Tim Judah. *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. p.59; Misha Glenny. *The Fall of Yugoslavia*. London: Penguin Books: 1992; Paulin Kola. *The Myth of Greater Albania*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. p.11.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed view on the Memorandum and its effects on policy-making agenda, see *inter alia*, Judah, 160; Stuart J. Kaufman. *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001. p.179. Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case (eds.) *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. pp.174-175; Carole Roger. *The Breakup of Yugoslavia and its Aftermath*. London: Greenwood Press, 2004. pp.16-17.

coalition.” Based on this logic, a preliminary version of my working hypotheses may now be introduced:

*Hypothesis 1a: A state government tends to be more irredentist if nationalist ideas, institutions, and interests radicalize.*

*Hypothesis 1b: A state tends to be less irredentist overall if nationalist ideas, institutions and interests promoting nationalist causes are either weak or missing.*

The second causal mechanism is external to the state and has to do with the degree of foreign pressure on a government’s agenda; this pressure may be either cooperative (the use of incentives or ‘carrots’) or coercive (the use of force or ‘sticks’) or both. The efficient use of these two mechanisms translates into powerful leverage on the political leadership in a given country to change the course of its foreign policy, according to the degree of benefits or threats yielded by the interveners. This paper argues that there was a considerable degree of *soft coercion*<sup>5</sup> from international community, both in Serbian and the Albanian case. The only difference between the two countries was that while in Serbia this soft coercion was used at the initial stage and failed to deliver results, leading thereafter to NATO bombing, it worked rather well in Albania, where as it will be demonstrated, the Albanian government quickly complied with the dictate of the international community. Thus, assuming that the degree of foreign intervention alters significantly a state’s foreign policy, we arrive at the following testable hypotheses:

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<sup>5</sup> This can be defined as rhetorical pressure that lacks enforcement mechanisms. Such mechanisms may include military or economic sanctions, or at least a credible threat of using them, if the parties fail to arrive at a common ground in the course of their negotiations.

*Hypothesis 2a: If politicians are faced with ‘weak’ external threats or lack of strong incentives to moderate their behavior, they will be more vulnerable to the agenda-setting pressures of powerful subsets of domestic society.*

*Hypothesis 2b: If politicians are faced with credible threats or powerful incentives to moderate their behavior, they are more likely to back down or shy away from an irredentist position, even when such positions enjoy strong support from influential societal groups or institutions.*

## **2.2 Case selection and Methodology**

My research will consist on over-time and across-case analysis of the Serbian and Albanian cases. There are several reasons why I have chosen these two cases for the purposes of this study. First, there is an absence of a systematic, comparative study of the foreign policies of these two countries with regard to their kin across state borders. Such a comparison is important, in light of the destructiveness that has happened in ex-Yugoslavia, because of the open pursuit of irredentist agendas (particularly from Serbia), and the future implications that it holds for future irredentism in the region. In this respect, the Albanian case is illuminating given its notable lack of irredentism, despite a number of factors that would seem to predict irredentism in this case.

Second, although many theoretical approaches seek to explain the brutal wars in ex-Yugoslavia and Serbia's aggressive irredentist policies, they cannot explain the differences between the Albanian and Serbian cases and, moreover, irredentist foreign policies cannot be understood without taking into account the important societal effects of domestic factors, acting in conjunction with external influences. Seen in this light, I attempt to examine the independent effect that domestic institutions and external actors have had on both Serbian and Albanian stances toward their ethnic kin.

Third, the existing literature on irredentism tends to ignore “non-events”—states that ought to have adopted an irredentist position at a given time, but that did not. Albania is just such a case in which the government’s lack of irredentism is seemingly inexplicable in light of current understandings of what causes state irredentism. This research seeks to address this issue and will try to demonstrate in a coherent way the factors that explain its relative absence.

I test my theory through both *controlled comparison* and *process tracing* methods. In the first case, I use John Stuart Mill’s “method of difference” to examine these two Balkan cases, that have many similarities, but depart on the matter of irredentist foreign policy. Both countries have in common significant kin outside their borders, both share a Communist legacy, the processes of democratic and economic transition have been quite similar and the history of both countries is written in a way that suggests that they have lost a significant part of their natural territory due to historical circumstances. Nevertheless, while Serbia has pursued a more aggressive foreign policy course toward their co-ethnic kin outside official state borders, Albania has been characterized by a relative lack of irredentism.

At the same time, process tracing is necessary for pinpointing the conditions that preceded shifts in the foreign policy within both countries. This is important for the exploration of the chain of events in the national decision-making process by which initial case conditions were translated into policy outcomes. To do so, I start with an overview of Serbian irredentist policy, focusing on those features and events that help the reader to gain a fuller picture of the cause-effect process that led to irredentism in this case. In conducting this analysis, I focus on shifts in the degree of Serbian irredentism

over time, and what preceded these shifts. In the Albanian case, I try to determine whether those elements that appear to have had led to irredentism in Serbia can also explain the relative *lack* of irredentism in Albania.

The sources to be used in my analysis include archival information to account for shifts that have occurred in the Albanian foreign policy, since secondary sources on Albanian foreign policy, particularly during communism, are scarce. I have specifically researched the 1979-1997 archives of the Foreign Ministry in regard to Albanian official stance toward its kin in ex-Yugoslavia, focusing primarily on Kosovo and the stances of the Albanian government toward Albanian minority there. However, there are some limitations in this research because I was allowed to look only at press conferences, speeches and official declarations of Albanian government towards Kosovo in the period of 1982-1997.<sup>6</sup> The text analysis of such primary sources and the interviews conducted with Albanian policy-makers in Albanian Ministry of Foreign Policy, academics and members of civil society will enable me to assess the relative importance of a number of factors that may have influenced Albania's (lack) of irredentism. On the Serbian case, I use mainly secondary sources, including books, academic journals and internet publications, for both theoretical and empirical information. This is due to the fact that is already a vast existing literature on the topic, which I draw on to test my hypotheses.

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<sup>6</sup> This happened because there is a *twenty-five* years prohibition for the general public on the latest documents in Foreign Ministry and I was able to obtain a special permission from the Minister to look only at the materials referred in the text.

### 3. Serbia`s Irredentism in foreign policy

#### 3.1 Domestic factors influencing irredentism

Ideas, interests and institutions are often linked inextricably with one another and have dictated the course of Serbia`s irredentism by setting, shaping and influencing the political agendas of elites. Some authors tend to have a kind of primordial view of interests, by taking them as either given or constant. These interests arise from:

some structural logic of a situation, usually economic, but interests can also derive from beliefs, which shape a preference, thus an interest. Interests drive preferences, which in turn drive the creation of institutions: since everyone understands that institutional arrangements influence outcomes, everyone will work to get the institutional pattern that increases their chances of victory.<sup>1</sup>

One may argue that politicians, as rational players, are well aware of how to make use of institutions to serve their own ends. Nevertheless, we might also argue that caught in such a ‘societal web’, politicians have little choice but to work within their domestic environment, making them subject to certain ‘rules of the game’. Turning now to the Serbian case, we will look at the role of ideas, institutions and interests,<sup>2</sup> in shaping irredentist foreign policy in order to test our hypotheses.

In the case of Serbia, the role of ideas is mostly connected to the variations of *Nacertanije* idea that has always been a feature of Serbian identity politics starting with the reign of Dushan Mugosha. As Tim Judah writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Gourevitch. “Domestic Politics and IR,” in *Handbook of IR*, p.312.

<sup>2</sup> I am making this point, because it is often hard to separate ideas such as *Nacertanije*, Cubrilovic`s Memorandum of 1937 or the more recent memorandum of 1987 from institutions that have produced them, such as the Academy of Science or institutions that have played a prominent role in distributing them, such as the Orthodox Church.



In the wake of the wreckage left behind by contemporary Serbian nationalism, *Nacertanije* is a crucial link in understanding the development of the national idea. It is the document that synthesizes centuries of Serbian dreams as preserved by the church and epic poetry and formulates them into a statement of modern nationalism.<sup>3</sup>

In more recent times, ideas similar to *Nacertanije* have gained prominence in Serbian politics with the notorious Memorandum of 1987 that served as a blueprint for Serbian nationalist politicians for years to come. The Memorandum, which was drafted and presented to the Serbian government in 1985 and leaked to the press only a year later made possible the movement from Yugoslavian communism toward Serbian nationalism.<sup>4</sup> The Memorandum argued that the Serbs have been victimized throughout history, which has been a repeated refrain in Serbian politics ever since. The Memorandum asserted *inter alia* that a “there was an anti Serb conspiracy causing genocide of the Serbian population in Kosovo,” and that “but for the period of the existence of the NDH [Ustasha regime], Serbs in Croatia have never been as threatened as they are now.”<sup>5</sup> What made the Memorandum particularly credible in the eyes of the Serbian public was the “the fact that the respected Academy made such charges...,”<sup>6</sup> giving this judgment automatic legitimacy.

