

CROATIA AND SERBIA:
TWO ROADS DIVERGED OR WANDERING DOWN THE SAME PATH?
INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND EUROPEANIZATION OF PARTY SYSTEMS
SINCE THE 2000 DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Political Science.

Chapel Hill
2011

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ABSTRACT

ERIN BACA: Croatia and Serbia: Two Roads Diverged or Wandering Down the Same Path?
Institutionalization and Europeanization of Party Systems
Since the 2000 Democratic Elections
(Under the direction of Milada Anna Vachudova)

The puzzle that animates this thesis is this: why has Croatia's party system institutionalized quickly while Serbia's has experienced another period of fluctuation? Moreover, why did Europeanization have positive effects on the stabilization of party systems in Croatia while the process has coincided with an increase in party system volatility in Serbia? Since volatility scores are expected to decrease over elections as voters and elites gather information from each other and the EU, electoral volatility should decrease with the adoption of pro-EU policies as all major parties develop a pro-EU platform. By analyzing electoral volatility scores, we can see the effect of information, which brings about institutionalization of party systems, on Europeanization as well. My hypothesis is that the process of information gathering by political elites over the course of multiple elections has been much higher in Croatia than in Serbia due to Serbia's changing physical and political landscape since 2000. Because of this, the 2008 election shows another spike in volatility due to an increase in information from the 2007 election. Thus, volatility, in the case of Serbia, turned out to be a good thing: Voters abandoned nationalist, anti-EU parties as they learned more about them.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my very first teacher and biggest supporter throughout all of my academic and otherwise crazy endeavors. To my sister, Krista, your selflessness does not go unappreciated and I thank you for your patience and admiration.

I also dedicate this to the friends who have influenced me at various critical junctures in my life and supported me through the consequences. Specifically, Jason Blanchett and Fadel Zeidan, thank you for knowing what was best for me, even when I didn't.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Sarah Hutchison. I don't know that I would have survived without her support, understanding and encouragement. I could never thank her enough and hope that she realizes the positive effect she has on those around her. Also, I am grateful for the support of Milada Anna Vachudova, without which this work would not have been possible. Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow Graduate students. Especially Lucas Semprini, Christopher Plummer and Patrick O'Donnell – your advice, guidance and comedic relief made the difficult times a little easier.

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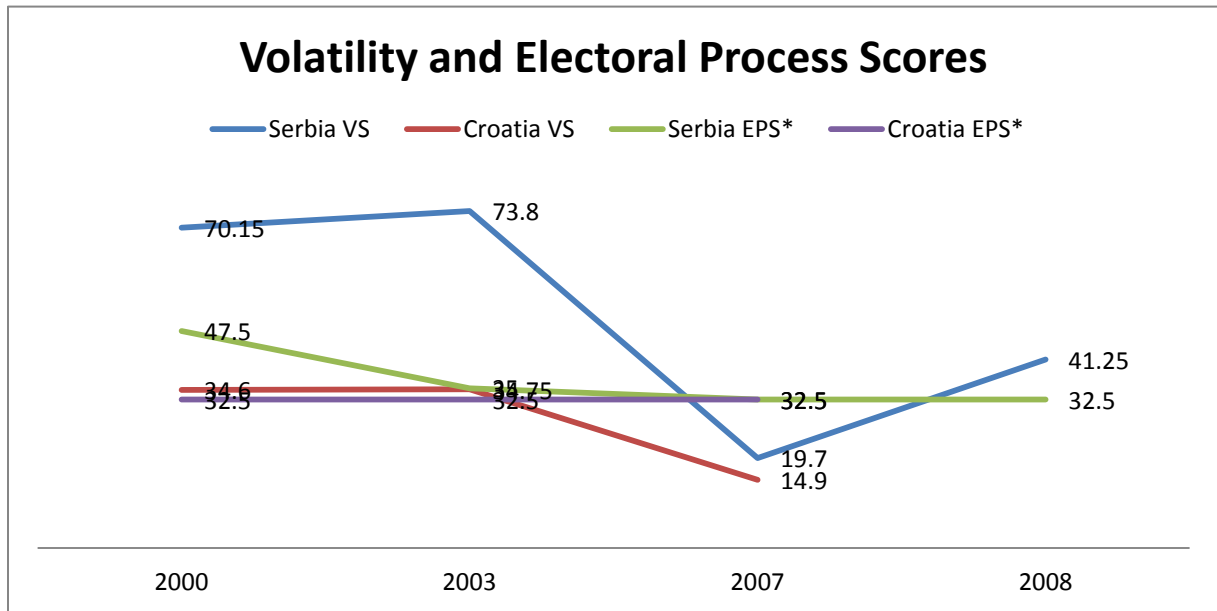
CEECs	Central East European Countries
DDS	Democratic Party of Serbia
DOS	Democratic Opposition of Serbia
DS	Democratic Party
EU	European Union
EULEX	EU mission in Kosovo
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
HSLs	Croatian Social Liberal Party
HSP	Croatian Party of Rights
ICTY	Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
NS	New Serbia
PR	Proportional Representation
SAA	Stabilization and Association Process
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SNS	Serbian Progressive Party
SPO	Serbian Renewal Movement
SRS	Serbian Radical Party
ZES	European Serbia Party

