

IRREDENTIST FOREIGN POLICY: CASE OF THE PARALLEL STRUCTURES IN NORTHERN KOSOVO

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Abstract

The so-called Serbian parallel structures in Northern Kosovo, which include the network of administrative structures, educational and healthcare facilities, judicial bodies and more, created and supported by Belgrade since 1999, has effectively hindered consolidation of Kosovo statehood and gave Serbia a de facto control over this territory. Despite the harmful and expensive character of support for the parallel structures, the policy changed only recently. This thesis explores the given question: Why, given the costs of doing so, Serbia's leaders supported the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo for so long, and why the support apparently changed when it did? Based on the literature of ethnic foreign policy and irredentism, this thesis argues that such foreign policy can be explained with a combination of two variables, political competition and international influence. This thesis utilizes a qualitative research design, which aims to assess the power of my independent variables to explain my dependent variable, the change of support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo. The main findings are that support for the parallel structures in Kosovo from 1999-2008 can be best explained by the domestic competition, which radicalized the political rhetoric to the extent the irredentist policy was possible. The change of support for the parallel structures, which is apparent in the period from 2008-2013, was possible because of the political competition with marginalized nationalist forces and the direct influence of the international community, the EU in particular.

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Introduction

The stabilization of Kosovo, emerging from the ethnic war in 1998-1999, has been one of the most important international missions in the last two decades. However, the solution is far beyond the horizon and as it is slowly cooling down, one might worry that it will finally become one of the many frozen conflicts of the post-cold war era. Kosovo's quasi statehood and unfinished status are the main reasons for the political and economic problems manifested in institutionalization of the ethnic division, skyrocketing unemployment, rising influence of organized crime networks¹ and repeated violent unrest throughout the country.² As many scholars and international observers have acknowledged,³ the constant presence of the so-called Serbian parallel structures on the territory of Kosovo is at the heart of the whole problem. Although previously operating in all Serbian enclaves in Kosovo, after the Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, Serbia lost its institutional dominance in southern and eastern enclaves, which have already stated the process of integration with Pristina's administration. Functioning especially in Northern Kosovo, the network of administrative, political and public institutions, including hospitals, schools, judicial and security bodies,⁴ created and financed by Belgrade, support the life of Kosovo Serbs in a way that is incompatible with the integration

¹Oliver Richmond : "Co-opting the Liberal Peace: Untying the Gordian Knot in Kosovo." *Cooperation and Conflict*. Vol. 43, No.1, 2008, pp.3; Andreas Ernst: "Fuzzy Governance: State-Building in Kosovo Since 1999 as Interaction Between International and Local Actors." *Democracy and Security*. Vol. 7, No. 2, 2011, pp. 125

²"NATO sends more troops to Kosovo after border unrest." *BBC News*. 2 August 2011 Available at: [5.2.2013] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14376424>; "KFOR commander warns against possible unrest." *B92 news*. 12. February 2012 Available at: [5.2.2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=02&dd=12&nav_id=78752; "Peacekeepers and locals hurt in Kosovo riot." *Reuters*. 12. September. 2010 Available at: [5.2.2013] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/09/12/us-kosovo-clashes-idUSTRE68B14K20100912>

³ International Crisis Group (ICG): "North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice." *Crisis Group Europe Report*, N°211, 2011; OSCE Mission In Kosovo: "Parallel Structures In Kosovo." 2006-2007

⁴ ICG: "North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice." 2011, pp. 1-2

efforts⁵ of Pristina's government and the international community. The social gap between the Kosovo ethnic groups amplified by the structures, effectively challenges Kosovo sovereignty and territorial integrity. Enjoying a higher standard of living, with double salaries for ethnic Serbs and created tax free areas with free electricity and telecommunications,⁶ the Northern Kosovars have only little initiative to pursue integration with the rest of Kosovo as happened to the other Serbian southern and eastern enclaves.

The policy of Serbia toward Kosovo is rather puzzling. It not only effectively prevents any consolidation of Kosovo's administration, but is also financially demanding and harmful for Serbia itself. First, the maintenance of living conditions, salaries and pensions for Kosovo Serbs, which are not only better and higher than in other parts of Kosovo, but also much better and higher than in the rest of Serbia itself, is a costly business. According to the International Crisis Group, Serbia spends yearly about 200 million euro, approximately 0,64% of Serbian GDP, on a population at less than 60 000 ethnic Serbs in the North.⁷ Although the support has already decreased from the previous 300 million euro per annum in the last decade, it still represents an irrational economic burden on the country with 80% of GDP public debt and 25 % unemployment.⁸ Such resources could have been invested elsewhere in the country.

Secondly, because of the perceived illegality by the international audience, Serbia's reputation of eternal troublemaker in the Western Balkans has not been

⁵For example: Slavisa Ristic in: "Kosovo Serbs Denounce Integration and 'Traitors'". *Balkan Insight*. 31. Jan. 2013. Available at : [10.4.2013] <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-serbs-rally-against-their-integration-into-kosovo>

⁶ ICG: "North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice." 2011, pp.15

⁷ Ibid. pp. 4

⁸ National Bank of Serbia: "Analysis of the Republic of Serbia's Debt." Belgrade, June 2012 Available at: [18.5.2013] http://www.nbs.rs/internet/english/90/dug/debt_II_2012.pdf; European Commission: *Serbia: Growth and Fiscal Challenges*. 2012 Available at: [18.5.2013] http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2012_spring/cc_serbia_en.pdf; Trading Economics: "Serbian Unemployment rate." 5. May 2013 Available at: [18.5.2013] <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/serbia/unemployment-rate>

improved, which causes additional problems. For instance, the parallel institutions are one of the reasons for the slow and troublesome integration of Serbia into Euro-Atlantic organisations. Serbia is a landlocked country, surrounded by EU member states. As a result, the EU is Serbia's main trading partner, with almost 65,3% of all Serbian imports and 60,2% of all Serbian exports heading to and from the EU.⁹ Serbia not only depends on the EU as a trading partner, but also enjoys financial assistance, in the form of grants and soft loans, from programmes such as Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) to the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA). Engagement with the EU is, therefore, of crucial importance for Serbia. EU integration has been, however, severely hindered in achieving these goals by its intransigent policy toward Kosovo. Despite the long term pressure from the EU¹⁰ and other international organisations, Serbia had, until recently, maintained its support for the parallel structures, damaging its international image.

Why has Serbia supported these parallel structures, which have had such a harmful impact on the country's future prospects? The obvious explanation is that support for the parallel structures has been a manifestation of strong nationalism, because Kosovo is an inseparable part of the Serbian national identity and Serbs would cling to it at any costs. There is indeed a strong and constant national sentiment in Serbia toward Kosovo, which might explain the support for the parallel structures. For example, in 2006 68,2% of Serbian citizens claimed that Kosovo has to remain part of Serbia, in 2008 it was 64.7% of citizens, in 2010 this number

⁹ DG Trade: "Statistic: Trade of Republic of Serbia." 26 April 2013 Available at: [10.5.2013]
http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2008/august/tradoc_140028.pdf

¹⁰ European Commission: Serbia 2012 Progress Report. 10.10. 2012, pp. 19 Available at: [27.3.2013]
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/sr_rapport_2012_en.pdf

increased to 73,1% and dropped to 63,6% by 2011.¹¹ However, given the relatively constant character of the public support and national sentiment, why has Serbia gradually changed its support for the parallel structures? The changes, such as “giving up” southern enclaves, decreased financial support, and signing of the groundbreaking agreement on the 19th of April 2013,¹² which envisions complete abandonment of the parallel structures, occurred from 2008, which collide with the beginning of the economic and financial crisis. Because the crisis hit Serbia particularly hard,¹³ one might suspect that the citizens finally recognized that they can no longer hold onto these structures, and pragmatically decided to abandon them. This argumentation is problematic because, firstly, as suggested by my field research and focused interviews,¹⁴ the ordinary Serbian citizens are not aware of the enormous financial contribution they have to pay in order to keep the parallel structures running. Secondly, as shown above, the sentiment for Kosovo has not changed, it remains relatively high and 65% of Serbian citizens would rather give up EU integration, considered as necessary for better economic performance, than Kosovo.¹⁵

This thesis, therefore, explores the question: Why, given the costs of doing so, Serbia’s leaders have supported the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo for so long, and why the support apparently changed when it did? Although there is a vast literature dealing with the variables enabling the parallel structures to persist, such as

¹¹ Gallup Balkan Monitor: “Kosovo has to remain part of Serbia.” Available at: [25.4.2013] <http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/index.php/dashboard>

¹² “Serbian Parliament Considering Landmark Kosovo Deal.” *Radio Free Europe*. 3 May 2013. Available at: [10.5.2013] <http://www.rferl.org/content/serbia-kosovo-landmark-deal/24969371.html>; “Kosovo and Serbia Reach Historic Deal in Brussels.” *Balkan Insight*. 19. April 2013 Available at: [10.5.2013] <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-and-serbia-may-seal-eu-deal>

¹³ Milan Stamatović: “The World Economic Crisis Impact of Serbia.” *Economics and Organization* Vol. 7, No 1, 2010, pp. 1 – 15 Available at: [5.5.2013] <http://facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/eao/eao201001/eao201001-01.pdf>

¹⁴ Informal interviews were conducted between 1 – 15 April 2013 in Belgrade and Mostar, and via social networks on the 25th, 26th and 27th of April 2013

¹⁵ “63% građana - Kosovo je nezavisno.” *B92.News*, 4. March 2013 Available at: [25.4.2013] http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2013&mm=03&dd=04&nav_category=640&nav_id=692113

the failure and division of the international community, only a few authors are, however, dealing with the motivations of the main actor, Serbia, to support those structures, despite their harmful character. This thesis also aims to fill in this gap. Because of the harmful character of the parallel structures, I believe that the theory of irredentism,¹⁶ a theory which has not been tested in the context of Serbian policy toward Kosovo, can account for the initiation of the self-harmful foreign policy, as well as its change. By offering new theoretical grounds, this thesis aims to shed a different light on the nature of the Kosovo conflict and its possible solution.

Based on the literature of ethnic foreign policy and irredentism, this thesis argues that such foreign policy can be explained with a combination of two variables, domestic political competition, which can radicalise or deradicalise the policy and increase or decrease the support for the parallel structures, and international influence, which can directly or indirectly influence and constrain the policy. The main findings are that the support for the parallel structures in Kosovo from 1999-2008 can be best explained by the domestic political competition, which radicalised the political rhetoric to the extent the irredentist policy was possible. In this period, the international influence constrained the ethnic foreign policy only indirectly, through the establishment of a framework, in which the political elites could have manoeuvred. The change of support for the parallel structures, which is apparent in the period from 2008-2013, was possible because of the political competition with marginalised nationalist forces and the stronger influence of the international community, the EU in particular.

¹⁶ For example: Thomas Ambrosio: *"Irredentism: Ethnic Conflict and International Politics."* London: Praeger, 2001; Stephen Saideman and William Ayres: *"For kin or Country: xenophobia, nationalism, and war."* New York: Columbia University press, 2008

The thesis progresses as follows. In the first chapter, the irredentist conceptualisation is introduced, followed by a review of existing literature dealing with aggressive foreign policy. Later, based on the review of irredentist literature, two variables, domestic political competition and international influence, are introduced and problematized. In the next sub-chapter, the framework combining the two variables is introduced, followed by the research design and methodology section. The second, analytical, chapter is divided into sections which represent the two time periods, 1999-2008 and 2008-2013, in which the change of support is observed. In each time period the main factors, the two explanatory variables, are assessed. The conclusion provides summaries of the thesis findings and its further implications.

Chapter 1

The parallel institutions or structures of northern Kosovo are the network of administrative, political, security and public institutions financed by Belgrade to support the life of Kosovo Serbs, who had been subjected to revenge killings after the departure of the Serbian army in 1999.¹⁷ The puzzle, which lies at the heart of this thesis, is twofold. Although it might be understandable why Serbia wanted to hinder Kosovo statehood, it is puzzling **why Serbia supported such foreign policy which has harmful side effects**. The second part of the puzzle is the variable character of Belgrade's support for the structures in Northern Kosovo. Although previously constant, in early 2013, a major shift in support for the parallel structures occurred. What accounts for such variation? **How can we explain the recent dramatic shift in support by the political elites in Serbia?** It is important to find the answer to these questions, because the comprehension of the mechanisms and forces driving the initiation and variations in such policy not only broaden our understanding of the nature of the conflict, but also have further implications for adjustment of the international community's approaches.