One of the inspiring figures behind the infamous Memorandum of 1986 was Vasa Cubrilovic, one of the oldest and more persistent Serbian nationalists.<sup>7</sup> Cubrilovic, an

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Judah. *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. p.59

<sup>4</sup> Robert Stallaerts, “The Disintegration of the Yugoslav Intellectual Community,” in *Secession, History and the Social Sciences*. Bruno Coppetiers and Michel Huyseune eds., Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press, 2002. Retrieved from: [poli.vub.ac.be/publi/orderbooks/secession/secession-05.pdf](http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/orderbooks/secession/secession-05.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Stuart J. Kaufman. *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001. p.179

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Philip J. Cohen. “The Complicity of Serbian Intellectuals,” in *This Time We Knew*, in Thomas Cushman and Stepan G. Mestrovic (eds), New York: New York University Press, 1996. pp.39-40

early “conspirator in the 1914 assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand..., reemerged as an advisor to the royal Yugoslav government. From this position, he authored the 1937 official government memorandum, ‘The Expulsion of the Albanians’, which cited Hitler’s and Stalin’s success in expelling Jews and others as examples for Serbia to emulate.”<sup>8</sup> Cubrilovic held several important governmental posts during Tito’s Communist regime, which is “a remarkable testimony to the moral flexibility of the communist regime.”<sup>9</sup> But Cubrilovic was not the only distinguished opinion leader in the Serbian Academy of Arts and Science at the time.

Another distinguished member who fervently advocated a Greater Serbia was Dobrica Cosic, who back in the 1960s was among the first to articulate the enduring pain and long suffering of the Serbian people, claiming that the “Serbs were being exploited and denigrated by other Yugoslav nationalities.”<sup>10</sup> Believing that the present regime was biased against the Serbs, Cosic then “turned his emphasis to unifying Serbian culture and the Serbian nation.”<sup>11</sup> In this context, he called for the Serbs to “rise and destroy the multi-national Yugoslav state to fulfill the old historical goal and national ideal’ of a Greater Serbia.”<sup>12</sup> What is especially puzzling about this kind of rhetoric during the communist period was that despite the fact that Serbs were disproportionately represented in the highest echelons of power throughout Yugoslavia, prominent Serbian intellectuals, such as Cubrilovic or Cosic were not purged, persecuted and imprisoned for expressing such views in public, although they were in stark contrast with Marxist and Communist

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Sabrina P. Ramet. *Balkan Babel*. Cambridge: Westview Press, 2002. p.19

<sup>11</sup> Thomas A. Emmert, “A Crisis of Identity,” in Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case (eds.) *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. p.174

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Cohen, 40.

ideology.<sup>13</sup> These individuals have been persistent in their nationalist rhetoric, although they could not get enough media coverage under the Titoist regime to make their views known to the Serbian public. This all changed with the demise of Tito.

The Memorandum “drew up a blueprint of a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia that would include Serbia, Montenegro, much of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the predominantly Serb areas of Croatia, but would exclude Macedonia, Slovenia, most of Croatia, and would cede part of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Croatia as compensation.”<sup>14</sup> Hence, it created a new political climate and gave rise to a new societal discourse, which influenced the mainstream political discourse and the course of policy-making in Serbia. Most importantly, it furnished a ready-made agenda to Milosevic, who based his political rhetoric and future career on goals outlined in the Memorandum. The Memorandum established “a role awaiting a leader, a program awaiting an executor,”<sup>15</sup> and almost a year later, Milosevic would step forward to carry out the program it spelled out. He was able to oust the head of the Communist Party, Ivan Stambolic, by ‘ethnically outbidding’ him<sup>16</sup> and gain a strong foothold in Serbian politics because of kin-related issues that did not threaten or influence his domestic constituency directly.

In the meantime, the mood of Serbian elites and various segments of society were increasingly supportive of Serbian irredentist policies, inciting Milosevic to pursue an aggressive policy toward Serbian nationals abroad. A critical link between the goals of

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<sup>13</sup> The freedoms of freely expressing their nationalist leanings in public were an abnormality for the Communist Yugoslavia. Roy Gutman argues *inter alia*, that the mere possession of a “Croatian” dictionary—rather than a “Serbo-Croatia” dictionary—was reason for imprisonment in Yugoslavia. See Roy Gutman, “Serb Author Lit Balkan Powder Keg,” *Newsday*, June 28, 1992, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Saideman, forthcoming. P.56

<sup>15</sup> Ramet, 20. Here, Ramet uses a phrase first coined by Egyptian President Nasser, to describe the opportunist goals of Milosevic who found a ready made agenda to push forward his political ambitions.

<sup>16</sup> Stambolic was the first that had argued that a “unified and strong Serbia” was a prerequisite for a strong Yugoslavia, but Milosevic proved himself abler in seizing up the political opportunity for radicalizing the nationalistic rhetoric. See Ramet, 35.

powerful institutions in Serbia, such as the Orthodox Church, and Serbian state-led irredentism can be seen for example, on June 28, 1989, when three main events happened simultaneously. This was the occasion of the six hundredth anniversary of the Serbs' defeat by the Turks at Kosovo Polje. On this date, Milosevic's showed his commitment to the Kosovo and Serbian 'cause' by proclaiming that: "the Serbs throughout their history never conquered or exploited anybody else."<sup>17</sup> Also, on the same day, the Krajina Serbs raised the demand for "their autonomous province..., with the encouragement of the Serbian government."<sup>18</sup> On the same day the Serbian Orthodox Church:

issued its official national program, which echoed the 1986 memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, as well as official documents of the Communist Party and the Yugoslav state apparatus. This manifesto, known as the "Proposed Serbian Church National Program," praised Serbia's decision to unilaterally terminate the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Restating a central theme of the Academy's memorandum, the church document portrayed an aggrieved and oppressed Serbia, and it further praised Slobodan Milosevic for beginning to right the alleged historical wrongs against Serbia.<sup>19</sup>

Although it may sound speculative, it is unlikely that these three salient and disconnected events happened simultaneously. Their convergence appears to be a concerted effort from selective subsets of the society to channel popular discontent toward aggressive politics in relation to the 'national question'. Political leaders, such as Milosevic in turn, made a shrewdly use of such ready made agendas.

The role of the Orthodox Church in the early 1990s was crucial. Notwithstanding the nationalistic tone taken by the Church throughout history, in the past it has been more involved in demonizing the West,<sup>20</sup> rather than taking the lead in irredentist public

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<sup>17</sup> Cohen, 41.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Branimir Anzulovic. *Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide*. New York: New York University Press, 1999. pp.125-126.

statements. Moreover, the five-decade long communism that helped create an anti-clerical climate had neutralized almost completely the role of the Church. The Orthodox Church during the Communist period was in defensive, rather than trying to use its already diminishing prestige to advocate a 'Greater Serbia'. Seen in this light, the Church was in a way obliged to often support state policies, rather than try to influence them in a particular direction. This all changed in the early 1990s, when the Serbs, "led by a cautiously Serbian Orthodox Church and by its intellectuals, were encouraged to follow their own path away from the "Western-Roman tradition" and along the well-traveled road of the Kosovo ethic."<sup>21</sup> As Thomas Emmert notes:

Using the evolving crisis in Kosovo as a theme for its own revival as an effective force in Serbian society, the Church presented itself as the defender of the Serbs in Kosovo, revisited the "martyrdom" of Serbs in World War II, and finally supported the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the creation of a greater Serbia.<sup>22</sup>

Seen in this light, the Church seems to have created an altogether new "discursive opportunity structure,"<sup>23</sup> that enabled it to transform most of the domestic debate from economic issues toward the ethnic ones. The main focus of the Church, started to become "a reinterpretation of Serbia's history in terms of suffering, exploitation, pain, and

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<sup>21</sup> Emmert, 173

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> Erin K. Jenne has defined this term as "long-lasting, malleable and adaptable to a range of settings, informing not only the legitimate forms of political organization, but also the means by which these "actors" can pursue their goals." See for an elaborated view on the concept: Erin K. Jenne. *Ethnic bargaining: the paradox of minority empowerment*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. (Acknowledging that Jenne uses the term to refer to ethnic bargaining, I use it here with a slightly different purpose, meaning the creation of a totally new structure that creates the opportunity for institutions such as the Orthodox Church, to seize the moment and shape the political discourse, especially in regard to irredentism. The politicians then are in a way 'constrained' to act in accordance with this new emerging societal discourse. )

justice.”<sup>24</sup> By seizing this opportunity and transforming the national debate from more acute economic problems toward issues of identity and ethnic linkages, the Orthodox Church gained a strong foothold in post-communist Serbian society and re-established its importance and influence, which was shattered during Communism. In the meantime, however, it gave rise to a fervent nationalistic domestic environment, which channeled popular dissatisfaction toward politics of ethnicity and saw irredentism as the only effective means of securing their internal stability.<sup>25</sup>