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In order to join the European Union (EU), the requirements have been clear for Serbia and Croatia – compliance with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), resolution of border disputes and eventual adoption of the *acquis communautaire* – yet Serbia had additional national and territorial issues that complicated domestic politics: the assassination of Zoran Djindjic, Kosovo’s political status and Montenegro’s eventual secession. In Serbia, unlike Croatia, the domestic sphere has been characterized by a changing political landscape, often strongly influenced by the EU, and beyond the control of any politician. Every election has provided an opportunity for elites to politicize various issues in order to win votes, especially issues regarding EU leverage. Therefore, Serbia’s domestic political scene is still changing while Croatia’s is now more static due to the political changes that occurred immediately following the 2000 elections. This has been the difference between the two countries and hindered the process of information gathering by both voters and political elites since agenda setting in Serbia has been primarily based on fleeting issues.

Serbia and Croatia, as part of the former Yugoslavia, experienced the collapse of communism, then the eventual dissolution of Yugoslavia, and held relatively democratic elections in 1990. The following decade was also similar, with the two countries both under authoritarian rule and engaged in ethnic war (Sekelj, 2000). However, in 2000, Croatia and Serbia experienced a democratic revolution – ousting both authoritarian leaders and ushering in real political competition.



For the volatility scores, I relied on ipu.org, aceproject.org, electionguide.org and parties-and-elections.de to compile comprehensive data on both countries.

The Electoral Process Scores were accessed from the Nations in Transit 2010 report from freedomhouse.eu

*In order to show Freedom House's Electoral Process Score, the 2001, 2004, 2008, and 2009 scores were used, since they are a composite of the previous year's reports. The scores were then multiplied by 10 in order to better coordinate with the volatility scores.

Overall, we can see that both Serbia and Croatia experienced high levels of electoral volatility during the 2000 elections and follow a similar pattern until Serbia's 2008 election. In particular, Serbia experienced a much higher level of volatility, a brief period of institutionalization and later another spike. For this purpose, I've also included Freedom House's Electoral Process Score to highlight that the drastic changes are not the result of changing electoral processes and that Croatia and Serbia are indeed highly comparable. Often, a big change in volatility scores is the result of a dramatic change in the country (as in the 2000 elections), so the Freedom House scores show that a difference in the quality of democracy wasn't to blame for the difference in volatility scores for both countries.

Two important mechanisms are at work here. First, volatility scores are expected to decrease over elections as voters and elites gather information from each other and the EU.