Because of the apparent negative impact of the Serbian policy toward Kosovo, I argue that the theory of irredentism, which attempts to explain self-destructive foreign policies of states, has a certain explanatory power. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I explain the suitability and feasibility of the conceptualisation of the case of Northern Kosovo as the irredentist policy and try to demonstrate that the Serbian support for parallel structures is, indeed, a manifestation of irredentism, even though not in its classical form. Secondly, in the literature review, I provide different

¹⁷Human Rights Watch: "Abuses against Serbs and Roma in the new Kosovo" *HRW report*, August 1999
Available at: [25.05.2013] <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/kosov2/>

theories, which might explain the support and variation in support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo, as well as the limits of such theories. Finally, based on the review of irredentist literature, I provide my main argument, framework for analysis and used methodology.

1.1 The parallel structures in Kosovo

In 1990, the Serbian government abolished Kosovo's substantial autonomy in the Serbian new constitution and through various restrictive laws, which enabled the Serbian government to impose emergency measures on Kosovo's administrative unit, discriminatory arrangements were introduced. For example, almost 100,000 Albanians lost their jobs, Albanian political elites were replaced by Kosovo Serbs and Albanian newspapers and radio were banned.¹⁸ The most significant changes were introduced in the education system, banning Albanian language, history or music, introducing new, strictly Serbian curriculum.¹⁹ The non-violent response of the Kosovo Albanians was a creation of the shadow state or so-called parallel structures, which included "a loose conglomeration of educational and cultural institutions, health services, social assistance networks, political parties, local financial councils."²⁰ In addition, they included the elected government in exile. The parallel system became a symbol of Albanian peaceful resistance, financially supported solely by Albania and Kosovo Albanians.

¹⁸For example: Andrew March and Rudra Sil: *"The 'Republic of Kosova' (1989–1998) and the Resolution of Ethno-Separatist Conflict: Rethinking 'Sovereignty' in the Post-Cold War Era."* University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania, photocopy, 1999; Predrag Simić: *"The Kosovo and Metohija Problem and Regional Security in the Balkans."* Belgrade: Institute for International Politics, 1996

¹⁹Marc Sommers and Peter Buckland: "Parallel worlds: Rebuilding the education system in Kosovo." International Institute for Educational Planning. 2004, pp. 41

²⁰ Besnik Pula: "The emergence of the Kosovo "parallel state," 1988–1992." *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 798

Although right after the Kosovo war in 1999, the Serbian administration and Albanian parallel structures were replaced by a single international administration, the shadow state did not disappear from Kosovo. In the early months after the war, Serbian structures returned back to Kosovo. This time, however, it was them who created para-structures parallel to the international ones. They have represented the network of administrative, political and public institutions financed by Belgrade to maintain its presence in Kosovo and support the life of Kosovo Serbs. The structures include hospitals and health care facilities, schools and the University, administrative organs, which have paid pensions and allowances, judicial bodies and even Serbian police, who, however, operate out of uniform.²¹ In addition, the enclaves also received support in the form of tax free zones and free utility costs, especially after 2007. Although there were attempts to extend their operation throughout the whole of Kosovo, the structures have always been the strongest in the North of Kosovo, in municipalities of Leposavić, Zubin Potok, Zvečan and north of Kosovska Mitrovica municipality, where they literally are the only structures available to citizens.

Despite the harmful effects, Serbia has financially and politically supported the parallel structures since the end of the Kosovo war and establishment of the international administration in 1999. However, the support has not been consistent, but it has varied over time. As mentioned above, the financial support has already decreased in the last decade. For example, the double salaries, received by Kosovo Serbs increased in 2003, but were reduced to 1,5 in 2008.²² The political support has also varied in time and cannot be considered as consistent. For example from 2008, southern and eastern enclaves, which had always been more vulnerable to the integrational efforts of Pristina, started to receive less support. Belgrade focused all

²¹ International Crisis Group: "North Kosovo." *Europe Report*, N°211, 2011

²² Ibid.pp.6

its efforts on the North.²³ Another sign of support decline could be seen in 2011 when Serbia agreed to engage with Pristina in EU – led dialogue on technical issues, regarding, for example, border crossings in Northern Kosovo. This event was met with a violent response from the Kosovo Serbs in the North. The decreasing support had peaked in early 2013, when more political questions of destiny of Kosovo Serbs enclaves were discussed at the Pristina-Belgrade EU led-forum. The agreement envisages abolition of the parallel structures in exchange for extensive autonomy for Kosovo Serbs.

1.2 Conceptualisation

Despite the existence of vast literature on the role of the international community in the preservation of the parallel structures, as well as their documented bad influence on the Kosovo conflict, there are only a few scholars dealing with the puzzling question of Serbian motivation for supporting a shadow state for its ethnic kin in a neighbouring country. Because the support for the parallel structures gives Serbia de facto control over the territory of Northern Kosovo, I believe that conceptualizing the support for the parallel structures as an irredentist claim, although not in its classical form, allows us to understand and see the motivations and interests behind the policy more clearly.

Chazan defines irredentism as “the attempt by **one state to detach land and people from another** to achieve incorporation within its boundaries.”²⁴ Ambrosio defines irredentism as the “most extreme manifestation of nationalism, as it involves attempts to **annex the territory of another state** in order to protect its co-

²³For example: Vedran Džihic and Helmut Kramer: “Kosovo After Independence.” International Policy Analysis Fridrich Ebert Stiftung, July 2009, pp. 9 Available at: [25.05.2013] <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/06571.pdf>

²⁴ Naomi Chazan: “Irredentism and international politics.” Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. 1991

nationals.”²⁵ In similar spirit, Saideman and Ayres consider irredentism as the most damaging form of nationalism that bases its territorial claims on ethnic affiliations and ties to the ethnic minority group living in another state.²⁶ As can be seen, the definition of irredentism assumes the existence of two state units, the irredentist state and the state whose territory or a part of territory is in the scope of the aggressive foreign policy. In the case of Kosovo one can, therefore, question the applicability of this scope condition, because of Kosovo’s unfinished status and quasi statehood. As a result, one might also question whether we can consider the relations between Kosovo and Serbia as the relations of two countries with given and internationally accepted boundaries.

This thesis argues that, even though Kosovo is not a fully-fledged sovereign and independent state, the UN Security Council resolution 1244 from 1999,²⁷ and following international administration, was supposed to prepare Kosovo for a certain degree of independent self-governance. It took away all Serbian administrative and legislative competences over Kosovo, leaving it a de facto state-like unit. All interferences of Serbia on the territory of Kosovo were proclaimed illegal and parallel by the organs of the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and Pristina.²⁸ In addition, after the unilaterally proclaimed independence in 2008 more than a half of the United Nations (UN) member states have already recognised Kosovo as an independent state.²⁹ Within the framework of the UN 1244 resolution, Kosovo became a part of many regional organisations, such as the Central European Free Trade Agreement, the Regional Cooperation Council and the Southeast European

²⁵ Ambrosio: *“Irredentism: Ethnic Conflict and International Politics.”* 2001, pp.18

²⁶ Saideman and Ayres: *“For kin or Country: xenophobia, nationalism, and war.”* 2008

²⁷ The Security Council: *“Resolution 1244”*. 4011th meeting. 1999 Available at: [01.03.2013] <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/docu/u990610a.htm>

²⁸ Mikulas Fabry: *“The contemporary practice of state recognition: Kosovo, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and their aftermath.”* *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*. Vol. 40, No. 5, 2012

²⁹ Ibid. pp.667

Cooperation Initiative. In addition, in 2009, Kosovo was admitted through majority voting in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Although Serbia has refused to admit Kosovo's recognition and continues to claim it a part of Serbia, it also sees the necessity to maintain the special relation with Kosovo. It can hardly be considered a domestic policy, because it is diametrically different from the policies in Serbia's other autonomous region of Vojvodina.

There is a strong territorial dimension to irredentist foreign policy. The very nature of the irredentist policies is **annexing** or at least proclaiming the right to acquire part of **another state's territory** and to force the international community to recognize such an outcome and legitimize it. As defined by Horowitz, "irredentism involves subtracting from one state and adding to another state, new or already existing."³⁰ This fact distinguishes irredentism from other types of internationalised ethnic conflicts. The control over other state's territory can be done by various means. The majority of irredentist scholars maintain that the attempt at dismemberment of a neighbouring state must necessarily involve force. They consider truly irredentist policies as only those claims which have aggressive and violent character. These policies can range from military aid to the actual intervention on behalf of kin in another country.³¹ However, the scope does not have to be narrowed only to actual military operations. As Carment and James suggest, "any effort to interfere with or disrupt the internal affairs of the state constitutes

³⁰ Donald Horowitz, "Irredentas and Secessions: Adjacent Phenomena, Neglected Connections." In Karl Cordell and Stephen Wolff, eds.: *"The Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict."* New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011

³¹ David Carment and Patrick James: "Internal Constraints and Interstate Ethnic Conflict: Toward a Crisis-Based Assessment of Irredentism." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 1995, pp. 92; Myron Weiner: "The Macedonian Syndrome: An Historical Model of International Relations and Political Development." *World Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1971, pp. 665-683; Saideman and Ayres: *"For kin or Country."* 2008; Ambrosio: *"Irredentism."* 2001

intervention, including covert and overt activities.”³² This is because countries do not have to necessarily use military means to acquire control over the disputed territory. The non- military policies, such as substantial economic, financial and political support, which aim to interfere in the domestic policies of the targeted state and violate its territorial integrity and sovereignty, can be considered irredentist as well. To put it crudely, an outcome, in the form of control of a territory, is more important than the means used for its achievement. Although there are many other policies short of the irredentist one, such as support of the right to organise, dual citizenship and other policies which might be perceived as interventionist, their goal is not to assert full control over the territory in question, and therefore does not fit into the framework. These policies, however, often become an alternative way for full scale irredentism, as shown by Saideman and Ayres on the example of double citizenship for Hungarians living outside Hungary.³³

By financial and political support of the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo, Serbia effectively challenges the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kosovo and clearly intervenes in its domestic politics. Although not a military intervention, this form of support can be considered as an “aggressive effort to change boundaries in order to reunite lost kin,”³⁴ or in other words an irredentist policy, because it gives Serbia de facto control over the Northern Kosovo territory, mainly inhabited by ethnic Serbs. The Serbian parallel structures successfully managed to hinder the integration processes foreseen by the international community and Pristina. The Kosovo Serbs in the North follow Serbian law, use Serbian dinar and, as shown during the 2011

³² David Carment, Patrick James: Two-Level Games and Third-Party intervention: Evidence from Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans and South Asia. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. No.3, Sep. 1996, pp. 525

³³ Saideman and Ayres: *For kin or Country*. 2008, pp. 46

³⁴ *Ibid.* pp.1

protests, are willing to use force to defend their partition from Kosovo.³⁵ Thus, Serbia's financial and political support has given Belgrade de facto control over the territory of Northern Kosovo, even though Northern Kosovo is officially and de jure a part of Kosovo. Moreover, Serbia has attempted to legitimize its de facto control on various occasions. The idea of Kosovo partition and the attempts at official redrawing of the boundaries have already been made prior to the Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence, as well as after this event, though never accepted by the international community.³⁶

1.3 Existing Literature on the Ethnic Foreign Policy

The grand structural theories of international relations, such as realism, neo-realism or neo-liberalism, are unable to explain aggressive foreign policy, which has harmful consequences for the state itself. These theories presume the existence of the anarchical self-help system, in which the nation states are primary, rational actors with an interest in maximizing state security and welfare.³⁷ States, therefore, should not pursue policies which endanger their own security or alienate their allies. However, as has already been demonstrated in cases such as Armenia against

³⁵ NATO sends more troops to Kosovo after border unrest." *BBC News*. 2 August 2011 Available at: [11.3.2013] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14376424>; "KFOR commander warns against possible unrest." *B92 news*. 12. February 2012 Available at: [11.3.2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=02&dd=12&nav_id=78752;

³⁶ "Kosovo partition 'on the table'." *BBC news*. 12 August 2007. Available at: [9.4.2013] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6943442.stm>; "Serbia considers Kosovo partition." *BBC news*. 21. August 2006 Available at: [9.4.2013] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4784687.stm>; "Belgrade considers partition of Kosovo as violence spirals." *ABC news*. 20 March 2004 Available at: [9.4.2013] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2004-03-20/belgrade-considers-partition-of-kosovo-as-violence/154970>; Deutsche Welle: "Partition of Kosovo is unacceptable" *B92 news*. 10 August 2011 Available at: [9.4.2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2011&mm=08&dd=10&nav_id=75860; Ian Traynor: "Serbia asks UN for partitioning of Kosovo." *The Guardian*. 25 March 2008 Available at: 9.4.2013] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/mar/25/serbia.kosovo>

³⁷ For example: Hans J. Morgenthau: *"Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace."* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993; Kenneth N. Waltz: "Structural Realism after the Cold War." *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2000, pp. 5-41; John J. Mearsheimer: *"The Tragedy of Great Power politics."* New York: Norton, 2001; Stephen D. Krasner: *"International Regimes."* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995

Azerbaijan in the 1990s, and Somalia against Ethiopia in 1960s and 1970s, countries do indeed undertake apparently self-destructive missions, despite considerable material costs of these missions and consequent alienation of their allies. The ethnic security dilemma³⁸ of one group left in the country where security forces are completely in the hands of another ethnic group can explain the irredentist tendencies of Kosovo Serbs who wish to join Serbia; however, this does not explain the ethnic foreign policy behaviour of Serbia. This policy variation, in other words, cannot be explained by structural factors, because the position of Serbia within the international system, in terms of power, has not changed, nor have the constraints of the international community vis-à-vis Serbia. As a result, it is necessary to have a look at state level variables and particularly domestic politics.