The interests of different groups in Serbian society are equally salient in influencing irredentist foreign policy. Interests can also be closely linked to ideas and institutions that influence nationalist politics and irredentist policies. For example:

In 1987, the Memorandum was circulated worldwide to Serbian émigré communities; it mobilized their support for Serbia’s national and territorial goals, which were justified by the Serbs’ alleged victimization in Yugoslavia, while making no mention of the sufferings of other national groups at Serbian hands. In practical terms, the memorandum helped standardize the rhetoric by which the Serbian emigration would rally to defend Serbia once the war began.<sup>26</sup>

I argue that there were certain ‘cluster groups’<sup>27</sup> within the Serbian society which tended to view their own interests as undistinguishable from those of the state. For the purposes of this paper, I emphasize two such groups: diasporas and mafia groups.<sup>28</sup> These groups provided critical support to political elites and generally pushed radicals or hawkish foreign policy goals. What these groups sought in exchange for this ‘service’ was

<sup>24</sup> Sabrina Ramet, “the Serbian Church and the Serbian Nation,” in *Beyond Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. p.103.

<sup>25</sup> Among many other concrete steps that the Orthodox Church undertook to increase nationalist feelings in Serbia, was to introduce a medal, “the ‘Majka Jugovica’ which any Serbian mother bearing four or more children in Kosovo would be entitled to receive.” See Mark Almond. *Europe’s Backyard War*. London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1994. p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, 39.

<sup>27</sup> By this I mean groups, whose members join together in pursuing similar interests and have a *modus operandi* that distinguishes them from the society at large.

<sup>28</sup> The mafia groups were often part of government structures as well, as will be further argued below.

accommodation in the highest echelons of the society and a position of prominence in shaping the political discourse.

The Serbian diaspora was at first quiescent, but in the context of Serbian aggression in Bosnia and Croatia, rose to prominence quickly, especially in the United States.<sup>29</sup> Brad K Blitz gives a colorful and lively picture of the Serbian diaspora and the influence that it had, as they formed their lobby groups. Although prior to the Serb aggression in Yugoslavia, they “had little tradition of political organization,” the Serbian diaspora was quick to organize itself, around the leadership of Senator Helen Delich Bentley.<sup>30</sup> Blitz draws a parallel between radicalization of the diasporas` language on one hand and the rising Serbian irredentism on the other.

The ultranationalist and xenophobic sentiments of Serbian leaders in Pale and Belgrade were exported to the United States through two principal carriers. The first was politicians and emissaries who traveled between North America and the former Yugoslavia. The second was the Serbian Orthodox Church. In effect, the Serbian diaspora was mobilized through similar community and institutional structures that had so successfully marshaled the Serbian public behind the nationalist agenda in Milosevic`s Yugoslavia.<sup>31</sup>

Another important element was the reinforcing role that pre-existing institutions such as the Orthodox Church had on the influence of the diaspora, by blessing their activities and adding legitimacy to Milosevic`s nationalistic regime. Thus, “the Orthodox Church and

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<sup>29</sup> In my opinion, this is mostly due to the flexibilities of the lobbying opportunities that the American political system allows and encourages.

<sup>30</sup> Senator Bentley was at the time, the most prominent Serbian diaspora leader in the US and also the only high American politician with Serbian origin. See for more, Brad K. Blitz. “Serbia`s War Lobby,” in *This Time We Knew*, in Thomas Cushman and Stepjan G. Mestrovic (eds), New York: New York University Press, 1996. p.196

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*

the Serbian polity, both in the former Yugoslavia and in the Diaspora, were firmly united.”<sup>32</sup>

The underworld crime figures and state security apparatus were often inextricably linked during Milosevic’s ‘reign of terror’ and it was difficult to distinguish them. The infamous ‘Zemun gang’ is widely believed to have been behind the assassination of the Prime Minister, Zoran Djindic, when he tried to crack its power down.<sup>33</sup> This dominant criminal clan of the Serbian underworld “includes many former paramilitaries who fought for the nationalist Milosevic in the Balkan wars of Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.”<sup>34</sup>

They were often given a “free hand in drug trafficking” from Milosevic; their illicit activities and “crimes also include kidnapping, murder, and the smuggling of cigarettes, arms, and people.”<sup>35</sup> They also strongly influenced the Belgrade’s policy design and prominent members of their rank and file, like Arkan or Legija, were part of the government structures, working on the meantime to put forward their own interests as well. The power of these organized crime groups was therefore considerable and they were freely pursuing their interest under the state’s arm. It just happened that their interests of waging irredentist wars to increase their illicit profits suited Milosevic and Serbian ruling elites as well and soon infamous criminal leaders like Arkan and Vojislav Sesejl found themselves in position of power. However, their relationship has never been

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<sup>32</sup> Blitz, 202

<sup>33</sup> For references to this, see, for example John Philips, “In Serbia, prime minister’s slaying triggers mafia roundup,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, March 25, 2003. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0325/p07s02-woeu.html>> (accessed April 3, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*



a linear, straight forward one. Milosevic backtracked and denounced them, when their crimes and atrocities became too embarrassing to be further sustained.<sup>36</sup>

But, when Milosevic, fearing the consolidation of these crime groups that in a way were restraining his authority and becoming a liability, tried to end their influence, through the use of intimidation and coercion, they shifted their loyalties and gave critical support to the opposition.<sup>37</sup> After the opposition came to power in 2000 and tried to meet the Western demands of submitting war criminals and fighting organized crime, these ex-military officers, turned in crime lords fiercely resisted the new government's actions, by threatening, intimidating and even killing prominent political figures, such as Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindic. Nevertheless, the new government that succeeded Djindic tried to take decisive action against this "mighty 'war lobby' that once surrounded former president Slobodan Milosevic, and which on March 12 murdered Djindic in a desperate attempt to arrest the country's democratization and its policy of cooperation with the war crimes tribunal."<sup>38</sup> The end of direct influence that these interest groups once enjoyed has no surprisingly coincided with the end of irredentist foreign policy of Serbia.<sup>39</sup>

### **3.2 Foreign intervention: 'Sticks' or 'Carrots'?**

Foreign intervention can have a direct or indirect impact on the foreign policies of a country, depending on timing, interest and determination of the third parties involved.

<sup>36</sup> Kaufman, 192.

<sup>37</sup> See among others Gagnon, 130; Dragan Bujosevic and Ivan Radonavic. *The Fall of Milosevic: The October 5<sup>th</sup> Revolution*. New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2003. pp.27-30.

<sup>38</sup> Bojan Dimitrijevic and Daniel Sunter, "Serbia: Red Berets Disbanded," *International War and Peace Reporting Balkans Crisis Report*, March 27, 2003. [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr3/bcr3\\_200303\\_418\\_2\\_eng.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr3/bcr3_200303_418_2_eng.txt) (accessed April 4, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> Although post-Milosevic Serbian leaders still advocate the return of Kosovo under Serbia's jurisdiction, (which is currently under international supervision), they maintain that this is just to preserve the international recognized borders, where Kosovo does not (yet) have a separate sovereignty from Serbia. But even for Kosovo, Serbian main political leaders, like President Tadic, have made clear that the prospect of violence and use of force is excluded; they will rely only in diplomatic means from now on.

Two of the most common policy tools that states or international organizations use, are cooperative or coercion mechanisms in influencing desirable policy outcomes. Carment and Harvey point to the effects of “coercive diplomacy,” which “includes a full range of political, diplomatic, and military instruments.”<sup>40</sup> Before proceeding further, I want to first note the distinction between economic and military sanctions, as they are different in nature and therefore they bear different economic and political costs. Clifton Morgan and Schwebach capture this element well when they note that: “economic sanctions provide a bargaining advantage to the sanctioner by leading to a favorable outcome without having to resort to the use of force.”<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the Serbian case does not follow this pattern, because the *economic* sanctions, most importantly those of the UN embargo, did not prove to be a strong deterrent in stopping Milosevic’s pursuit of a ‘Greater Serbia’, by supporting Serbian paramilitaries in Bosnia and Croatia. This, however, does not exclude the advantage that the sanctioner enjoys, which on the other hand, might decrease, if the costs of the parties that impose such sanctions increases. The result is a bargaining game, where these sanctioners should impose strong sanctions only when “there is a fair chance that they would work.”<sup>42</sup> If we discuss the patterns of international intervention in Serbia in this framework, my understanding is that the international community chose not to risk too much of its own credibility at stake, following thus a *via media*, while using a limited degree of *soft coercion*. However this was only in the initial stage, because later as it will be further elaborated below, the international pressure increased, culminating with the

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<sup>40</sup> Carment and Harvey, 25.