Second, as Europeanization increases, electoral volatility should decrease since the adoption of pro-EU policies occurs when all major parties develop a pro-EU platform, which can be considered a process of institutionalization. While these two mechanisms were at work regarding Croatia, Serbia's electoral volatility scores seem to indicate otherwise. Why has it taken longer for Serbia to institutionalize party systems and head down the path of Europeanization? My hypothesis is that the information gathered by political elites over the course of multiple elections has been higher in Croatia than in Serbia. This has resulted in the 2008 spike in Serbia's volatility score since Serbia has only recently begun to resolve outstanding issues, making their reaction to EU requirements different.

So, EU leverage impacts political parties, party systems and voters in such a way as to impact volatility scores because it provides information to both voters and politicians; it sets the stage for agenda setting that is altogether unique in the cases of Serbia and Croatia. While discussing institutionalization and electoral volatility, we will see that the durability of political parties is reached when the interchange of information between politicians and voters is exceptionally high. However, with Serbia and Croatia a paradox emerges with the process of Europeanization. First, EU leverage forces countries to control their budget and implement clear-cut policies in order to abide by the *aquis communautaire*. Second, however, it proved to be one of the easiest exploitable political platforms for new parties and charismatic new political leaders. As theories of institutionalization studies have shown, this contributes to increased volatility scores. Thus, Europeanization weakened programmatic cues and hindered voters' ability to make choices based on policy formation, governance and ideology.

In order to bring together theories of Europeanization and institutionalization, I have used electoral volatility scores to analyze the differences and similarities of the emerging patterns in the two countries. Next, I will introduce theoretical arguments on the mechanisms of institutionalization and the significance of electoral volatility in comparative analysis of party systems. The following section builds on these mechanisms and discusses the process of

Europeanization and incentives for elite/party cooperation, especially in postcommunist or Central East European Countries (CEECs). Finally, I will analyze the changing political agendas from the first democratic elections in 2000 to the period immediately following the 2008 elections in order to explore the role of information gathering and why it was different for Croatia and Serbia.

This paper relies on a rational choice perspective, assuming that parties enter elections in order to win votes and constituents vote for parties so that they can represent their interests in parliament. In regards to Serbia and Croatia, this argument becomes more nuanced since both countries have unique institutions and Europeanization incentives due to their shared communist, war-time, authoritarian and democratic pasts. Therefore, we see a high level of comparability between these two countries and we have the opportunity to trace elite actions, changes in party platforms, evolution of governing coalitions, and creation or destruction of parties during that process.

CHAPTER 2

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND ELECTORAL VOLATILITY

In this section, I will cover the theoretical argument on electoral volatility as an effective tool in comparative analysis of institutionalization.

So, what are volatility scores and what information do they provide? According to Pedersen (1979), the best vantage point to study party system change is in election results. In order to measure the strength of party systems, the Pedersen Index accounts for individual vote transfers that are being reallocated from one election to the next by taking the absolute value of the difference in vote percentages a party receives and dividing that number by two. Since the resulting number is rather crude and uncontrolled, based solely on the available parties receiving seats in parliament, it casts a large net of analysis and has since become the proxy variable to measure institutionalization. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on elite actions and how party system stability or instability result from or include changes in the supply of parties (Mainwaring 1999; Mair 1997; O'Dwyer 2004; Tool 2000).

Why is institutionalization of party systems important? First, programmatic representation is a fundamental requirement of democracy; at the very least, voters choose representatives as members of party labels who best align with the policy choices they prefer (Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007; O'Dwyer, 2010). Party identification, therefore, allows citizens to make vote choices based on “information economizing devices” (Tworzecki, 2003, p. 104) and electoral volatility is the means by which we can analyze those choices at the aggregate level. Thus, higher volatility signifies weaker programmatic cues, making it more difficult for citizens to determine the best representatives and creating a higher likelihood of competition based on

individual party leaders, clientelism, nationalism, ethnicity, etc. (Kitschelt, 1999; Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007; O'Dwyer, 2010). Furthermore, the dilution and instability caused by too many political parties also make it difficult to gather information about governance, ideology, and policy formation. Ultimately, volatility measures the preferences of the governed, but the institutionalization process must curve around the country-specific issue parameters to win approval, or votes. Therefore, issues of supply side volatility will be the focus of the rest of this section as it better indicate the dynamics of a particular election and the response to political elites' choices.