The second image theories,³⁹ which attempt to explain the initiation of the self-harmful foreign policy, see the motivations for involvement in such foreign policy project either in affective or instrumental terms.⁴⁰ The affective or primordial approach toward ethnic foreign policy emphasises the role of emotions, ethnic kinship and national identity and assumes that ethnic divisions and hatred are natural and inherited. This approach would suggest that after the collapse of multi-ethnic state, such as Yugoslavia or the Russian Federation, the ancient hatred unbounded which led to mass support for the ethnic war.⁴¹ Because of the overwhelming outburst of emotions, countries get involved in aggressive foreign projects to protect

³⁸ Barry R. Posen: "The security dilemma and ethnic conflict." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 35, No.1, 1993

³⁹ Kenneth N. Waltz: "Man, the state, and war: a theoretical analysis." New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, chapter IV "The Second Image: *International Conflict and the Internal Structures of States*"

⁴⁰ For example: Astri Suhrke and Lela Garner Noble: "Spread or Containment?" In: "*Ethnic Conflict in International Relations*." New York: Praeger, 1977, pp. 213; Alexis Heraclides: "Secessionist minorities and external involvement." *International Organization*, Vol. 44. No. 3, 1990, pp 370; John A. Vasquez: *The War Puzzle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1993

⁴¹ For example: Alexis Heraclides: „The Self-Determination of Minorities.“ London: Frank Cass: 1991; William Bloom: "Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Bojana Blagojevic: "Causes of ethnic conflict: A conceptual framework." *Journal of Global Change and Governance*, Vol.3, No.1, 2009

their ethnic kin. The states are, therefore, seen as a means by which the ethnic groups can perform their policies.

Although this approach can explain the initiation of the aggressive foreign policy, if we take ethnic hatred as ingrained and unchangeable, we not only automatically doom any vision of multi-ethnic state, but can hardly explain the variation of possible targets of the aggressive foreign policy and variations observed over time. Although the ethnic ties and emotions might have been important factor in the decision to pursue a self-destructive foreign policy, it is not a sufficient explanation. Nationalism alone can hardly explain why Serbia, for example, supported only Northern Kosovars, but neglected the southern enclaves or Serbs living in the contested territory in Croatia, so-called Krajina Serbs. What is more, Serbian policy is not only selective, but also varies in time. One of the possible explanations could be that national identity can be changed either intentionally by manipulation or naturally in time.⁴² As constructivist scholars suggest, identity is not primordial and unchangeable, and therefore, can be modified by framing the Kosovo Serbs as different from the Serbs in Serbia. This, however, presumes a more instrumental usage of nationalism by political elites.

Scholars of the instrumentalist approach see the aggressive policy of the state more in terms of elitist project. The motivations of elites can be manifold, from corruption benefits to the increase in power.⁴³ As pointed out by scholars of conflict transformation or diversion, the support for the "unpopular leaders generate foreign policy crises to both divert the public's attention away from the discontent with their

⁴² For example: Stephen M. Saideman : "Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability Versus Ethnic Ties." *International Organization*. Vol.51, No.4, 1997; David D. Laitin: *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986; Donald Horowitz: *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985

⁴³ Chris van der Borgh: "Resisting International State Building in Kosovo." *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 59, No. 2, 2012, pp. 35

rule and bolster their political fortunes through a rally around the flag effect.”⁴⁴ Politicians try to divert the attention of the domestic audience from economic or political crises in the country with the nationalistic rhetoric to create an external enemy. Here, the nationalist appeal of elites is seen as an instrumental means for increasing political power, which can be manipulated and formed. Although initially used for the description of the hostile foreign policies of the American president, such as the Bush’s war on terrorism, this approach would regard the parallel structures and the Kosovo issue as a project of political elites, which can be used to divert the attention of the domestic audience from more pressing domestic issues.

Although this approach might explain the initiations and variance in the hostile foreign policy, the problem remains that the diversion theory causal path can go both ways. The theory of diversion presumes that the domestic audience will react to the nationalistic mobilisation positively, without any own real preferences.⁴⁵ However, as I argue in this thesis, it is rather the domestic audience which influences the kind of nationalism the elites will utilise. This approach combines the affective and instrumental motivations for the support, because it acknowledges the existence of the domestic nationalistic sentiment due to the historical salience of Kosovo in Serbian domestic politics, but at the same time takes into account its instrumental usage of nationalism by political elites to stay in power. The project of Serbia is therefore seen from the rational choice perspective, where domestic preferences define the political outcome. These scholars treat domestic political elites as rational actors, who “will consider what their supporters want, the threats posed to them by their competitors, and their own interests in maintaining power.”⁴⁶ The elite’s main

⁴⁴Jaroslav Tir: “Territorial Diversion: Diversionary Theory of War and Territorial Conflict.” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 72, No. 2, April 2010, pp. 413

⁴⁵Saideman: “Inconsistent irredentism?” 1998, pp. 60

⁴⁶Saideman and Ayres: “*For kin or Country*.” 2008, pp. 36

motivation is remaining in office or relative increase of power. Therefore, they try to make those decisions that will be appealing to their main constituencies. Because, voters can change their support, politicians, facing strong concurrence, are willing to pursue those interests, which are the most salient within their constituency.

The problem is that the relationship between the mass preferences and elites policies is not straightforward, but rather goes the way of mutual influence.⁴⁷ Political elites do not passively behave in accordance with the main preferences of the constituencies, but to mobilise or manipulate followers to achieve their main goals of power preservation and increase. As Carment shows, elites, in an attempt to optimize the results of competition, can appeal to the voters not only with instrumental, but more affective tools of ethno-nationalism.⁴⁸ When the competition is intense, and there are strong sentiments within the constituency, politicians appeal to their national identity, origins, symbols and other national myths to increase their popularity, manipulate their constituencies and siphon off popular support from their rivals. What Horowitz calls “ethnic outbidding”⁴⁹ can occur when the political competition is fierce, and there is an issue which has awakened the mass sentiment. Then, every relevant political actor⁵⁰ has to have a stance on it. This might lead to the radicalisation of the political rhetoric and actions, which can lead to the initiation of the irredentist foreign policy. Although this approach might seem deterministic, the process is highly contingent and depends on unpredictable shifts at the domestic and international level.

⁴⁷ Carment and James: “Internal Constraints and Interstate Ethnic Conflict.” 1995, pp. 90

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 83

⁴⁹ Horowitz: “*Ethnic groups in Conflict*”. 2000, pp. 357

⁵⁰ This thesis follows Sartori’s definition of the party relevance: “We must count all the parties that have either a governmental relevance [coalition potential] in the coalition-forming arena, or a competitive relevance in the oppositional arena [blackmailing potential]” In: Giovanni Sartori: “*Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*.” Colchester: ECPR Press, 2005, pp. 108

1.4 Inconsistent Irredentism

How does the literature of irredentism, based on rational choice, account for the variations in support for ethnic foreign policy? The core motivation underlying irredentist foreign policy derives from the domestic political system of irredentist states, a fact that is acknowledged by all authors dealing with the theory of irredentism. They, however, diverge as to what constrains such aggressive foreign policy. Authors, such as Gauze, Saideman, Saideman and Ayre, Horowitz, Carment and James, believe that the explanatory weight lies within the realm of domestic political competition and interaction between elites and masses, which either allow or constrain governments to pursue damaging foreign policy.⁵¹ On the other hand, scholars, such as Ambrosio, Vachudova, Schimmelfennig and Seidemeier, Grabbe and Sasse, assert that the international community plays a director role because it creates a window of opportunity or constrains governments from aggressive behaviour.⁵² Although the variables of both groups have certain important explanatory power, I argue that it is necessary to combine these two approaches to account for all variations.

The rational choice approach argues, that domestic variables can account also for the variations in this kind of foreign policy and emphasise the role of political competition in policy deradicalisation. As Saideman shows through the cases of Somalia and Serbia during the Milošević era, crucial constituencies are willing to

⁵¹ Rene Gauze: *"The politics of Congo-Brazzaville."* Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973; Saideman: "Inconsistent irredentism?" 1998; Saideman and Ayres: *"For kin or Country."* 2008; Horowitz: *"Ethnic groups in Conflict"*. 2000; Carment and James: "Internal Constraints and Interstate Ethnic Conflict." 1995

⁵² Ambrosio: *"Irredentism."* 2001, pp. 23; Milada Vachudova: *"Europe Undivided."* Oxford: Oxford University press. 2008, pp. 105-137; Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier: *"The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe."* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2005, pp. 29-50; Gwendolyn Sasse: "The politics of EU conditionality." *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 842-860; Heather Grabbe: *"The EU's transformative power."* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006

support irredentist policies abroad, until the costs of such policies exceed their perceived benefits. When the costs are high, constituencies allow politicians to change the course of action on the territory of their neighbour inhabited by their ethnic brethren and allow them to decrease the assistance for them.⁵³ Politicians, fearing the loss of support or sensing an opportunity to increase their power, deradicalise their policy and political rhetoric to satisfy their constituents. The costs can range from international actions, such as sanctions or delayed integration, to more domestic, deriving from the inclusion of additional citizens, who would become new competitors on the job market, state welfare or new supporters for certain political forces.⁵⁴

So, if the political competition is high, elites should be more responsive. If the voters perceive that the support for their ethnic brethren causes them more losses than benefits, they push for policy change. In the Serbian case, after 2008 the economic performance was slow and the situation deteriorated even more. Furthermore, the better economic performance was strongly connected with EU integration because, as it was believed, integration brings access to structural funds and allows a country to attract foreign investments easier. One would, therefore, presume that Serbian citizens preferred “cheaper” policies which, opted for fast integration track and allowed elites to decrease the support for the parallel structures. In fact, this is what actually happened. However, interestingly, although the perceived losses were high, unemployment and bad economic performance were highlights of the 2012 elections, 65% of Serbian citizens would rather give up EU integration⁵⁵ than Kosovo. At the same time, as demonstrated in Figure 1, support for EU

⁵³ Saideman: “Inconsistent irredentism?” 1998, pp. 64

⁵⁴ Gauze: “*The politics of Congo-Brazzaville.*” 1973, pp.67; Horowitz: “Ethnic Groups in Conflict.” 2000, pp. 284

⁵⁵ “63% građana - Kosovo je nezavisno.” *B92 News*. 4. March 2013 Available at: [25.4.2013]

http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2013&mm=03&dd=04&nav_category=640&nav_id=692113

integration project had a decreasing character. Furthermore, even after the previous pro-EU government lost their support in the election of 2012, the new government continued in the integrational policy and went even further and radically decreased support in April 2013. The fact that the salience of the Kosovo issue in the domestic politics of Serbia has not changed, but the irredentist policy of Serbia has changed, suggests that there are also other constraints on Serbian ethnic policy than domestic politics and the pre-given preferences of voters.

The other main strand of scholarship asserts that it is the international community which creates a structural framework in which domestic government can manoeuvre. This broad set of arguments suggests that states, and more precisely political elites, adjust the policy facing high cost introduced by the international community, ranging from economic sanctions to hindered Euro-Atlantic integration, and rather refrain from irredentist policies.⁵⁶ Though attitudes of the international community play an important role in elites' decision on the form and extent of irredentism, the empirical evidence from Croatia, Somalia or Serbia shows that elites concerned with self-preservation tend to pursue aggressive policies despite international pressure.⁵⁷ In fact, the international community's reactions rather constrain domestic elites by establishing a framework in which they can manoeuvre.