<sup>41</sup> T. Clifton Morgan and Valerie L. Schwebach. “Fools Suffer Gladly: The Use of Economic Sanctions in International Crises,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.41, No.1. (March., 1997). P.30

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* For a well-argued view on the effectiveness of the use of sanctions, see Clifton Morgan and Scwebach text (reference above).

NATO bombing, both in 1995 against the Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia and 1999 in Kosovo.

There are three significant interventions in the Yugoslav conflict, as Western governments tried to prevent and punish the Serbs for their aggressive irredentist policies. One was the European Union intervention, mostly driven by Germany's strong interests in the region, which led to the early international recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. The second was the Russian intervention, which was significant, considering Russia's position in such important bodies, such as the UN Security Council. The third intervention came from the concerted efforts of the United Nations (under the leadership of the United States), which sought to bring the conflict to an end by various means.

The Yugoslav conflict gained salience in the eyes of European foreign policy elites only in 1991, after Milosevic had already radicalized his political rhetoric in his "use of ethnic identities to gain and maintain his position."<sup>43</sup> First, the European policy was based on offering incentives of cooperation to Yugoslavia if the country "could meet several key conditions: democracy, free market reforms, human rights, and unity."<sup>44</sup> In exchange, the European Community promised economic benefits and also a promise of "closer association."<sup>45</sup> Although this promise sounded plausible enough to persuade Yugoslavia to reach an agreement, the efforts of the European Community were halted by inner contradictions. The principle of maintaining the Yugoslav federation that was advocated by the EC, and latter by United States, was no longer realistic, given that Milosevic was basing his entire political agenda on Serbian leadership and hegemony over the federation.

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<sup>43</sup> Saideman, "Explaining the International Relations...", 741.

<sup>44</sup> Kaufman, 195

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*

Milosevic's rhetoric served to fuel the fears of Croatia and Slovenia, which chose to secede in June 1991.<sup>46</sup> In their road to declaring independence from Yugoslavia, they were met with the enthusiastic support of the European Union, led by Germany.<sup>47</sup> This made the Serbs increasingly suspicious of the European Union in general and Germany in particular, since Germany had always been seen as having a strong bias against the Serbs and historically was looked upon as the protector of Catholic Croats and Slovenes.<sup>48</sup> The United States, in the meantime, had maintained an ambivalent position, supporting first the maintenance of the federal system, shifting only gradually toward vocal condemnation of the Serbs and support for the newly independent republics. In his 1991 trip to Yugoslavia, James Baker, the U.S. Secretary of State made it clear that "the United States continues to recognize and support the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia."<sup>49</sup>

Even when the U.S. openly condemned Serbian atrocities and Serbian state support for them, it was still reluctant to send ground troops into the conflict, which made Great Britain and France not only critical of United States' policy, but also affected their decision of withdrawing their troops as well.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, NATO made it clear that would not intervene in any way in "any Yugoslav civil war."<sup>51</sup> The West's failure to act as a coherent body is well captured by Jean Baudrillard when he writes that: "The West's military inability to react to Serb aggression is equaled by its inability to put the life of a

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<sup>46</sup> Saideman, 741.

<sup>47</sup> Only Macedonia's paradoxically peaceful secession was met with skepticism and not recognized by the European Union, because of Greece's strong opposition of its name.

<sup>48</sup> Stephen M. Saideman. *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy & International Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. pp. 122-123.

<sup>49</sup> Almond, 49.

<sup>50</sup> For more on this issue, see Ramet, 214.

<sup>51</sup> Almond, 48.

single soldier at risk.”<sup>52</sup> While the UN,- which was committed to provide security for the people,- still operated in “state-centric terms,” under which ensuring human security meant “saving failed states.”<sup>53</sup>

Russia’s position vis a vis their Serb ‘protégées’ was ambivalent as well, especially with regard to the war in Bosnia. In the Croatian case, they were actually critical of the Serbs. Russia’s foreign policy in this period was deeply divided between “the desire to reinforce its rewarding relationship with the West and its confessionally rooted affinity for the Serbs.”<sup>54</sup> In this light, we may interpret both Russian support for the imposition of economic sanctions against Serbia in 1992 and the Russian parliament’s 1993 adoption of “a resolution calling on the government to use its Security Council veto to block any proposed U.N. military action against Bosnian Serbs.”<sup>55</sup> The seeming ambivalence of the West in imposing sanctions and using of coercion in the first stages of the war made Milosevic more willing to ignore the West’s demands, turning instead on the domestic politics, and become more vulnerable of internal influences. In addition, the lack of international coercion, and material support from traditional allies such as Russia,<sup>56</sup> made Milosevic more determined to pursue his irredentist agenda. Bogdan Denitch points out “that protests alone could not stop Serbian repression in Kosovo or aggression against Croatia and Bosnia: they were not backed up with sufficient credible threats of sanctions.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Jean Baudrillard. “When the West Stands In for the Dead,” in *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia*, Thomas Cushman and Stepan G. Mestrovic (eds.), New York: New York University Press, 1996. p.87

<sup>53</sup> For an elaborated discussion of this issue, see Gerald Halman and Steven Ratner, “Saving Failed States,” *Foreign Policy* 89 (winter 1992-93): 3-20.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>56</sup> For an estimate of Russian military help, see for example, Ramet, 215.

<sup>57</sup> Denitch, 210

Furthermore, there was already a deep-seated suspicion in the intra-Republics' relations, because "Kucan, Tudjman, and Milosevic all preferred war to compromise,"<sup>58</sup> because compromise would show them to be 'weak' in the eyes of electorate, thus making them more dependent on domestic agendas. Therefore, as Kaufman argues: "[w]estern efforts to broker a compromise faced an almost insurmountable barrier,"<sup>59</sup> by tying their hands, they made the failure of *soft coercion* inevitable. Kaufman concurs that: "[g]iven these fundamental obstacles, it is clear that the western policy of verbal encouragement and economic incentives could not have helped."<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, when the threat of forceful intervention was backed by credible threats from the international community acting in a coherent way, the Serbian leadership tended to take these threats seriously, scale down its irredentist rhetoric and minimize its support to ethnic kin in Croatia and Bosnia. When the cost of opposing the increasing build-up of foreign intervention became unbearable, "Milošević even engaged in sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs to force them to the table."<sup>61</sup> This was made possible by NATO bombing "against the communications centers of the Bosnian Serbs, which finally made it clear that the days of bluffing, were over,"<sup>62</sup> and made possible a Croatian and Bosnian counter-offensive against the Serbian troops. "NATO suffered almost no losses and could clearly bomb at will. Therefore, overblown rhetoric and posturing about defying an unjust and anti-Serbian world community was finished."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Kaufman, 196

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>61</sup> Saideman and Ayres, 58

<sup>62</sup> Bodgan Denitch. *Ethnic Nationalism: the Tragic Death of Yugoslavia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 1997. p.208

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*

Later events, like the seventy-eight days intervention of 1999 in Kosovo, also prove that Milosevic backed down from his irredentist position only when faced with no escape hatch. At first, when the Serbian leader was not facing an imminent threat to his position of power from the NATO bombing of 1999, he seemed eager to defy the international community. In addition, the bombing seemed to rally support to his side, at least in the initial stage, which hardened Milosevic and made him more resolute in continuing with invigorated strength the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Albanians. Only after the cost inflicted by the continuous bombing became insupportable, did Milosevic back down and accept to withdraw the army and start the negotiations.

This shows that Milosevic could understand “only the language of force,” as ex-U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Allbright once said.<sup>64</sup> This is why air strikes were often seen as a “negotiation tool to force the Serbs to the bargaining table.”<sup>65</sup> Saideman and Ayres make the point that international pressures matter “only when actual costs accrue. Threats by themselves were unable to ‘shake’ Milosevic; instead, it was the actual impact of sanctions over the course of time that wore him down.”<sup>66</sup> In this perspective, we can make the point that while *soft coercion* failed to work in Serbia’s case, the impact of steady, resolute sanctions, were convincing enough to persuade him and the ruling elites in Serbia to back down from aggressive foreign policy-making, even when domestic subsets of the society were clearly in favor of a continuance of the present irredentist policy.