When examining volatility levels a clear demarcation emerges between postcommunist states and the rest of the world (Bielasiak, 2002; Mainwaring & Torco, 2006; Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007; O'Dwyer, 2010; Tavits, 2007). Often referred to as the “communist legacy”, many studies have considered the democratic development of postcommunist states as a unique and highly comparable situation. First, the institutional approach analyzes the effects of electoral design on party development. Essentially, proportional representation (PR) is expected to cause fragmentation of parties and unstable coalition governments, while the electoral system determines an upper bound on the number of viable contenders (Cox, 1997; Duverger, 1954). Most importantly, there is a strong correlation between the size of a party system and the interactive product of social and electoral structures (Neto & Cox, 1997; Ordeshook & Shvetsova, 1994). Furthermore, a recent study by Tucker and Powell (2009) discuss the different types of volatility, whereby postcommunist countries experience the type of volatility caused by the entry and exit of new parties rather than their Western counterparts who experience vote switching between stable parties. Since available political parties constrain voting behavior, it is important to understand how and why higher numbers of parties contest elections.

According to Rose (2007), the entry and exit of parties in electoral competition creates supply-side volatility. The intensity of volatility in a political system depends on the number of political parties that exit the political system, the number of supporters that the existing parties

had, and the number of new supporters that the persisting parties attract. The turnover of parties that are too small or do not receive any seats has very low volatility compared to the exit and entry of parties that wield much support who gain or give up seats in legislature. This leads to significant changes as voters float between the parties that persist and the supporters of parties competing have to find other alternatives in new parties. Thus, floating votes or fluidity of party labels result in a double impact on volatility scores since the changes in vote shares has to be reallocated from one party to another (Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007; Tavits, 2007). These fluid systems exhibit less regularity in patterns of party competition, weaker party roots in society, lower legitimacy, and weaker party organizations that are often dominated by charismatic leaders.(Mainwaring & Torco, 2006).

It is also important to consider the impact of policies, or issues, used by new parties in the electoral processes. Such policy choices are normally strategic and are endogenous to the system in which elites utilize them to attract votes. The success of new parties has much to do with what they bring to the bargaining table(Roberts & Wibbels, 1999) and the programmatic cues they use while convincing the electorate (Tavits, 2007; Tworzecki, 2003). New parties have the upper hand in issue exploitation because new leaders are not hesitant to address new issues that old political parties have difficulty or failures dealing with, making those issues relevant and developing a platform that resonates with voters (Tucker, 2002). Thus, even though the electorate is able to identify party positions on various issues, party switching signals little attachment to specific parties (Bielasiak, 2002) and shows that both voters and elites exhibit rational and strategic behavior (Tavits, 2007). Ultimately, the nature of party competition in post-communist states ensures that, not only will a poorly positioned new party fail to win votes, but parties whose ideology does not encompass current and important issues among the electorate are vulnerable to new parties who are well informed and ready to battle.

So far, we discussed how social cleavages, institutions, elite behavior, post-communism, and issue salience affect party system size; however, at what point do party systems reach

equilibrium between the number of parties receiving votes and the number of parties receiving seats? Best (2010) argues that the lack of proportionality among party systems' size is determined by the mechanical effects of the electoral system, given the distribution of party vote shares. Essentially, this means that a country with an electoral system that allows four viable parties will experience lower proportionality if seven parties have received votes. Eventually, however, the strategic actions of voters and elites should bring the party system size at the electoral level in equilibrium (Best, 2010). In PR systems, equilibrium occurs far more frequently since electoral laws allow party system size to increase and still fall within the institutional boundaries allowing both voters and elites to maneuver strategically. So, not only do actors act rationally by creating new parties that adapt to changing voters preferences over time, but they have strong incentives to do so since the legislative level can absorb the smaller, more numerous parties (Best, 2010).