How the international community can constraint the violent or harmful foreign policy of the state can be found in the work of Vachudova, Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier, Sasse and Grabbe.⁵⁸ They believe that the international community, through the international organisations' accession process, can influence states through so-called "conditionality." Because countries wish to join the institutions for

⁵⁶ Ambrosio: *"Irredentism."* 2001, pp. 23

⁵⁷ Saideman: "Inconsistent irredentism?" 1998; Ambrosio: *"Irredentism."* 2001

⁵⁸ Vachudova: *"Europe Undivided."* 2008, pp. 105-137; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier: *"The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe."* In: Inhaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2005, pp. 29-50; Sasse: "The politics of EU conditionality: 2009, pp. 842-860; Grabbe: *"The EU's transformative power."* 2006

various reasons, ranging from more instrumental reasons, such as economic and security enhancements, to the more identity based motivations, such as “back to Europe” movement during the 1990s, it is believed that they adjust their domestic policies and ease tense neighbourly relations. The conditionality works on a stick (coercion) and carrot (incentive) strategy, whereby the international organisations set conditions which candidate countries have to meet in order to receive the promised reward. Conditionality operates on cost- benefit calculations, and therefore it works only if the perceived benefits exceed the perceived political costs of following the new policy. Other factors that influence the success of the conditionality are the credibility of the international organisation commitments, asymmetrical relations between the applicants and the organisation, and clear and unambiguous conditions with a serious threat of benefit withdrawal in the case of non-compliance.⁵⁹ If it is successful, the international community can pressure the country to deradicalise its policies.

As can be observed, parallel institutions in Kosovo have been in place since 1999 and neither changed after the lift of economic embargo in 2000,⁶⁰ nor had any major change occurred after the particular stages of the EU accession process had begun. The particular change, however, could be noted after the change of the pro-EU government, which suggests that the additional condition for proper functioning of conditionality is a favourable domestic environment in the conditioned state. The major changes in Serbia’s support for the parallel structures, however, occurred after Serbia received candidacy status and the starting date of accession negotiation was

⁵⁹ Tina Freyburg.: “National identity matters: the limited impact of EU political conditionality in the Western Balkan.” 2010, pp. 1; Frank Schimmerfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier: “Governance by Conditionality.” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2004, pp. 673; Frank Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert, Heiko Knobel: “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 41. No 3., 2003, pp. 495–518

⁶⁰ ICG: “Sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” Washington/Brussels, 10 October 2000 Available at: [16.4.2013] <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/Serbia%2013.pdf>

approaching. Determination of the starting date for accession negotiations could symbolise greater commitment of the EU toward Serbia, which increased the functioning of the conditionality.

1.5 Argument of the thesis

As noted in the literature review, harmful irredentist foreign policy of the state and its changes can mainly be explained by the domestic political competition or influence of the international community. However, as indicated, none of these approaches can account for all variations alone. This thesis argues that the Serbian irredentist policy and variation in it can be explained only by combination of the two levels, domestic and international in a meaningful way.

This thesis presumes that **the initiation** and support for the irredentist policy of Serbia in Northern Kosovo, such as from 1999-2008, can be understood as a product of the domestic political competition. When the political competition is high, parties and political elites become more responsive to the preferences of their constituencies in order to stay in power. The high competition means that there is an alternative for the electorate to vote upon and change their support. The direction and issues during the election campaign depends on the nature and political ideology of challengers. If there is particularly strong nationalist preference in the constituency or if the successful challenger has a nationalist agenda, the endangered elites are expected to follow suit. This leads to the radicalisation of policy or even outbidding, which have an important influence on the form of irredentist policy. The intensity of the policy cannot be, however, fully explained only by the domestic variables. Although indirectly, the irredentist policy is also constrained by the international

influence in the form of policy tolerance, which limits the policy options and creates the framework in which elites can manoeuvre.

Regarding the deradicalisation of policy, or policy change, such as the one noted from 2008-2013, this can be seen as an attempt of domestic political elites to reconcile the two foreign preferences of its selectorate, Serbian Kosovo and high standard of living, which could be obtained only with the help of international actors. If these two preferences are directly opposing, elites have to play the so-called two level game which attempts to appease international, as well as the domestic audience. The international community can directly influence or constrain the irredentist policy through conditionality. It sets priorities and conditions, which would otherwise be avoided by domestic elites due to their sensitivity. However, for its proper functioning, the condition has to be accepted by domestic elites first, because they are the holders of power and the main decision makers. If the conditions are not accepted by domestic elites, the international pressure can even have radicalising influence. For example, domestic elites can utilize the conditions contradicting their interests to awaken the anti-EU/NATO sentiment and gain additional political points.

1.6 Research Design

This thesis utilizes a qualitative research design, which aims to assess the power of my independent variables, domestic political competition and international influence to explain my dependent variable, the change of support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo. In order to measure the influence of the domestic political competition from 1999-April 2013 on the change of support, that is increase or decrease of support, this thesis employs qualitative content analysis of various sources, such as election programmes, newspaper articles from the BBC Monitoring database and secondary literature. The main concentration is before important

events, such as elections parliamentary and presidential in 2000, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2012, violent riots in Kosovo in 2004, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008 and the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Kosovo independence case. The search is concentrated mainly on the signs of radicalisation or deradicalisation of political rhetoric. If the rhetoric radicalises, and so does the actual policy, then the political competition is mostly responsible for the policy. If the rhetoric is neutral or ambiguous then the political competition can have an influence, but so might have the other independent variable, international influence. There is no option in which domestic policy does not have any influence.

In order to measure the variable of international influence, primarily the influence of the EU, the thesis engages in analysis of primary documents, such as the Commissions' enlargement strategic documents and various communications from 1999 until April 2013. Important part consists of the different reports from status talks and subsequent technical negotiations between Serbian and Kosovo, as well as secondary literature dealing with Europeanization and conditionality functioning in Serbia. The international community's influence is expected to be twofold. Indirectly, it limits the range of acceptable options. Directly, it can have influence through its pre-accession conditionality. To assess whether the foreign policy decisions of the elites are influenced by the international pressure or domestic variables, one has to take into account the public opinion on certain policy and "stick and carrots" offered by the international community at the same time. If the elites comply with the condition despite opposite public opinion, the international community is expected to have stronger influence.

Chapter 2

As shown above, the Serbian Kosovo policy, in form of support for the parallel structures, had varied greatly from its initiation in 1999 until the groundbreaking agreement from April 2013. This analytical section is divided into two parts which present time periods denoting the fundamental changes in the Kosovo approach. The first time period from 1999-2008 is characteristic of marginal changes in support for the parallel structures, the second time period from 2008-2013 experienced moderate decrease and dramatic drop of support in the end. Each part provides an overview of the different policies of Serbian governments to identify the changes and subsequently, it analyses the factors that contributed most to the change of the support. As showed in the literature review, the possible independent variables, which can change the support for irredentist policy, are domestic political competition and international pressure. Therefore, the analysis concentrates on these two variables and examines how the domestic political competition and international pressure possibly influenced the changes in support for the Serbian irredentist policy.

2.1 Serbia's Irredentism: 1999-2008

The reversed killings and ethnic cleansing of Serbs in Kosovo, after the forced departure of the Serbian army, and massive reshuffling of the Serbian population to the North of Kosovo and to the enclaves in the central and southern parts, had important influence on Serbia's policy toward Kosovo. The Serbian administration returned back to Kosovo in late 1999, creating the expensive and harmful parallel structures, which included administrative offices, healthcare and education facilities, courts, and even police and parallel security forces, such as the so-called "bridge

watchers” in north Mitrovica.⁶¹ The structures, financed and supported directly from the budgets of the respective Serbian Ministries, such as Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior, became the only fully functioning structures in Northern Kosovo and partly in the southern enclaves, effectively dividing Kosovo. Although considered illegal by Kosovo Albanians, but partially tolerated by the international community, the parallel structures were welcomed by the Kosovo Serbs and Serbian public.

Despite the change in government in Belgrade in 2000, the actual policy toward Kosovo diverged only slightly from the Milošević one. The Yugoslav Committee for Kosovo and Metohija, was established whose “function was to maintain the Serbian state’s presence in Kosovo and provide a link between the population and the government in Belgrade.”⁶² The committee, however, became the only pro forma organisation with negligible budget and competences, widely considered to be unsatisfactory. After the insurgences in Preševo Valley in 2001, the so-called the Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija (CCK), was founded. The new head of the center, Nebojša Čović, who attempted to find a functioning agreement with the international administration and supported Serb integration into Kosovo society, broadened the extent of the parallel structures beyond the Northern municipalities, such as in Gjilan region and Pristina.⁶³ The parallel structures remained the primary source of employment for Kosovo Serbs when in Kosovo was unemployment rate approximately 90-95%. Receiving double salaries, only a few

⁶¹ OSCE mission in Kosovo: “Parallel Structures in Kosovo.” Department of the Human Rights and Rule of Law Report, October 2003, pp. 5-7

⁶² ICG: “Serb Integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge.” Crisis Group Europe Report N°200, 12 May 2009 Available at: [4.5.2013] http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/200_serb_integration_in_kosovo_taking_the_plunge.pdf

⁶³ ICG: “Collapse in Kosovo.” ICG Europe Report N°155, 22 April 2004 Available at: [4.5.2013] http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/155_collapse_in_kosovo_revised.pdf

Kosovo Serbs had an incentive to seek further integration with Pristina.⁶⁴ Using their influence, Belgrade called for the boycott of the Kosovo local election, and encouraged the Kosovo Serb participation in Serbian general elections, which helped to preserve the link with Serbia, but were deemed illegal by the international community.

As a result of the 2003 elections in Serbia, Kosovo policy fell into the hands of the Democratic Party of Serbia with a rather radical nationalist stance on Kosovo.⁶⁵ Despite the 2004 Kosovo riot, which left 19 killed, many injured, and over 4100 Serbs and other non-Albanian minorities forced to flee to the North or out of Kosovo,⁶⁶ **the political and financial support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo remained relatively consistent with the previous governments**, which preferred the segregation of the communities. The idea of partition became more pronounced and articulated on various occasions by Prime Minister Koštunica.⁶⁷ For example, building on the notion that the riots showed the failure of the international attempts to create a multi-ethnic state in Kosovo, the then Prime Minister Koštunica proposed, in the so-called "Plan for the Political Solution to the Situation in Kosovo and Metohija," territorial autonomy for Kosovo Serbs and reduction of the Kosovo government interference on this territory.⁶⁸ This plan was in line with Belgrade's policy, which attempted to strengthen the dependency of the Northern Kosovars on the parallel structures and prepare such territorial arrangements, which would, at worst, give Serbs full autonomy in Kosovo or split the Northern part of Kosovo and annex it to

⁶⁴ ICG: "Kosovo's Ethnic Dilemma: The Need for a Civic Contract." ICG Balkans Report N°143, 28 May 2003, pp.5 Available at: [4.5.2013] <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/Kosovo%20143.pdf>

⁶⁵ der Borgh: "Resisting International State Building in Kosovo." 2012, pp. 33

⁶⁶ "Kosovo: Failure of NATO, U.N. to Protect Minorities." ⁶⁶ *Human Rights Watch Report*, 25 July 2004 Available at: [8.4.2013] <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2004/07/25/failure-protect>

⁶⁷ ICG: "Kosovo: Toward Final Status." Crisis Group Europe Report N°161, 24 January 2005, pp. 5 Available at: [4.5.2013] http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/161_kosovo_toward_final_status.pdf

⁶⁸ The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia: "Plan for the Political Solution to the Situation in Kosovo and Metohija." 29 April 2004 Available at: [4.5.2013] <http://www.cpi.hr/download/links/hr/11175.pdf>

Serbia.⁶⁹ Such policy was in line with the public opinion, because, for example, in 2005, only approximately 4% of Serbian citizens favoured Kosovo independence while 80% insisted on the premises that Kosovo should stay in Serbia and almost or favoured the partition of Kosovo along ethnic lines.⁷⁰

In 2005, the Belgrade-Kosovo negotiations started, led by the UN envoy Ahtisaari. The so-called status talks were supposed to find the solution for the Kosovo's status and decide whether Kosovo become independent or stay a part of Serbia. Yet, the end of the talks did not bring solution only disappointment for both sides, which insisted on the diametrically opposing stances without a sign of compromise. Following the talks, the Serbian parliament unanimously passed the new Serbian Constitution, which included a phrase that "Kosovo is an autonomous province of Serbia with significant autonomy,"⁷¹ which made any possible steps toward recognition of Kosovo unconstitutional. The Constitution was later confirmed by the referendum on October 2006, which is a clear hint that the public approved such steps. According to Center for Free Elections and Democracy, more than 96% of voting citizens approved the new Constitution.⁷²

The government policy of Kosovo Serb segregation and de facto partition even increased in 2007 when the parallel structures, in addition to the administrative and other structures, also encompassed "offices, telecommunication towers, permanent energy facilities (transformer stations), underground telecommunication optical fibre cables, and others. Entities involved in this new

⁶⁹ ICG: "Serbia's U-Turn." ICG Europe Report N°154, 26 March 2004, p.14- 15 Available at: [6.5.2013]
[http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/154_serbia_s_u_turn.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/154_serbia_s_u_turn.pdf)

⁷⁰ Judy Batt: "The question of Serbia." Institute for Security Studies, *Chaillot paper*, No. 81, Paris, August 2005, pp. 46