This chapter demonstrated that contrary to the common beliefs that it was Milosevic who started pursuing irredentist policies and waging wars on the neighbors, by

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Carment and Harvey, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Carment and Harvey, 30.

<sup>66</sup> Saideman and Ayres, 76.

just imposing its will on the society at large, or that he was just acting out of his way only to please its constituencies, there is also a different perspective to look at it. As Serbian writer, William Jovanovich puts it: "...foreigners from the start have misread Milosevic as a national expansionist."<sup>67</sup> Rather it was the Academy which pushed for a nationalist expansion that later led to state irredentism, "but this was ascribed [wrongly] to Slobodan Milosevic."<sup>68</sup> A close analysis of the chain of events emphasizes the role that institutions, such as the Academy of Science and Arts and Orthodox Church, nationalist ideas, like the infamous Memorandum of 1987 and societal organized groups like diaspora or mafia groups had, in strongly influencing Serbian irredentism.

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<sup>67</sup> See the Introduction by William Jovanovich in Alex N. Dragnich. *Serbia and Yugoslavia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*



## 4. Albania's Absent Irredentism

### 4.1 Historical Overview

Being part of the Ottoman Empire for more than five-hundred years and the last Balkan country to gain independence from it, Albania lagged behind of most of its neighbors in developing common myths and symbols from which a common sense of national belonging could emerge. Despite for a brief independent Albanian state in Medieval times, when Albanian national hero, Scanderbeg, could unite the feudals,- which were up to then Ottoman vassals,- in a common struggle against the Turks, the most other important moment in Albanian national awakening history, has been the so called 'Prizren League'. Its name derives from a meeting in the Kosovo town of Prizren, held in June 1878, where the Albanian representatives from all Albanian lands, "gave birth to the 'Albanian League for the Defense of the Rights of the Albanian Nation'".<sup>1</sup>

Only in 1912, would Albania finally proclaim its independence, under the leadership of former Ottoman minister, Ismail Qemali. This step was taken only when it was realized that the demise of the Ottoman Empire was inevitable and further Albanian would chose to stay under Ottoman arm, worse would have been when the Ottomans would finally loose. However, the new Albanian government that emerged was not powerful enough to defend and include all the Albanian territories in a single state. The only thing which it could do was to secure an internationally recognized independence of this new state, which was achieved in the Conference of the Ambassadors in London, in 1912.

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Hall. *Albania and the Albanians*. London and New York: Pinter Reference, 1994. p.9.

Of the early Albanian leaders, the Harvard-educated bishop, Fan Noli, was the only one who voiced concerns for the fate of Kosovo and tried to raise the issue in international forums. Noli's position is explained by the fact that the bulk of his supporters, especially in the revolution that brought him to power, were drawn from the Kosovo Committee. This Committee, a clandestine organization "which drew its membership from both sides of the border, was formed in 1918 to promote a more aggressive Albanian policy on Kosovo. It sought the national unification of all Albanians."<sup>2</sup> However, not only did Noli fail to reverse the borders, but his support for Kosovar uprising leaders earned him the enmity of his Yugoslavian neighbors, who lent support to his adversary, Ahmet Zog, who forced him out.<sup>3</sup>

Zog, who maintained power for the next fourteen years, thus relied on the crucial help of the Yugoslavs, whom he rewarded with domestic parts of the Albanian territory. His main threat to power was an opposition led by "disgruntled Kosovars who expected more concern from Tirana, and judged Zogu as pro-Yugoslav."<sup>4</sup> This led Zog to radicalize his stance toward the Kosovars and even helped the Serbs put an end to the *kachak* uprising<sup>5</sup> that was taking place in Serbia at the time. Not only did Zog not bother to rescue its ethnic kin in Kosovo, "leaving the Albanians of Kosovo to their fate,"<sup>6</sup> but he saw their leaders as the most dangerous adversaries to his power. His fear, in fact, was

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<sup>2</sup> Robert C. Austin. "Greater Albania," in *Ideologies and National Identities: The case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower eds. Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2004. p.241.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmet Zog was first ousted from the Internal Ministry which he was heading, by a Revolution led by Noli.

<sup>4</sup> Austin, 241. (The 'u' in Zogu here is a definite article in Albanian. I have omitted it in my mentioning of his name, to avoid confusion.)

<sup>5</sup> Vickers writes that "the Kachak movement was made up predominantly of Albanian emigrants from Kosovo, and was referred to by the Serbs as an outlaw organization and by the Albanians as a national-liberation movement." See for more, Vickers, 99.

<sup>6</sup> Vickers, 101.

well-grounded, because not further that “March 1922 Bajram Curri, Hasan Prishtina and Elez Isufi, an important Kachak leader, tried to overthrow the Tirana government, but failed.”<sup>7</sup> Later on, all these prominent Kosovo Albanian leaders were killed by Zog’s agents on his orders. Thus, Zog saw Kosovo as a hub of nationalist movement, whose leaders were a direct threat to his rule. Hence, he chose to cooperate with Yugoslavs in crushing the Kosovo national movement, rather than back it up.

## **4.2 Communist Albania and the end of Nationalism**

The Communist regime that took hold of power after the end of the World War II was established with the help of Yugoslav emissaries, Dushan Mugosha and Miladin Popovic.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it refrained from any openly irredentist policy toward Kosovo, from its inception. Nonetheless, in order to draw the Kosovars in the Communist side, both Yugoslavs and Albanian communists offered Kosovo a potential perspective of self-determination, based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. This implied *inter alia*, the right to secede. Only under such conditions, would Kosovars be willing to fight on the side of the Communists against the common German aggressor, who in fact has been very supportive of the claims of Greater Albania, as a way to gain the sympathies and possible collaboration of the local Albanian inhabitants.<sup>9</sup>

As soon as war ended, the Kosovo question was never brought up in talks between Yugoslav and Albanian government. Enver Hoxha, the Albanian primer

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<sup>7</sup> Vickers, 100.

<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless Hoxha disputes this, by writing that Mugosha had no role at all, while Miladin served only as an adviser and supporter of the founding members of the Albanian Communist Party, not as a founder himself.

<sup>9</sup> For a similar argument see Nicholas J. Costa. *Albania: A European Enigma*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. pp.59-60.

mentioned the issue of Kosovo only once to Tito and according to his memoirs, Tito replied that while the request sounded all right, the timing was not appropriate, because it would be hard to convince the Serbs, “who would not understand.”<sup>10</sup> Hoxha in fact was not the nationalist leader that he later claimed to be, nor did he press the Kosovo issue after his break with Yugoslavs in 1948. Furthermore, he never brought the Kosovo question in international forums, like in the United Nations<sup>11</sup> and evidence shows that it did not raise the issue up, even in bilateral talks.

After the death of both Tito and Hoxha in 1980s, the situation started to change and the non-nationalist paradigm started to be replaced with overt or covert forms of nationalism. In Serbia's case as it was already demonstrated, the raising nationalist consciousness, helped by the role of societal catalysts, led to state supported irredentism. While in Albania, the rise of some nationalist voices, especially in the late 1980s, when the situation of Kosovars deteriorated was not accompanied with any public support for irredentism.

Nonetheless, a formal state support for Kosovo was for instance exercised, when Bujar Bukoshi, Kosovo prime minister in exile, visited Tirana in 1991.<sup>12</sup> Bukoshi was promised that Albanian government was considering three main options for Kosovo,

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<sup>10</sup> Enver Hoxha. *Titistet* [The Titoites]. Tirana: “8 Nentori”, 1982. p.260.

<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Hoxha remained adamantly opposed at such potential moves, like the reunification of the two Germanies, which in the face of the deteriorating relations with Soviet Union and the Eastern camp and the precedence that it might serve for a possible reunification of the Albanian nation at a later stage, would seem as a reasonable request to be forwarded or supported while discussed in the UN General Assembly. I am indebted to Remzi Lani, the executive director of the Albanian Institute of Media for elucidating me on this point. Interview with the author, April 12.