⁷¹ Constitution of the Republic of Serbia: Preamble. 29. April 2006 Available at: [6.5.2013]
http://www.srbija.gov.rs/cinjenice_o_srbiji/ustav.php?change_lang=en

⁷² "Clinging to Kosovo." *Spiegel International*, 30 October 2006 Available at: [26.5.2013]
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/clinging-to-kosovo-serbia-passes-new-constitution-a-445401.html>

construction included Serbian Post and Telecommunications (PTT), all three Serbian operators of mobile telephony (MTS, Mobtel, and VIP), and some smaller commercial undertakings.⁷³ The increase of support for the parallel structures equally decreased the incentives for Kosovo Serbs to pursue any integration with Pristina. These new structures were also considered as illegal and parallel to those deployed by the international community.⁷⁴

After the Kosovo unilateral proclamation of independence in February 2008, Belgrade, in its Action Plan to combat Kosovo's independence and statements by the Minister for Kosovo and Metohija, proclaimed its intentions to strengthen the grip on the four northern municipalities inhabited by Serbs and called for the partition along ethnic lines.⁷⁵ Governmental reaction was very tough, but reflected the public opinion. In early 2008, 71% of citizens proclaimed that Kosovo has to remain a part of Serbia.⁷⁶ Parliament passed resolution according to which Serbia would take back ambassadors from countries which had recognised independent Kosovo and instructed Kosovo Serbs to disengage with Pristina and newly established EU rule of law mission's (EULEX) institutions. **The support remained relatively high until the change of pro-Western government in May 2008.**

2.1.1 Domestic Politics

As shown in ethnic foreign policy literature and irredentism literature reviewed in the literature review, domestic political competition has strong influence on the

⁷³ Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia: "UNMIK Document Reveals Serb(ian) efforts to divide Kosovo." 15. November 2008 Available at: [6.5.2013] http://www.helsinki.org.rs/kosovo_t06.html

⁷⁴ ICG: "North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice." 2011, pp.13

⁷⁵ Dan Bilefsky: "Serbia Formally Proposes Ethnic Partition of Kosovo." *The New York Times*. 25 March 2008 Available at: [19.5 2013] http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/25/world/europe/25kosovo.html?_r=0; Ian Traynor: "Serbia asks UN for partitioning of Kosovo.", *The Guardian*. 25 March 2008 Available at: [19.5 2013] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/mar/25/serbia.kosovo>

⁷⁶ Gallup Balkan Monitor: "Focus On Kosovo's Independence." July 2010, pp.5 Available at: [27.5 2013] http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/files/Gallup_Balkan_Monitor-Focus_On_Kosovo_Independence.pdf

initiation, as well as radicalisation of the harmful foreign policy. The same can be demonstrated on the 2000 general election. In previous years, Milošević's Socialist had been losing precious percentages to the opposition, to radical nationalist and pro-western oriented parties in particular.⁷⁷ In addition, just before the initiation of the Serbian administration return to Kosovo, the opinion polls showed a sharp drop of 20% in support for Milošević.⁷⁸ The initiation of such harmful policy, immediately after the war, can, therefore, be understood as a Milošević's attempt to resurrect his popular support. This assumption can be backed by Milošević's election campaign, which appealed to his supporters with nationalist rhetoric which was supposed to echo the popular sentiment nourished by the unfinished territorial dispute in Kosovo and NATO bombing, perceived as unfair and illegal.⁷⁹ The failure of the NATO led Kosovo Force (KFOR) to protect the ethnic Serbs against retaliation in early 1999, boosted the popular support for nationalist politicians, who asserted "the need for Serbia to retain control of Kosovo as the only means of guaranteeing security."⁸⁰

Despite the structure of Milošević authoritarian regime, the political competition was relatively high, because Milošević's rein was truly imperilled by the popular opposition. The main challengers became the broad coalition of 18 pro-democratic, anti-Milošević parties under the banners of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS), which included nationalists, liberals, the radicals, as well as moderate opposition. Their presidential candidate became the conservative populist, popular

⁷⁷ Florian Bieber: "The Serbian Opposition and Civil Society: Roots of the Delayed Transition in Serbia." *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2003, pp. 77; Gordana Andrić: "Serbian Presidential Elections Since 1990." *Balkan Insight*. 1 April 2012 Available at: [27.5 2013] <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-presidential-elections-since-1990>

⁷⁸ "Serbia 2000 election watch." National Democratic Institute, 11 September 2000, pp. 2 Available at: [27.5 2013] http://www.ndi.org/files/1071_yu_2000electwatch.pdf

⁷⁹ Mladen Lazić and Slobodan Cvejić: "Class and Values in Postsocialist Transformation in Serbia." *International Journal of Sociology*, vol. 37, no. 3, Fall 2007, pp.65

⁸⁰ der Borgh: "Resisting International State Building in Kosovo." 2012, pp. 36

among voters, Vojislav Koštunica.⁸¹ Due to the strong nationalist rhetoric initiated by Milošević, as an endangered elite,⁸² opposition parties had to follow suit and engage in the outbidding. For example, Koštunica appealed to the voters with anti-Milošević rhetoric, accusing him in revenge from “bringing foreign troops to Kosovo and the Serb lands.” He promised to “rid Serbia of any such foreign influence,”⁸³ therefore, he played the Milošević nationalist card, which attracted the sentiment of voters, disappointed with Milošević policies causing crippling economic sanctions and decreased standards of living.⁸⁴

Despite winning the elections with large majority, the competitive pressure did not cease after the election. The new government, in order to consolidate the power, had to first of all make a deal with the key players and proponents of the previous regime, which had monopoly over the use of forces, such as army, security apparatus and paramilitaries. The deal included a promise to stop any allegations or extraditions of criminals to The Hague.⁸⁵ Although it did not have direct effect on Serbian Kosovo policy, it allowed some political elites and the so-called war lords to continue to participate in high politics without persecution. The presence of the old regime spoilers caused ruptures in coalition. The consequent lack of extraditions to The Hague, required for further international financial assistance and EU integration, effectively prevented quick transition, democratic consolidation of the state overcast by corruption and consequently it limited the economic performance of Serbia.⁸⁶ As a

⁸¹ Bieber: “The Serbian Opposition and Civil Society.” 2003, pp. 78-79

⁸² Slobodan Milošević: “President’s address to the nation.” Belgrade, 2 October 2000 Available at: [20.5.2013] <http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/spch-oc2000.htm>

⁸³ BBC Monitoring: “Presidential runner slams Milosevic for letting NATO into Serb lands.” Source: Beta news agency, Belgrade, 19. September 2000; BBC monitoring: “Kostunica accuses Milosevic of being NATO hireling.” HINA news agency, Zagreb, 4 October 2000

⁸⁴ Gary Dempsy: “Who Toppled Milosevic?” *Cato Institute*. 2006 Available at: [20.5.2013] <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/who-toppled-milosevic>

⁸⁵ Jelena Subotic: “Explaining Difficult States : The Problems of Europeanization in Serbia” *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2010, pp. 609

⁸⁶ ICG: “Serbia’s U-Turn.” 2004, p.8

result, the continuance of the low standard of living and realisation of the impact of the reforms on the constituencies, such as manual workers, pensioners and farmers, gave rise to the popularity of anti-reformist parties,⁸⁷ such as the radicals of Šešelj, a nationalist agitator, war crime indictee and advocate of the Greater Serbia and ethnically clean Kosovo.⁸⁸

In the 2003 pre-election campaign, Šešelj's Radical Party of Serbia (SRS) not only supported a strong hand Kosovo policy, and rejected any cooperation with the international community and the EU, but also concentrated on more general social issues,⁸⁹ because as suggested by the polls, there were 15% more people in 2003 claiming that their standards of living had decreased than in 2000 and this number had grown every half a year.⁹⁰ Šešelj's party was able to secure a plurality of seats in the National Assembly after the 2003 parliamentary elections, which were considered free and fair with high competition by the international observers.⁹¹ Koštunica, as threatened elite, behaved according to the predictions and, in order to stay in power, he abandoned his pro-reformist coalition and appealed to voters, now as the leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia, with populist and nationalist rhetoric, opposing extraditions to The Hague and restating his strong position toward Kosovo as a part of Serbia on every occasion. Even though Koštunica did not win the elections, he managed to put the ultra nationalists into opposition and became Prime Minister with the controversial support of Socialists in March 2004. After the Kosovo riots in 2004,

⁸⁷ Lazič and Cvejič: "Class and Values in Postsocialist Transformation in Serbia." 2007, pp.59

⁸⁸ Marija Ristic: "Vojislav Seselj." *BalkanInsight* . 15. March 2012 Available at: [6.5.2013]
<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vojislav-seselj-fallen-leader-of-the-great-serbia>

⁸⁹ BBC Monitoring: "Agency details new alliances on Serbian political scene ahead of 28 Dec election." Beta news agency, Belgrade, 26 November 03

⁹⁰ Judy Batt: "Serbia on the eve of elections." Institute for Security Studies, 2 November 2003 Available at:
[26.5.2013] <http://www.iss.europa.eu/fr/publications/detail-page/article/serbia-on-the-eve-of-elections/>

⁹¹ OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: Parliamentary Elections – 28 December 2003 Republic of Serbia (Serbia and Montenegro) OSCE/ ODIHR Final Report Available at: [20.5.2013]
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/serbia/24521>

during which many Kosovo Serbs had to leave their homes,⁹² which resonated strongly among Serbian voters⁹³ and once again awakened national sentiment, Koštunica, facing strong opposition from the Radicals, radicalised his rhetoric, increased support for the parallel structures and proposed policies which favoured segregation of ethnic communities in Kosovo. For example, in March 2004 he asserted in front of the National Assembly that “a multi-ethnic paradise is a utopia ... I can see no other way [than substantial decentralization] for Albanians and Serbs to live together in Kosovo.”⁹⁴

In 2004, Boris Tadić, the new leader of the Democratic Party after the assassination of Đinđić, was able to win the presidential elections in 2004, defeating the radical candidate Tomislav Nikolić who proclaimed during the campaign that he “would oppose diplomatic relations with Croatia until the Serbian border was settled along the Karlovac-Karlobag-Virovitica-Ogulin line.” and that he was “ready for the return of the Serbian police and army to Kosovo, even if it meant armed confrontation.”⁹⁵ Tadić, unable to escape the Kosovo issue, in the context of the anti-Serb riots in Kosovo, was, at least, able to position himself as reconciliatory, who is able to persuade the international community to make concessions. Before the Kosovo elections, unlike the rest of the government and political elites, Tadić appealed to Kosovo Serbs to participate in elections in exchange for the quasi legitimisation of Belgrade’s “decentralisation plan,” de facto partition, by the international community.⁹⁶ Although Kosovo Serbs, under the influence of

⁹² “Kosovo: Failure of NATO, U.N. to Protect Minorities.”⁹² *Human Rights Watch Report*, 25 July 2004 Available at: [8.4.2013] <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2004/07/25/failure-protect>

⁹³ “March 2004 Kosovo riots anniversary.” *B92 News*, 17 March 2007 Available at: [28.4.2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2007&mm=03&dd=17&nav_id=40179

⁹⁴ Sasha Grubanovic: “Belgrade's Push for Decentralization.” *Transitions Online* .Belgrade, 4 May 2004

⁹⁵ ICG: “Serbia's U-Turn.” 2004, p.5

⁹⁶ BBC Monitoring: “Serbian president defends decision to support Kosovo elections.” *Radio B92*, 11. October 2004; ICG: “Kosovo: Toward Final Status.” 2005, pp.17

Koštunica's DSS, refused to participate, Tadić managed to gain additional political points and with a thin majority won the elections. Although a president, because of the power division and institutional constraints, Tadić was unable to influence the direction of Serbian irredentist policy. The results of the presidential elections, however, showed the deep division and schizophrenia of the Serbian electorate between EU integration, which was still connected with high standard of living and political reforms, and nationalist agenda.

The Kosovo status negotiation led by the UN envoy Ahtisaari from 2005, re-sparked national sentiment in Serbia, eventuating in the adoption of a highly controversial Constitution, which included Kosovo as an autonomous province of Serbia. In 2005, almost 80% of citizens favoured the solution in which Kosovo would stay as part of Serbia or be partitioned and annexed to Serbia,⁹⁷ therefore, there was only a little surprise that the new Constitution was approved in referendum.