<sup>12</sup> At this time, the Communists were still in power, although a coalition government was June 4, 1991. It is important to note that the Albanian government gave a greater support than previously to the Kosovars, in tandem with the new geo-political circumstances. Muhamet Kapllani, the Albanian Foreign Minister at the time, had even warned in New York: “The Republic of Albania holds that representatives of the Albanian people in Yugoslavia can in no way be excluded from the peace conference on Yugoslavia and from the negotiations on the future of its people.” Quoted in Kola, 219.

which could potentially serve as grounds for future policy action.<sup>13</sup> Later events nevertheless proved that Tirana government fell short of pressing for any of these options put forward in its international agenda. The only thing which Tirana could do and in fact did for the Bukoshi government, was to recognize the newly self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo on September 28, 1991,<sup>14</sup> albeit the only country to do so, with other countries failing to reciprocate such a move. But even this move was not that significant as it seems, given that it lacked any binding legal effects.<sup>15</sup> However, the political landscape in Albania at the time was fast changing, with the start of the anti-communist student protests and the emergence of the first opposition party, the Democratic Party.<sup>16</sup>

### ***4.3 Albania in transition and its lack of irredentism***

The end of the Communist system in Albania and the emergence of political pluralism, made possible a diversification of views regarding the Albanian national question, particularly with reference to Kosovo. Sali Berisha, who was soon to emerge as the Democratic Party's strongman, was especially concerned with the fate of the Albanians in Kosovo and the future relationship that he envisaged that Albania would have with them. Criticizing the Serbs for the growing repression in Kosovo, he once

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<sup>13</sup> Albanian Foreign Ministry Archives (1991). These options were: (1) "Kosovo to be an independent and sovereign state, with the right to join the other Yugoslav states in a loose confederation." (2) "The creation of a Kosovo Republic if the domestic borders of Yugoslavia were to change." (3) "Kosovo to join Albania if the outside existing borders of Yugoslavia changed."

<sup>14</sup> See the newspaper "Zeri i popullit," September 29, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> It was later maintained by successive Albanian governments that the recognition of the parliament was not binding in any way for Albania, since legally speaking the government only has the right to formally recognize the sovereignty of another state. As Kola has argued, citing specialists of international law, such as Ian Brownlie: "...recognition of a state or government must come from the government of a country, as the recognized subject of the exercise of power." Kola, p.282.

<sup>16</sup> The party was formed on 12 December of 1990.

declared that: “The Democratic Party of Albania cannot accept the division of the Albanian nation as eternal; therefore, it will struggle by peaceful means and within the context of the processes of integration in Europe to realize their rights for progress and national unity.”<sup>17</sup> His nationalist rhetoric was even more explicit at another of his pre-electoral speeches in 1992, when Berisha made the following promise: “Our brothers living in their territories in former Yugoslavia and wherever they are: the DP will not stop fighting until her great dream of uniting the Albanian nation comes true.”<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding the electoral rhetoric, Berisha was to later backtrack from these stated goals, because he came to realize “the responsibilities of the office, which dictated the need to abide by the norms of international law to which the Albanian state was a party.”<sup>19</sup> Robert Austin identifies three core reasons that might have had an impact on Berisha’s withdrawal from nationalist rhetoric after he became President of the country. According to Austin, these were:

Firstly, he was in no doubt warned by Albania’s patrons in Washington and Europe to avoid advocating border changes. Secondly, he realized that pan-Albanian nationalism was not something that unified Albanian voters, and it was especially useless among a population fed up with slogans and cut off from the outside world for so many years. Finally, Berisha sacrificed almost all his programs in favor of a devastating battle with the opposition Socialist Party that poisoned Albanian political life. As a result, Berisha softened his line on Kosovo once he was in power.<sup>20</sup>

An observer noted that as early as 1993, Berisha took a U-turn on the nationalist cause, labeling as naïve those who believed in a possible unification of Albanian lands and he stated: “Albania has not sought, does not seek and will not seek any change in

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Biberaj, *Albania in Transition*, p.66.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Kola, 223.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Austin, 244.

existing borders.”<sup>21</sup> This abrupt change in Berisha’s political rhetoric, was unexpected in the face of present circumstances and showed him to be an inexperienced and vulnerable leader. Considering this shift of rhetoric, one rightly might be tempted to ask why Berisha proved so vulnerable in a moment when he was the most successful politician in the country, having scored a landslide victory in the March 1992 elections. Furthermore, no evidence suggests that Berisha was facing any material sanctions from international community if he were to continue with the nationalist talk. In my view, Berisha backed down in response to *soft coercion* by the international community<sup>22</sup> for two main reasons.

First, the new democratic government was in the process of undertaking some harsh and quick reforms in Albanian economy and state structures, which made it unpopular with the majority of the Albanians, shortly after coming to power. Only seven months after winning by large margins in the March elections, the Democratic Party lost the local elections, which signaled that something was not right. Therefore, Berisha needed to show he had strong support from the West, particularly the US; he hoped to capitalize on the Western support to gain strength back home. That explains why Berisha proved vulnerable even in the face of some short, but significant remarks from the Western donors. Thus, Berisha was keen to be seen as moderate on nationalist issues in order to attract Western sympathies and support. This is why, the British daily, the London Guardian, wrote that “Berisha earned Western tolerance by his resistance to any

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<sup>21</sup> Elez Biberaj. *Albania in Transition: The Rocky Road to Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998. p.251.

<sup>22</sup> By *soft coercion* I refer here to the warning that his outside patrons gave him when they suggested that he should step back from advocating border changes, in order to maintain the good terms with the West. Without any apparent threat of sanctions, be they economic or military, it is surprising how Berisha duly complied with such requests.

pan-Albanian tendency which might add to the problems in Serbian Kosovo and in Western Macedonia.”<sup>23</sup> In line with this argument, Kola writes that:

Indeed, when, in September 1995, President Sali Berisha became Albania’s first head of state to be invited to the White House, he assumed he had passed the test of moderation and restraint required of him vis-à-vis Kosova and the region. In fact, since Albania’s 1992 insistence on removing references to Kosova’s being part of Serbia in international documents, Tirana has been pressured to tone down its rhetoric, so much that, by mid-1993, Berisha had come up with the idea of a ‘democratic space’ in the Balkans that would facilitate direct integration in to Europe, regardless of international borders.<sup>24</sup>

Hence, to summarize the argument, the Albanian leadership proved vulnerable even toward a mild degree of *soft coercion* and backtracked, changing its policy goals suddenly.

Second, there was a kind of ethnic underbidding in Albanian politics at the time, with the main opposition party, - the Socialist party, - not voicing any concern at all for the fate of Kosovo and Kosovo Albanians. Moreover, when the Socialists succeeded Berisha “[they] made it clear that Greater Albanian was not on their agenda.”<sup>25</sup> Some observers have explained this in terms of the fact that the Socialist leadership came mostly from southern Albania that has had little historical roots and connections with Kosovars and other ethnic Albanians in the territories of ex-Yugoslavia.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, the Democratic Party draws most of its followers from the north, with Berisha being himself a northerner from the border town of Tropoja,<sup>27</sup> with family ties in Kosovo.

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in James Pettifer and Miranda Vickers. *The Albanian Question: Reshaping the Balkans*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007. p.11.

<sup>24</sup> Kola, 309

<sup>25</sup> Austin, 245.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>27</sup> Tropoja lays in the border that Albania shares with Kosovo.



Nonetheless, with Berisha changing its rhetoric and priorities, not much concern was voiced thereafter in Albanian political scene. Another piece of evidence demonstrating that the first democratic government shifted its concerns away from Kosovo and ethnic Albanians in general, is that in a 160- page document that illustrated the achievements of the Democratic Party in the first three years of governance, “just a single page on the ‘Internalization of the Albanian question’,”<sup>28</sup> was reserved among Albania’s foreign policy goals. In view of such neglect and marginalization of the Albanian national question, Kola writes:

It is, therefore, not coincidental that a group of seventy-six Albanian intellectuals, including Rexhep Mejdani, who was to succeed to the presidency in 1997, wrote an *aide mémoire* to President Berisha ahead of his Washington visit, urging him to: request President Clinton to ensure that any US peace plan on the Balkans should seek to endorse Kosova’s expressed will for independence (‘There should be no vacillation on this issue’); guarantee Macedonia’s Albanians an equal constitutional position in their state; secure territorial autonomy for Montenegro’s Albanian inhabitants as well as the Albanians of southern Serbia (Presheve, Medvegje, Bujanovc)...”<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to note, the sentiments of some prominent Albanian voices from civil society regarding the national question. Fatos Arapi, a leading Albania writer and poet, wrote in 1992 that the main concern was not the potential rise of nationalism; rather, it is what the author calls ‘lack of Albanianism’<sup>30</sup>. Regarding the policy recommendations that the intellectuals signed and handed to Berisha before his trip to the White House, the opinions of analysts vary in extremes, but join in its condemnation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Kola, 309.

<sup>29</sup> Kola, 310. The author, being a foreign ministry official at the time, also points out that the document was not legally binding and did not affect in any way the official agenda of Berisha in Washington.

<sup>30</sup> Fatos Arapi, “Kjo eshte Golgotha,” *Zeri i Rinise*, 16 September 1992, p.3.