The Kosovo issue also played a major role in the 2007 parliamentary elections, due to the unsuccessful status talks and the proposed Ahtisaari plan, which suggested controlled independence for Kosovo. In addition, according to the pre-election polls, the Radicals became even stronger than in previous election, stealing supporters from other parties.⁹⁸ Due to the high political competition and fear of losing their offices, threatened elites, such as Koštunica and Dačić, responded with similar radicalised rhetoric such as "Serbia could go to war over Kosovo again" and condemning the international community from occupation.⁹⁹ This radicalised rhetoric,

⁹⁷ Batt: "The question of Serbia." 2005, pp. 46

⁹⁸ Ian Traynor: "Nationalists triumph in Serbian elections." *Guardian*. 22 January 2007 Available at: [28.5.2013] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jan/22/balkans>; "Serbian Radical Party wins the 2007 elections with 28%." *EUTimes*. 30 January 2007 Available at: [28.5.2013] <http://www.eutimes.net/2007/01/serbian-radical-party-wins-the-2007-elections-with-28/>

⁹⁹ BBC Monitoring "Radicals: Pre-election games." Beta's Beta Week service, Belgrade, 7 December 2006

later translated into increased efforts to de facto separate the territory inhabited by ethnic Serbs.

The question of Kosovo played an important role prior to the May 2008 election, because the earlier unilateral proclamation of its independence and the controversy over whether European integration can resume without Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia dashed the previous DSS-DS-G17+ coalition in March 2008. The political competition was relatively high, and Koštunica could feel especially threatened, because opinion polls indicated a massive loss of support,¹⁰⁰ which could explain the radicalisation of Kosovo policy at the beginning of 2008. The polls also showed that the most popular political platform were once again the Radicals with anti-EU and anti-Kosovo rhetoric. Koštunica, therefore, diverted from any moderate stances and progressively became more radical and anti-European, especially after 22 EU member states recognised Kosovo. This increasingly led to the connection of the Kosovo discussions with the other foreign policy priority, the EU integration. The position of political parties on Kosovo was basically very similar, but they differed on the EU issue. Whether nationalist, populist or democrats, all parties had to oppose the Kosovo's independence and expressed their support for Kosovo Serbs in order to hope for re-election. For example, during the peaceful protest sponsored by government, Koštunica and Nikolić held inflammatory speeches, stating, that "Kosovo – that is the first name of Serbia. Kosovo belongs to Serbia. Kosovo belongs to the Serbian people. So it has always been. So it will always be," and "if there isn't Kosovo, then there isn't Serbia."¹⁰¹ Even moderate President Tadić, in order not to lose popular support, had to engage in radicalisation of the rhetoric. He reiterated

¹⁰⁰ Marko Stojic: "Europe and Serbian Parliamentary Elections 2008." Sussex European Institute, 2008 Available at: [20.5 2013] <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=epern-election-briefing-no-50.pdf&site=266>

¹⁰¹ ICG: "Will the Real Serbia Please Stand Up?" Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°49, 23 April 2008 Available at: [20.5 2013] http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/b49_will_the_real_serbia_please_stand_up.pdf

that "Serbia will never recognize Kosovo and Metohija's independence,"¹⁰² and attended a meeting with international officials to thank them for non-recognition of Kosovo.

2.1.2 International Influence

The international presence in Kosovo constrained the range of policies Serbian elites could deploy "not to give up Kosovo" and effectively excluded any Serbian military presence. Although irredentism is considered as self-destructive, the military intervention would necessarily provoke immediate international reaction, which Serbia had experienced during the Kosovo war. For instance, cleansing of Kosovo Serbs in 2004 riots or unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence in 2008 provoked violent demonstrations across Serbia, calling government to react. In fact, one of the Belgrade demonstrations was directly attended by the then Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica with his impassioned speech about the necessity to protect Kosovo Serbs.¹⁰³ Despite the pressure, however, he refused to get involved militarily in the area, fearing NATO response.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the international community, indeed, set a framework in which Serbian political elites could manoeuvre and limited the range of policy options.¹⁰⁵ Despite this indirect influence, more direct one, in terms of effective conditionality, is, however, questionable. Although the foreign assistance and financial aid has always been conditional on the fulfilment of certain

¹⁰²"Serbia annuls Kosovo independence declaration." *B92 News*. 17 February 2008 Available at: [20.5.2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=17&nav_id=47781

¹⁰³ Vojislav Kostunica: "We cannot exist without Kosovo, Serbian premier tells Belgrade demonstrators." *RTS TV*, Belgrade, 18 Mar 2004 In: BBC Summary of World Broadcasts

¹⁰⁴ Zoran Cirjakovic: "17 Killed as Rioting Spreads Through Kosovo and Belgrade." *Los Angeles Times*. 18 March 04 Available at: 28.5.2013] <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/mar/18/world/fg-kosovo18>

¹⁰⁵ More on why the international community tolerates the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo see: Chris van der Borgh: "Resisting International State Building in Kosovo." *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 59, No. 2, 2012; Gezim Visoka and Grace Bolton: "The Complex Nature and Implications of International Engagement after Kosovo's Independence." *Civil Wars*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 205; Alexandros Yannis: "Kosovo Under International Administration." *Survival*. Vol. 43, No. 2, 2001, pp. 31-48;

criterion, the international community had always used more carrots than sticks, which might undermine the functioning of the conditionality.

The most relevant institutions which might have an impact on the domestic policies of Serbia are NATO and the EU, because Serbia became a member state of other organisations, such as the Council of Europe or OSCE, earlier on and, as acknowledged, for example, by Vachudova or Grabbe, the leverage of the international organisation is stronger before the actual accession.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, although Serbia joined the NATO Partnership for Peace in 2005, due to the domestic situation, historic experience with NATO, close partnership with Russia and perceived NATO support of Kosovo's independence, the NATO integration was not a foreign policy priority of Serbian government.¹⁰⁷ The public support for the NATO membership had ranged from its peak of 22% in early 2003 to 13% in 2005 and 16% in 2011.¹⁰⁸ As a result, the EU has remained the most important organisation which could have influence and constrain Serbian policy toward its neighbours and Kosovo.

Although EU integration process has become the foreign priority of almost all Serbian governments, it has never been an identity issue in Serbia, in contrast to the many other applicant states. The EU has always been perceived in a more instrumental way as a tool for economic enhancement. As a reward for the democratic change in Serbia, the EU not only lifted the crippling economic sanctions

¹⁰⁶ Milada Vachudova: "Europe Undivided." 2008, Grabbe: *"The EU's transformative power."* 2006

¹⁰⁷ Zorana Atanasović: "Public opinion of Serbia on joining NATO." *Western Balkan Security Observer*. No 5 · April June 2007; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia: *"Participation of the Republic of Serbia in the Partnership for Peace Programme."* 2012 Available at: [20.5.2013] <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/foreign-policy/security-issues/partnership-for-peace-programme>; "Serbia's priorities remain same." *B92 news*. 3 January 2013 Available at: [20.5.2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2013&mm=01&dd=03&nav_id=83964

¹⁰⁸ Atanasović: "Public opinion of Serbia on joining NATO." 2007; Steven Woehrel: "Serbia: Current Issues and U.S. Policy." *Congressional Research Service*. 30 July 2012 Available at: [27.5.2013] <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22601.pdf>

in 2000,¹⁰⁹ but in an attempt to stabilise the region, it decided to spread its integration process to Balkan countries, as stated during the Zagreb summit in 2000. Further integration encompassed the promise of additional aid, a trade agreement and tax-free access to its market.¹¹⁰ This move, however, was not mirrored in the change of support for the parallel structures. Although the good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation were an integral part of the EU conditionality right from the beginning, the Kosovo question did not resonate in it until the re-emergence of this topic at the beginning of the status talks in 2005. Therefore, the EU could hardly directly influence the early stages of the Serbian irredentist policy and partition attempt in Kosovo.

Although Serbia tried to fulfil the conditions in other areas, it became very sensitive and controversial to meet the conditions regarding cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The question of cooperation divided the first pro-reform coalition. In an attempt to set Serbian on the integration path, the Prime Minister Đinđić, allowed the extradition of Milošević and some other indictees, which could be one of the reasons why he was assassinated in 2003.¹¹¹ After his death, Koštunica's government maintained an ambiguous stance on the EU, saying that Serbia had no alternative to Europe, but also framed the cooperation with The Hague as treason.¹¹² The main reasons were the contradictory foreign policy preferences of the citizens, "clinging on Kosovo" and portraying Serbia as a victim of the Western plot on one hand, and EU integration with approximately

¹⁰⁹ ICG: "Sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." Washington/ Brussels: Balkan Briefing. 10 October 2000 Available at: [20.5.2013] <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/Serbia%2013.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Subotic: "Explaining Difficult States." 2010, pp. 599

¹¹¹ Ibid. pp.601

¹¹² Denisa Kostovicova: "Post-socialist identity, territoriality and European integration: Serbia's return to Europe after Milošević." *GeoJournal*, Vol. 61, 2004, pp. 25; ICG: "Serbia's U-Turn." 2004, pp.1-8

70% of citizens supporting the integration project in 2003.¹¹³ To maintain popular support, Koštunica's rule was, consequently, characteristic of cosmetic changes, in exchange for further benefits, especially in the sensitive cases for national identity. For example, the strategy of "voluntary surrender" of the indictees to the ICTY followed by the start of negotiations of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2005,¹¹⁴ subsequently suspended for the failure to deliver Radko Mladić to the court. However, there were not any signs of profound reforms in the areas required by EU conditionality.

The EU, in an attempt to influence and soften the Serbian hard-line position to Kosovo, after the unsuccessful status talks, decided to resume the SAA negotiations in June 2007 without any further requirements of ICTY cooperation. This unprecedented measure was introduced only after the pro-EU DS re-occupied the key governmental positions, to pursue the integration. It could be also interpreted as a political move and an attempt to support the pro-EU forces before the 2008 parliamentary elections.¹¹⁵ However, it did not have any effect on the governmental support of the parallel structures in Kosovo, because, as shown above, the government in power, led by Koštunica, regarded support for Kosovo higher priority than the EU accession. The conditions were, first of all, perceived as contradictory to the national interests. Secondly, the long and distressful integration path offered more costs than rewards for the domestic elites.

2.2 Inconsistent irredentism: 2008-2013

After the formation of the new pro-EU Serbian government, Belgrade did not cease support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo completely, but chose a

¹¹³ See Figure 1 in Appendix

¹¹⁴ The Stabilisation and Association Agreement is the core document and the first step in EU integration

¹¹⁵ Subotic: "Explaining Difficult States." 2010, pp.606-607

rather more relaxed diplomatic approach. Right from the beginning, “the foreign ministry took responsibility for representing Serbia’s position on Kosovo internationally”¹¹⁶ leaving the Ministry for Kosovo to take care only of Kosovo Serbs’ day-to-day needs. In November 2008, Serbia and the UN negotiated on the so-called Six-point plan, which envisaged deployment of the status-neutral civilian mission of the EU, subjected to UNMIK and resolution 1244, which refers to Kosovo as the southern province of Serbia. This move was fiercely opposed by Kosovo Serbs in northern Kosovo, but accepted by the southern and eastern enclaves.¹¹⁷ After Kosovo’s proclamation of independence, Serbian influence on the rest of the enclaves started to diminish even faster. Because of the geographical proximity, Belgrade has been able to maintain its support in the North to a greater extent than in the other enclaves. Surrounded by Pristina’s administration, many citizens in the south decided to adopt a more pragmatic approach and engage with Pristina’s institutions.¹¹⁸ This trend accelerated after Kosovo’s unilateral proclamation of independence.

Regarding the financial support for the parallel structures, Tadić’s government decided to decrease it December 2008. The budget of the Ministry of Kosovo was cut by 36%,¹¹⁹ mainly due to the domestic budget crisis in Serbia. The salaries of Kosovo Serbs’ parallel structures employees were cut from 200% to 150% of the salary rate in Serbia in 2009 and a further decrease had already been announced. Although excused by the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis which hit Serbia

¹¹⁶ ICG: “Serb Integration in Kosovo.” 2009, pp. 7-8

¹¹⁷ BBC Monitoring: “Kosovo Serbs divided over EU mission deployment.” Serbian newspaper Politika, Belgrade, 22 November 2008

¹¹⁸ ICG: “Serb Integration in Kosovo.” 2009, pp. 25

¹¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 16

particularly hard, the decrease of support initiated a debate about whether the 'belt tightening' should also involve Kosovo Serbs.¹²⁰

The support remained relatively constant until 2010, when the Serbian government started to be pressed to renew the negotiations with Pristina,¹²¹ and later called for dialogue aimed at promoting cooperation.¹²² During the "technical negotiations" both parties agreed on some day-to-day issues, such as mutual recognition of university diplomas, freedom of movement or a customs agreement. The last point of integrated Northern Kosovo crossing points found a violent response from the Kosovo Serb community. The leadership of Kosovo Serbs, with strong local support, placed roadblocks and barricades to the border crossings, expressing their disagreement. Although the roadblocks were initially supported by Belgrade, president Tadić later proclaimed that "the barricades are not contributing to the defence of Serb national interests. On the contrary, they are endangering them."¹²³ As the negotiations progressed, disagreements between the Serbian government approach and Kosovo Serbs grew. The source of disagreement can be found in the personal interests of the whole Kosovo Serb community. As noted in the interview with Serbian professors, "Mitrovica is in the centre of attention only while it is a gray zone. Once the issue of Kosovo is settled, it will become just another poor town".¹²⁴ Once the situation is settled, the flow of support from Belgrade, Pristina and the international administration will be cut off, which is not in the interests of Kosovo Serbs or their leadership.

¹²⁰ ICG: "Serb Integration in Kosovo." 2009, pp. 16

¹²¹ Igor Jovanović: "Serbia lobbies for Kosovo talks two years after independence." Southeast Europe Time News, 02 March 2010 Available at: [14.5 2013]

http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/03/02/feature-03

¹²² Linda Karadaku: "UN General Assembly adopts Kosovo resolution." Southeast European Times News, 10 September 2010. Available at: [14.5 2013]

http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2010/09/10/feature-01

¹²³ "Tadić tells Serbs to leave barricades." B92 news. 29. November 2011 Available at: [14.3 2013]

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2011&mm=11&dd=29&nav_id=77550.

¹²⁴ ICG: "North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice." 2011, pp. 3

In 2012, the new government, led by Ivica Dačić, managed to abolish the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija and replaced it with the Office for Kosovo. This move has been interpreted as a concession to the West or as a sign of the decreased importance of the Kosovo issue for Serbia.¹²⁵ Despite the oral assurances of the government that it would continue with previous policies, abide by the agreements and support Kosovo Serbs, it can indeed be considered as a sign of decreased support. In late 2012, the government created an official platform for Kosovo, which “demands a high level of territorial and political autonomy for Serbian municipalities throughout Kosovo.”¹²⁶ The resolution was supported by Serbian parliament and opposition parties.

The decreasing support peaked in early 2013, when the new Serbian Prime Minister, Dačić, and Kosovo Prime Minister, Thaci, reached a groundbreaking agreement on the 19th April, which envisions the creation of “the local autonomy for the ethnic Serbs in the North with their own police forces.”¹²⁷ Although Serbia still officially refuses to de jure recognize Kosovo’s independence, and both, the President and Prime Minister reassure the public that Serbia will never do so, this agreement recognises Pristina’s jurisdiction over the controversial territory and envisages abolition of the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo, therefore, de facto it

¹²⁵ Igor Jovanović: “Closure of Serbian ministry sparks debate.” Southeast Europe Time News, 14 August 2012 Available at: [14.5 2013]

http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/08/14/feature-01

¹²⁶ Bojana Barlovac: “Serbia to Adopt Kosovo Platform in New Year.” *BalkanInsight News*. 1 January 2013 Available at: [14.5 2013]

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-parliament-to-adopt-kosovo-platform-in-early-january>

¹²⁷ “Serbian Parliament Considering Landmark Kosovo Deal.” *Radio Free Europe*. 3 May 2013. Available at: [15.5 2013] <http://www.rferl.org/content/serbia-kosovo-landmark-deal/24969371.html>; “Kosovo and Serbia Reach Historic Deal in Brussels.” *Balkan Insight*. 19. April 2013 Available at: [14.5 2013] <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-and-serbia-may-seal-eu-deal>

recognises the reality on the ground. The implementation of the agreement became a prerequisite for Serbia to start accession negotiations in June 2013.¹²⁸

2.2.1 Domestic competition

The political competition played an important role also after the 2008 election. The results of the elections took many by surprise, because the support for pro-EU parties was higher than expected. Although they won the elections with 39%, the pro-Western Democratic Party of President Tadić had to invite Dačić's Socialists to form the new government with Mirko Cvetković (DS) as the new Prime Minister. Radicals were the second largest parliamentary group, winning mainly in Kosovo, however, in mid 2008, 21 MPs left the party and formed the new Serbian Progressive Party around Tomislav Nikolić. The weakening of the radical party, Koštunica in opposition and the new Progressive party with a pro-reformist programme, had partially decreased political competition and had significant influence on the ability of the new Prime Minister to manoeuvre and decrease the support for the parallel structures.

Despite his pro-integration programme, the increasing popularity of the Progressives with their pro-reform but nationalist agenda, which earned them 35% in the opinion polls in 2009, did not allow Tadić's DS, which received only 30%, to neglect the question of Kosovo.¹²⁹ The new government, in order to "get rid of" the Kosovo issue and concentrate on EU integration and necessary reforms. Therefore, in October, Serbia brought the Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) case at the International Court of Justice, not only to rule out the independence as

¹²⁸ "Belgrade and Kosovo Serbs Agree on EU-Deal." *Balkan Insight*, Belgrade, 13 May 2013 Available at: [14.5 2013] <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/belgrade-and-kosovo-serbs-agree-on-eu-deal>; "Implementation plan "without prejudice to Kosovo's status"." *B92 News, Belgrade*, 27 May 2013 Available at: [14.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2013&mm=05&dd=27&nav_id=86381

¹²⁹ "SNS emerges as most popular party." *B92 News*, 18 July 2009 Available at: [28.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2009&mm=07&dd=18&nav_id=60572

illegal, but also to strengthen the Serbian negotiation position and to “buy time.” Many critics and opposition remarked that it was only an attempt to sweeten the bitter pill of Kosovo’s independence that Serbia would have to swallow one day anyway. The ruling of the ICJ from 2010, which said that the unilateral declaration of independence did not violate international law and norms, meant a major change in Belgrade’s Kosovo policy. Although President Tadić reiterated that “Serbia will never recognize the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo,”¹³⁰ he interestingly did not rule out a mutually agreed recognition, which suggested that Serbia no longer believed that it could keep the whole of Kosovo, including the southern and eastern enclaves, and concentrated all its efforts on the North.¹³¹ Furthermore, the ruling enabled them to re-start the negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade, which had not been in contact since the UDI in 2008. Tadić, pressurized by EU officials, submitted a draft resolution to the UN General Assembly,¹³² calling for the beginning of dialogue dealing with all issues but status, which started in early 2011. The agreements, especially those related to the border/boundary crossings previously controlled by Kosovo Serbs, were considered as a major concession by all parties. Some commentators even called this decision a de facto recognition of Kosovo.

The negotiations and daily Kosovo business seems to be of little interest to ordinary Serbs; however, Kosovo has strong emotional connotations and national sentiment remains high in Serbia. In 2011 and 2012, approximately 63% of all Serbian citizens, in some regions even 70%, were convinced that Kosovo should

¹³⁰ “President reacts to ICJ decision.” *B92 News*. 22 July 2010 Available at: [20.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2010&mm=07&dd=22&nav_id=68619

¹³¹ ICG: “Kosovo and Serbia after the ICJ Opinion.” Crisis Group Europe Report N°206, 26 August 2010 Available at: [20.5 2013] <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/206%20Kosovo%20and%20Serbia%20after%20the%20ICJ%20Opinion-1.pdf>

¹³² “EU should facilitate Kosovo-Serbia talks, show new muscle.” *EU Observer*. 9 September 2010 Available at: [20.5 2013] <http://euobserver.com/opinion/30734>

remain a part of Serbia.¹³³ As 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections approached, the issue started to reappear on the political forum, at least on the rhetorical level. However, Kosovo became only secondary topics. The most important issue of the pre-election campaign became the bad economic performance of Serbia, decreasing employment and declining standards of living. Many voters were dissatisfied with the policies of the previous government, which was unable to stop the economic crisis, draw Serbia out of recession and attract new investors. Kosovo and the EU resonated only in the background. One of the reasons why Kosovo played such a marginal role was isolation of DSS and Radicals, which, according to the pre-election opinion polls, would score only about 5 - 6 %. The Progressive Party of Nikolić and Dačić 's Socialists became the main challengers to Tadić 's Democrats.¹³⁴ Regarding Kosovo, Dačić, as the Minister of Interior proclaimed that "the only realistic solution is that places where Serbs live stay in Serbia and that the other part where the Albanians live secedes."¹³⁵ Furthermore, he criticised Tadić 's soft approach and called for a more radical defence of Serbian interests, as demonstrated by the arrest of Albanian policemen during their patrol in the North. Nikolić, as the main competitor, used the same tactics as Tadić in previous elections, where he represented a conservative nationalist with a moderate stance on Kosovo.

Despite high political competition, Tadić did not radicalise his Kosovo rhetoric and remained faithful to his ambiguous statements such as "Serbia will never

¹³³ Gallup Balkan Monitor: "Kosovo has to remain part of Serbia." 2011, 2012 Available at: [20.5 2013] <http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/index.php/dashboard>

¹³⁴ "Poll: Main presidential rivals neck-and-neck." *B92 News*. 10 April 2012 Available at: [21.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=04&dd=10&nav_id=79698

¹³⁵ "Partition of Kosovo only solution, minister says." *B92 news*. 15. May 2011 Available at: [22.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2011&mm=05&dd=15&nav_id=74342

recognised unilateral declaration of independence,” while calling for intensified negotiations to end the conflict.¹³⁶ One of the reasons why Tadić completely relied on the EU success, in form of candidacy status for Serbia received on the 1st of March 2012, and did not follow his challengers’ rhetorical radicalisation could be that, according to the various pre-election polls, Tadić was considered as a clear winner. For example, according to Ipsos Strategic Marketing’s poll, Tadić would receive 58% of votes, while Nikolić was expected to win 42%.¹³⁷ **Despite these predictions, political competition was, in fact, very tight and therefore, Tadić’s complete reliance on the EU success was rather puzzling,** because the support for EU integration dropped in some parts of Serbia below 45%.¹³⁸ The EU was perceived as in crisis and blackmailing Serbia to recognize Kosovo. Although Tadić, as mentioned above, reiterated that he would never accept a unilateral declaration of independence, the agreements with Pristina and his subsequent decrease of support for Kosovo Serbs’ blockade or refusal of the Kosovo Serbs referendum in which they rejected any further cooperation with Pristina’s institutions, were perceived as the opposite,¹³⁹ especially by Kosovo Serbs who make important constituency.

The ultra- Radicals unable to reach the parliamentary threshold of 5% and reformist opposition contributed to the decreased in political competition and enabled Nikolić to continue with policy of the previous government. Although Nikolić had previously been Radical and anti-EU oriented, he went even further and engaged in negotiations with Pristina about the destiny of Northern Kosovars.¹⁴⁰ Despite

¹³⁶ “Tadić says he “shares CoE award with people.”” *B92 News*, 27 March 2012 Available at: [22.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=03&dd=27&nav_id=79472

¹³⁷ Bojana Barlovac: “Tadic Leads Polls on Eve of Serbian Election.”

. *Balkan Insight*. 20 may 2012 Available at: [26.5 2013]<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-chooses-between-nikolic-and-tadic>

¹³⁸ See Figure 1 in Appendix

¹³⁹ *Dušan Pavlović* : “Serbia after the May 2012 Elections.” *Hungarian Review*, Vol. 4, 2012, pp. 22-25

¹⁴⁰ “Dačić tells EU official Serbia is “on European path”.” *B92 News*. 27 July 2012 Available at: [22.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=07&dd=27&nav_id=81492

decreasing popular support for the EU international project, the government, as well as President, seemed to perceive the EU as the main guarantor of Serbian better economic performance, in terms of better access to funds and increased credibility in front of international investors and made the EU accession a priority of the presidency and the whole government. The seriousness of this perception can be demonstrated on the rapidity of the decision to substantially decrease the support for the parallel structures, which happened in less than year, in exchange for the EU rewards.¹⁴¹ As pointed out by Nikolić, “the goal is to get the start date for the accession talks with the EU, but not having to humiliate ourselves to get it, or humiliate the people, or give up on our sovereignty.”¹⁴²

The 19th of April agreement, which envisages dismantlement of the parallel structures in the North in exchange for greater autonomy for Kosovo Serbs, stamped by Kosovo Serbs as the first step toward recognition of Kosovo’s independence, but approved by the National Assembly in April,¹⁴³ meant that the government is ready to work with the de facto situation in Kosovo while rejecting de jure recognition of independence. **What is puzzling is that this policy seems not to follow the public opinion** which clearly showed that the sentiment for Kosovo has not changed, moreover 65% of Serbian citizens would rather give up EU integration, considered as necessary for better economic performance, than Kosovo.¹⁴⁴ Due to the public protests in Belgrade, and violent protests in the North of Kosovo, after the signing of the Kosovo deal, which underlined the importance of Kosovo in domestic

¹⁴¹ “No rifts in DS, party official says.” *B92 News*. 18 May 2013 Available at: [22.5 2013]

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2013&mm=05&dd=18&nav_id=86242

¹⁴² ICG: “Serbia and Kosovo: The Path to Normalisation.” Crisis Group Europe Report N°223, 19 February 2013, pp. 8 Available at: [22.5 2013] <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/balkans/kosovo/223-serbia-and-kosovo-the-path-to-normalisation.pdf>

¹⁴³ “Serbian Parliament Approves Belgrade, Pristina Deal.” *BalkanInsight*, 27 April 2013 Available at: [22.5 2013] <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-parliament-approves-belgrade-pristina-deal>

¹⁴⁴ “63% građana - Kosovo je nezavisno.” *B92.News*, 4. March 2013 Available at: [25.4.2013]

http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2013&mm=03&dd=04&nav_category=640&nav_id=692113

politics, Dačić and Nikolić tried to present the agreement in a different light as a pragmatic deal, which does not by any chance envisage any kind of recognition of Kosovo's independence. For example, Nikolić pointed out that they have to act fast "because the Albanians would have attempted in the meantime to expand to northern Kosovo and no one would have been able to stop them."¹⁴⁵ He presented the deal as an opportunity for Serbia to legitimise their parallel structures and protect Kosovo Serbs better.¹⁴⁶ Nikolić, as well as Dačić, presented the deal as the only way how to help Kosovo Serbs and therefore, in line with the national interests, to appease public protests.