<sup>31</sup> For instance, in an interview that I had with Professor Hysamedin Ferraj, he denounced this policy paper as falling short of all expectations, because it took a minimalist stance (according to him) and did not advocate more radical options, like territorial autonomy for Albanians in Macedonia, or Kosovo joining Albania in a future unified state. Quite on the contrary, was the opinion of media analyst and the director of

Although space does not allow me to comment at length on each particular Albanian event that had an impact on Kosovo, during the period up to 1999 that culminated with the intervention of NATO in Kosovo, some dramatic occurrences, like the collapse of pyramidal schemes were noteworthy for their effect on both sides of the border. In Albania, the fall of these pyramidal schemes,<sup>32</sup> created a *window of opportunity* for the Kosovars to receive a *de facto* support from the ‘motherland’ through the acquisition of weapons in the black markets, in an Albania in chaos. In relation to this, Sam Vaknin notes that:

What finally transformed the KLA from a wannabe IRA into the fighting force that it became was the disintegration of Albania...The KLA absorbed thousands of weapons from the looted armories of the Albanian military and police...The convulsive dissolution of Albania led to changes in high places. Sali Berisha was deposed and replaced by Rexhep Mejdani, who had an even more sympathetic ear to separatist demands. Berisha himself later allowed the KLA to use his propriety, around Tropoja, as staging grounds and supported the cause...unequivocally.<sup>33</sup>

Vaknin’s description of what was happening, seems to imply that Berisha was replaced with Mejdani, because he was more radical on nationalist issues. This argument lacks in fact, a causal explanation and sounds more like a speculation. There is no evidence that Berisha was substituted with Mejdani because Mejdani did previously make some radical claims. Rather, Berisha resigned only when faced with a humiliated loss in the 1997 election, although he was just recently re-elected and could legally retain power if would

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the Institute of Media, Mr. Remzi Lani. Lani dismissed this policy paper as “superfluous” and written by some “short-sighted radicals,” and was considerate of the fact that it was not taken into consideration from the government at the time. Interviews- April, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> In the words of Albania’s justice minister in 1997, Mr. Spartak Ngjela, the fall of pyramidal schemes led to a “Hobessian world,” in Albania, with little or no regard for law and order.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Erin K. Jenne. “Ethnic Bargaining in the Balkans: Secessionist Kosovo Versus Integrationist Vojvodina,” *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 173.

chose to do so. In contrast, Mejdani was proposed by the Socialist leader Fatos Nano as a candidate for the post of President, based on domestic consideration and his newly gained status as the Secretary-General of the Socialist Party. In addition, Mejdani's presidential powers were rather curtailed, particularly by the new 1998 Constitutional design, which made it impossible for him to advocate any nationalist claims, even if would chose to do so.<sup>34</sup>

In any case, the new socialist prime minister<sup>35</sup> who was allowed under the new Constitution, to have more prerogatives, including those in foreign policy conduct, was keen to show himself as an able diplomatic player and was soon involved in some controversial issues.<sup>36</sup> But, because Nano's governance lasted only for a short stint, his impact on the course of the events that culminated with the intervention of NATO, was miniscule. It was mainly his successor Pandeli Majko who shouldered most of the burden of the refugee flows from Kosovo and provided the NATO troops with access for establishing its bases in Albanian territory.<sup>37</sup>

What is important to note here, is that even during the height of the Kosovo crises, when the Serbs were 'cleansing' the Kosovars and Albania was facing a refugee crises,- not to mention border provocations from Milosevic's army,- Tirana was pretty much restricted in its course of action, with its behavior heavily influenced from the

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<sup>34</sup> This point is important to show that there was continuity in Albanian non-nationalist path, which has made possible for Albanian foreign policy to refrain from irredentism.

<sup>35</sup> Fatos Nano, the long-time Socialist leader that was serving a prison sentence on corruption charges, saw his charges dropped suddenly in 1997 and succeeded in becoming the new prime minister.

<sup>36</sup> Nano met Serbian President, Milosevic, in a summit in the Greek Island of Crete in November of 1997, after which, he was strongly criticized by opposition at home and the Kosovars for basically giving a 'free hand' to Milosevic in Kosovo. Nano was reported to have said that Kosovo was an 'internal matter' of Serbia, which was only supposed to comply with human right laws in their treatment of Kosovo Albanian citizens. For more on this meeting, see for instance: Pettifer and Vickers, 133-134;

<sup>37</sup> The focus of this chapter is up to 1998, before the escalation of war in Kosovo and NATO intervention there, so I do not address the ongoing events in Albanian foreign policy course.

standard rhetoric of the international community. The prospect of potential integration in NATO and European Union no doubt offered a strong incentive to the Albanian politicians<sup>38</sup>, as did the role of soft coercion in making them quickly backtrack even when faced with lucrative electoral gains. In addition, the *absence* of strong nationalist ideas, institutions and/or interest groups that were in favor an irredentist policy seemed to have helped Berisha in easily dismissing previous electoral campaigns, the same as it helped his Socialist successors later on.

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<sup>38</sup> Albanian Foreign Minister during the years 1998-2002, Mr. Paskal Milo has strongly emphasized this point. He has written *inter alia* that any reference to Albanian government efforts to promote irredentism is simply absurd. “On the contrary, there have been clear and unequivocal statements that such an idea is counterproductive and contrary to the objectives of Albania to be integrated into a United Europe.” See Appendix 1 for a full picture of Albanian foreign policy during these years.

## 5. Assessing F.P. irredentist policies: Serbia versus Albania

### 5.1 *Factors influencing irredentism*

As was previously mentioned, while Serbia pursued an aggressive foreign policy toward the lands inhabited by its kin, especially in regard to Serbs living in Bosnia and Croatia in the years following the demise of communism and dissolution of Yugoslavia, Albania was not actively irredentist during the same period. The Albanian press has been mild and “avoided a descent into nationalism and jingoism,” while the nationalist parties rarely, if ever, passed the parliamentary threshold in general elections.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the question that logically follows, is why this is the case, given the almost identical set of circumstances that were in place for Albania to pursue the same irredentist calls for a Greater Albania that their Serb counterparts were already claiming toward their own neighbors. Albania and Serbia shared the same historical grievances, communist regimes that repressed nationalist identities and appeals, and pluralist parties that used to have a nationalist agenda when they first came to power.

Furthermore, the history books in both countries painted rather bleak stories of the historical injustices that the two countries have suffered as a result of Great Power interventions that left the most part of their territories outside state recognized borders.<sup>2</sup> Seen in this light, both countries should have actively pursued irredentist agendas that would attract popular support and thereby allow them to retain power. But while this was the case in Serbia, Albania failed to act according to these predictions. Instead, the

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<sup>1</sup> Austin, 246.

<sup>2</sup> For more on this view, see Pettifer and Vickers, 190.

rhetoric of post-communist politicians moderated, and they abstained from nationalist rhetoric.

This paper has argued that the domestic element in tandem with foreign intervention, explain these divergent outcomes. The domestic factors, including nationalist ideas, institutions and interests, operated differently in Albania and Serbia, yielding different foreign policy results in the two countries. This is because of historical, as well as more current geopolitical implications that affected the decision-making of the political leadership in these countries. While Serbia has had a tradition of the role of ideas in foreign policy-making, in designs such as *Nacertanija*, which projected a Greater Serbia from medieval times, Albania lacked such nationalist ideas that could be used to later base territorial claims on.

## **5.2 Why the two cases differ.**

In Serbia's case, ideas such as *Nacertanija*, helped in provoking modern-day developments, such as the Memorandum of 1987, when Serb intellectuals gave a ready-made agenda to shrewd politicians like Milosevic, who would later use it to obtain their political goals. Moreover, Serbia had a tradition of state formation prior to the Ottoman conquest and the memories of the 'good old days' had failed to disappear. The acquiring of sovereignty from the Ottoman Empire, which coincided with a well-established literacy and epic myths, gave rise to a sense of nationalist pride and a sense of belonging that proved critical for future developments. Ernest Gellner has correctly pointed out that: "nationalism emerges only in *milieux* in which the existence of the state is already very

much taken for granted.”<sup>3</sup> Although Serbia was granted full autonomy from the Ottoman Empire only in 1830, it had already ‘taken for granted’ the existence of itself as a separate autonomous unit under the Ottomans, long before it won it formally. The collective memories of an independent, strong Serbian state, especially under Stefan Dusan (1331-55), when the Serbian state reached its zenith, were still strong and remembered in the aftermath of the Ottoman reign. As Ferdinand Schevill has noted, “it is Stephen Dushan who gave the Serb state its greatest extent and luster.”<sup>4</sup> For most Serbs, the days of Dushan are still remembered as the golden days of their nation. Therefore, the existence of some prior self-governing structures, in conjunction with a strong tradition of literary and epic songs, made it possible for the Serbs to be more ‘receptive’ to nationalist ideas. If we throw into the mix the common religious identity and the role that the Orthodox Church played into transforming the support for irredentism, then there is little wonder why Serbian elites found such a ready support from their constituencies, while pursuing their aggressive foreign policy. This is not to sidestep the crucial role that the international community came to play in affecting nationalist agendas. As was already demonstrated in Chapter 2, when the threat of credible coercion was perceived as such by Serbian politicians, they tended to back down from their irredentist policies. In contrast, when such threats seemed to lack credibility, Milosevic and the ruling elites were heavily dependent on strong subsets of the Serbian society.

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<sup>3</sup> Ernest Gellner. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford, UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1983. p.4.

<sup>4</sup> Ferdinand Schevill. *A History of the Balkans: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. New York: Dorset Press, 1991. p.152.

Nationalism could not be developed successfully in post-communist Albania because of different economic, social and political factors, which were in the limelight. For instance, Albania was suffering from one of the most terrible isolations in its history, due to the intransigencies of the communist system, which left deep marks on the population. The population was more concerned with prosperity and social freedoms than Pan-Albanianism. This was picked up by Albanian politicians, who were rhetorically pressured by the international community to drop any claims of Albania joining Kosovo or other Albanian-speaking territories outside Albania. Thus, the lack of a strong national idea, elaborated by such institutions as the Academy of Science and the absence of a nationalist based single religion that would serve to unify all the Albanians in a single state, proved enough to deter Albanian politicians from any claim of Greater Albania and to heed the advice of the international factor. In addition, Albania also lacked groups that were in a particular way interested in promoting the notion of Greater Albania. On the contrary, some of these groups, like the Albanian criminal networks, were interested in having a good relation with the Serbian state and their own counterparts in Serbia, especially during the period of the embargo imposed by the United Nations. This was because they could break this embargo, if they were allowed by the Albanian government<sup>5</sup> and reap enormous profits. Only the Albanian Diaspora seemed to have been the most enthusiastic supporters of any potential irredentist goal toward Kosovo, but

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<sup>5</sup> The ex-President Berisha in fact, did accept earlier this year that he allowed (or at least did not harass), the illicit trade that was taking place with Serbia in the height of the Bosnian and Croatian wars. His declaration came right after the publication of the memories of the ex-President of Montenegro that created a fuss on the Albanian public opinion. For the latest account, see “Roli grek ne takimin Berisha-Bullatovic,” *Revista Mapo*, nr.32. 22 May 2007.



their influence over policy-making was miniscule, not to say non-existent. Rather, it looked more like wishful thinking than actual participation in the policy-making process.

Only with Pandeli Majko's government that succeeded Nano as prime minister did a *window of opportunity* seem to open up for Albania to take a more pro-active stance with regard to Kosovo, albeit under the umbrella of the international community. The Majko government, on the verge of talks in Rambouillet, tried to "that the national question remained its priority."<sup>6</sup> In addition, a big plus for the socialist government was its "first ever policy platform, namely the 'Platform on the Solution of the Albanian National Question', worked out by the Academy of Sciences in August 1998; the platform does not indicate what Albania could and should do, confining itself to calling for immediate international intervention to force Belgrade to recognize the independence of Kosova."<sup>7</sup>

What this shows is that even when the almost non-existent Albanian Academy of Science came forward with concrete proposals in envisaging a kind of strategy on national policies to be implemented by the policy-makers, their claims and calls for action did not go beyond the already existing official framework. To put it a different way, the role that Albanian institutions like the Academy of Science had in promoting the nationalist cause in Albania, was minimal and within the boundaries of the existing government policies.

On the other hand, even those Albanian intellectuals that took rare, isolated initiatives, like the *aide-mémoire* provided to President Berisha by a group of prominent intellectuals, it failed to have any real impact on the foreign policy agenda of the

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<sup>6</sup> Kola, 350.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*

Albanian state. There is hardly any evidence that proves the contrary. The international community not only found very receptive politicians on its objectives of containing any nationalist fervor from Albania, but on top of that, the Albanian politicians were in a race of *ethnic underbidding* on nationalist issues, which excluded nationalist rhetoric from their electoral agendas. They were acting in such a way, partly to accommodate the will of the international community, and partly because there was no need to mobilize voting support on nationalist or irredentist agendas.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis developed a rather different explanation of irredentist foreign policy, with the aim of analyzing overlooked factors in the existing literature. Its contribution centers on the role that nationalist ideas, interests and institutions play in constructing a state's foreign policy, which are important for any serious study of irredentist policies. They play a crucial role as catalysts of societal change, particularly in the absence of a third-party intervention. The historical legacy of such nationalist ideas, like in the case of Serbia with the *Nacertanije* idea or the role that the Orthodox Church came to play in the aftermath of communism as a unifying institution for different subsets of the society, are significant factors shaping modern-day Serbian irredentism. It was Serbian nationalist policies in turn that preceded and led to the fall of Yugoslavia. Also, the role of other institutions, such as the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, which seems to have provided a ready-made agenda for Milosevic and his ruling elite, is not to be neglected. The policy platform that the Memorandum of 1987 outlined was later used to achieve irredentist goals that would make Milosevic's 'reign' more secure. The interests that organized groups, such as the Serbian Diaspora and mafia groups had as outside players in the process of waging irredentist wars, seemed to be equally important, if we are to recognize the critical support and influence that organized groups had.

In contrast, the lack of a nationalist 'grand design', together with the absence of strong national and religious institutions, made Albania vulnerable to external intervention. Albanian leaders thus heeded its advice, even when it went against their national interests. In addition, the long time that has kept Albanian speaking people

separated from each-other, during the centuries, has developed into a lack of national consciousness, which different societal catalysts could use to transform into a strong irredentist weapon. Albania failed to grasp ‘the golden moment’ that the fall of Communism created, in pursuing nationalist policies, which would in the long run lead to irredentist claims. Not only that, but Berisha, who has sometimes been referred to as strong in nationalist issues, has even jailed some of the most prominent Kosovar leaders during the course of his Presidency.<sup>1</sup> This clearly shows Tirana’s absence of strong domestic factors in influencing foreign policy outcomes and its continuous reliability on the international factor. Therefore, Austin rightly concludes when he stresses that: “[i]n any case for Albania, even more so than in the past, Tirana is largely unable to influence events outside the country.”<sup>2</sup>

All in all, my contribution rests on analyzing the sources of irredentism and the critical role that they play while constructing foreign policy agendas. This thesis demonstrated that the influence that these sources exert varies with the degree of foreign intervention. This means that higher the level of involvement and the will of the international community for imposing sanctions, higher the ‘sensitivity’ of the elites toward the external pressures. While, the *soft coercion* mechanism that I introduced in this thesis, works only in absence or rather weakness of domestic institutions, a well articulated nationalist idea and/or powerful societal actors with interests in state’s pursuing irredentism.

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<sup>1</sup> Kosovar prominent leaders, like Adem Jashari, or Hashim Thaci were put to prison by Berisha’s orders, when the British intelligence services reported for a training camp set up for Kosovo guerilla fighting training. Berisha was reported to have been pressured by the international community to close the camp and arrest its leaders and surprisingly, without any sanctions threatening him directly, he quickly complied with these ‘suggestions’. See Pettifer and Vickers, 98.

<sup>2</sup> Austin, 248

## Appendix 1

**From: Paskal Milo**

The platform of a “Greater Albania” is not popular in Albania. This does not mean that the Albanians of Albania are less nationalistic than others or that they do not want close relations with their compatriots in other countries. There is no connection between the two. A number of reasons explain this attitude to the platform. Political culture and education in Albania are at higher levels than in Kosova and Macedonia concerning the public at large. They understand better the anti-Albanian core and substance of the slogan. Living in the mother-country, they have conceptualized their future in the development of Albania and its orientation towards Euro-Atlantic structures. Human contacts during the last decade between Albanians on both sides of the borders have shown differences not only in mentality, psychology, and cultural background, but also in economic development. This gap cannot be filled in a short time.

In the official policy of the Government of Albania there is not, nor has there been any reference to or any aim at the creation of a “Greater Albania.” On the contrary, there have been clear and unequivocal statements that such an idea is counterproductive and contrary to the objectives of Albania to be integrated into a United Europe.

**Source:** Paskal Milo, *Greater Albania-Between Fiction and Reality*. Published by the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001. At the time of writing, Milo was Albania’s foreign minister.

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