2.2.2 International Influence

As stated above, some decisions made by Serbian political elites were contradictory to the public opinion and national sentiment, such as The Hague extraditions and decreased support for the parallel structures. This puzzling behaviour is inexplicable by the domestic politics alone and the international influence, which has become more direct during 2008-2013 period, has to be, therefore, taken into account as well. At the beginning of this period, the EU influence on the Serbia Kosovo policy was rather moderate. This was mainly because after the Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008, 22 out of 27 EU member states recognised Kosovo as an independent state and five member states, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain in particular, refused to do so, causing divisions in the EU common foreign policy, which was unable to speak with single voice. Based on this friction, the EU literally cannot demand from Serbia to recognise Kosovo and this condition has not been a part of official conditionality for

¹⁴⁵ N. Janović: "Nikolić: Serbs have to agree on Brussels deal." *Tanjug*. Tačno, 9 May 2013 Available at: [25.4.2013] <http://www.tanjug.rs/news/86361/nikolic--serbs-have-to-agree-on-brussels-deal.htm>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

accession. Even the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, deployed at the beginning of 2008, had to be status neutral to ensure not only the agreement of Serbia, but also the five member states.¹⁴⁷ The guidelines and conditions related to Kosovo have been rather unclear and ambiguous. The condition of good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation had been a part of accession conditionality from the Copenhagen Summit in 1993. This included the bilateral resolutions of boarder disputes and improvement of mutual neighbourly relations.¹⁴⁸ Because Kosovo is a rather specific case, this condition was neglected for a long time and the EU concentrated on more measurable issues, such as full cooperation with the ICTY.

To increase the euro optimism among Serbs, which, according to surveys, has had decreasing character since 2008,¹⁴⁹ and to support the pro-EU forces before elections, the EU initiated the signing procedure of the SAA in mid 2008. The year 2008 and the change of Serbian government is perfect example of the fact that it is necessary to find domestic leaders which would support pro-EU agenda for conditionality to function properly. At the beginning of the year Koštunica refused to sign the SAA, which was the first step in EU integration and position the whole Kosovo situation in to a zero-sum game, claiming that “the EU can either accept Serbia within its internationally recognized borders or accept Kosovo as an independent state. It certainly cannot do both.”¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, Tadić tried to frame the issue differently, separating the two and instrumentally connecting the EU with opened and economically advanced Serbia. He also tried to modify the perception of the Kosovo-EU battle as mutually complementary.¹⁵¹ Only after the

¹⁴⁷ Oisín Tansey: “Kosovo: Independence and Tutelage.” *Journal of Democracy*. Vol. 20, No. 2, 2009

¹⁴⁸ Vachudova: “Europe Undivided.” 2008, pp.7

¹⁴⁹ See chart No. 1 in appendix

¹⁵⁰ BBC Monitoring: “Kosovo to be permanently severed from Serbia if Democrats win polls.” *Vecernje novosti*, Belgrade, 7 May 2008

¹⁵¹ BBC Monitoring: “Kosovo, EU as key Serbian election campaign issues.” *Politika*, Belgrade, 11. March 2008

pro-EU leader was elected, conditionality started to function as demonstrated on the sudden re-establishment of the cooperation with The Hague, such as extradition of Radovan Karadžić in 2008 and Goran Hadžić and Radko Mladić in 2011.

Other rewards for Serbia included unfrozen trade agreement and a road map to meet all criteria for visa liberalisation, which were fulfilled in 2009.¹⁵² The bigger carrot of candidacy status was, however, offered only after the ICJ decision on the Kosovo case, when the EU immediately pushed for the beginning of renewed talks and, as stated in the declaration of the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, the EU offered itself to "facilitate a process of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade."¹⁵³ But again, the EU has not required recognition of Kosovo, but only to normalise the relations. The normalisation should have included *"fully respecting the principles of inclusive regional cooperation; fully respecting the provisions of the Energy Community Treaty; finding solutions for telecommunications and mutual acceptance of diplomas; by continuing to implement in good faith all agreements reached; and by cooperating actively with EULEX in order for it to exercise its functions in all parts of Kosovo."*¹⁵⁴ The required normalisation, however, might have had a strong influence on the support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo, because it led to various agreements, such as border crossings agreement, which undermined the unique position of the parallel structures and allowed the international control of the crossings previously controlled exclusively by Kosovo Serbs.

The EU rewarded Serbia with candidacy status in 2012, just before the Serbian presidential elections in hope to boost the support for the pro-EU candidate

¹⁵² "Visa-free regime "depends on Serbian authorities." *BalkanInsight*. 7 October 2012 Available at: [22.5 2013] http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2012&mm=10&dd=07&nav_id=82541

¹⁵³ "Declaration by High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union on the ICJ advisory opinion", press release, EU, 22 July 2010

¹⁵⁴ European Commission: "Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012" 11.October 2011, pp. 27 Available at: [22.5 2013] http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/strategy_paper_2011_en.pdf

Tadić. Although failed to do so, the new President Nikolić, ex-ultra-nationalist, adopted Tadić's pro-EU agenda and continued in the policy, despite the protests of public. One of the reasons for this puzzling situation can be, as I mentioned earlier, that the EU membership is perceived by the Serbian political elites a tool for economic enhancement and as pointed by Nikolić "the agreement reached on the 19th of April in Brussels will be implemented, because it ease the pressure from leading Western countries and encourage investments in Serbia."¹⁵⁵ The credibility of the EU conditionality increased after Serbia received its candidacy status, because it meant stronger commitment of the EU to Serbia. The expected starting date of accession negotiation, conditioned by the implementation of the agreed deal, will mean, based on the observation of the accession of other candidate countries, that Serbia has a real chance to become EU member state in a decade, which will lead to the increased confidence of investors and better economic performance. With the increased credibility of the EU conditionality, and pro-EU oriented government, the EU has stronger leverage on Serbia and consequently more direct influence on the policies toward Kosovo.

¹⁵⁵ "Nikolić: Serbs have to agree on Brussels deal." Tanjug.Tačno, 9. May 2013 Available at: [27.5 2013] <http://www.tanjug.rs/news/86361/nikolic--serbs-have-to-agree-on-brussels-deal.htm>

Conclusion

As can be seen from the analysis of the Serbian foreign policy from 1999 until 2008, the lack of change and subsequent moderate increase of the support of the parallel structures in Kosovo, the irredentist project of Serbia, can be best explained by domestic variables, such as political competition. Because of the strong national sentiment and strong political competition, it was inevitable to address the issue of Kosovo in the election campaign. The strong electoral position of radical nationalist parties, therefore, determined the direction of the Kosovo policy, because even the moderate or pro-EU parties could not afford not to support the interventionist policy without the loss of substantial support. Although, another strong preference, EU integration, also resonated on the political level, elites only resorted in the so-called double game. They publicly committed themselves to integration, but made only cosmetic changes that would not endanger the elites' position. The international community had only a moderate impact during this period, in terms of framework setting, which constrained the policy options elites could deploy in Kosovo. A more direct impact, assumed by scholars of Europeanization was, however, limited, mainly because of the lack of credible conditionality and the lack of euro enthusiasm of the domestic elites.

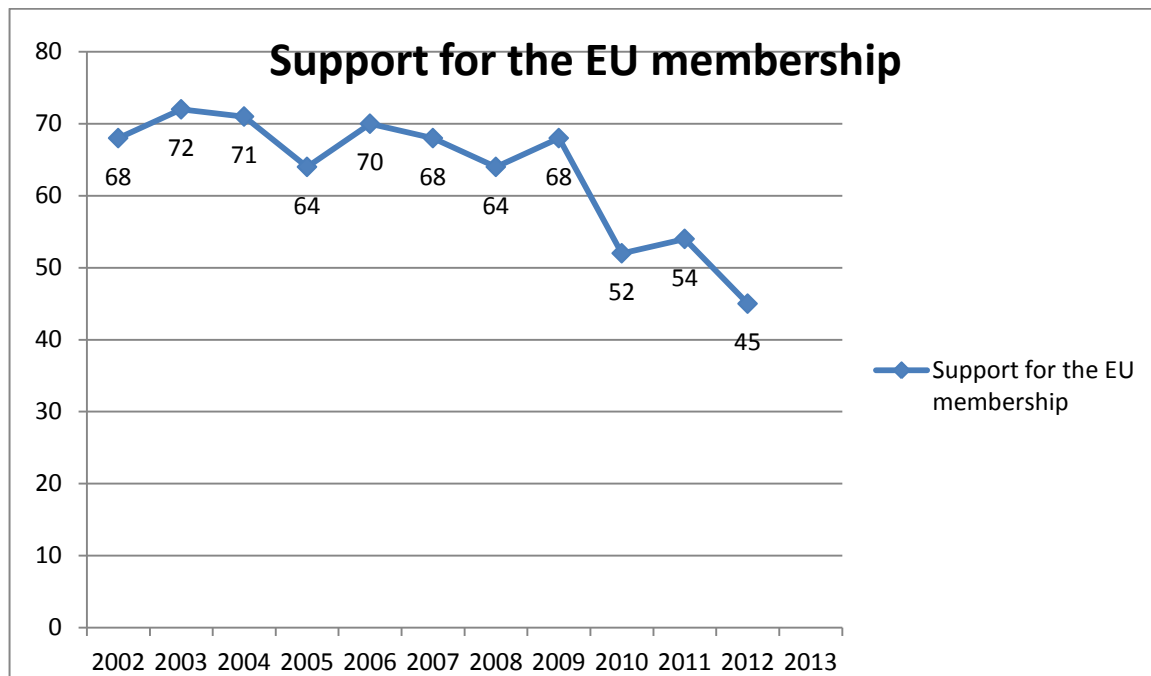
On the other hand, from 2008 until 2013, the support for the parallel structures in Kosovo gradually decreased and dramatically dropped in April 2013. As in the previous case, domestic variables, such as political competition, played a decisive role in the change of support. The marginalisation of radical political elites and pro-reform oriented elites in power, contributed to the fact that despite the constant national sentiment and emotional value of Kosovo, elites were able to sustain the goodwill of the electorate and at the same time decrease the support for the

irredentist project. This was true, because the economic issues and low standard of living in Serbia resonated greatly among the electorate and further economic deterioration derived from the EU non-cooperation was perceived by the political elites as particularly threatening. The EU has been viewed as a solution to the economic struggle of Serbia, hit particularly hard by the financial and economic crisis in 2008, which increased its influence. The condition of the relation normalisation had, despite its obscurity, a huge influence on the Kosovo policy direction and drop of support for the parallel structures. The benefits in the form of additional aid and foreign investors connected with EU cooperation, therefore, exceeded the costs of decreased support. The double game, in the form of nationalist rhetoric and reassurance to the public with strong nationalist sentiment that Serbia would never recognize Kosovo, helped to soften the consequences derived from such an unprecedented Kosovo policy.

To conclude, it seems that domestic political competitions played a decisive role in the initiation, maintenance and change of the support in the Serbian irredentist project, such as the support for the parallel structures in Northern Kosovo. As shown in the case of Serbia from 1999-2008, competition contributes to the radicalisation of the political rhetoric, which could be translated into the increase of support for a harmful foreign policy. Although domestic variables play an important role in deradicalisation of policy, it seems that it cannot account for changes in ethnic foreign policy alone, especially those directly opposing public opinion, but rather in combination with the other variable, the constraining international influence of the EU.

Appendix

Chart 1



Source: Republic of Serbia Government: “ European Orientation of the Citizens of the Republic of Serbia” December 2012; .June 2011. December 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

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