Before discussing Serbia and Croatia's electoral volatility scores, I will first introduce the process of Europeanization. As we will see below, many of the mechanisms that affect institutionalization are similar to the mechanisms of Europeanization. The process itself is ongoing and is one of the major influences on party politics in Europe. However, this process has been wholly unique for Serbia and Croatia, together and separately. The following section examines the effects of Europeanization on party systems and how it relates to the cases of Serbia and Croatia.

CHAPTER 3

EUROPEANIZATION AND PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE

According to Milada Vachudova (2005), the EU's enlargement process has proven to be "the most successful democracy promotion program ever implemented by an international player." The EU accession process has not only been an effective tool for instituting stable democracy, but also a means to measure the level of stability of future candidate countries. After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the CEECs went through a rapid period of democratization and during the 1990s, democracy promotion was the prominent foreign policy goal for many international actors and the EU model of integration has been the most successful at promoting stability (Vachudova 2006; Dimitrova, A. & Pridham G. 2004). Additionally, the prospect of EU membership and the "characteristics of EU's pre-accession process" have had a major impact on party system stabilization and, ultimately, to democratic stability (Vachudova, 2008). It is within this process that the development of Europeanization occurs.

So, if EU leverage has an impact on political party agendas – even just inasmuch as making them more moderate – then it certainly has an effect on the number of parties that come and go. As we learned above, agenda setting is an intrinsic part of information sharing between voters and political parties. Either established parties need to reform past platforms in order to comply with EU requirements (sometimes contradicting previous platforms) or new parties are better positioned to successfully exploit new issues. The successful adaptation, or opposition, by parties will increase electoral volatility scores.

Europeanization is defined as a process by which states adopt EU rules and policies (Schimmelfinnig & Sedelmeier, 2004) and construct, diffuse and institutionalize both formal and

informal rules in order to integrate shared beliefs and ideologies (Subotic, Forthcoming). In order to harmonize institutions across the region, there are various stringent rules and regulations in which all countries wishing to join the EU have to comply with. This can be thought of as a three-step process, accomplished by means of rule transfer by ‘conditionality’ (Schimmelfinnig & Sedelmeier, 2004) or active and passive EU ‘leverage’ (Vachudova M. , 2005). Therefore, Europeanization can not only be measured by compliance with EU requirements, but by pro-EU ideology in prominent political parties.

Most importantly, integration of democracy requires that the citizens are active and participate in governmental institutions by obtaining information and articulating interests, and that the public’s needs and requirements can be identified, shaped and transformed into collective decisions that would be considered legitimate and acceptable (Dimitrova & Pridham, 2004). These elements of liberal democracy, in addition to human rights and market reform, began with the first free and fair elections and were rewarded and/or promoted by EU’s democratic conditionality particularly in postcommunist countries (Schimmelfinnig & Sedelmeier, 2004).

Once this is established, Europeanization occurs in what can be thought of as a three-step process. First, by the sheer “virtue of its existence”, the EU is able to exercise passive leverage on domestic politics in credible candidate states due to the political and economic benefits of joining, costs of being excluded and the way states are treated as nonmembers (Vachudova M., 2005, p. 65). However, when membership reaches a point of vital importance the next step occurs: a reform-minded government emerges, promoting policies that comply with the commonly required regulations to participate effectively in the economic block. Third, the EU begins to set rules and conditions for membership by enacting the *acqui* conditionality (Schimmelfinnig & Sedelmeier, 2004; Vachudova M. , 2005). To ensure that states comply with the requirements, the EU provides ample benefits to countries meeting accession conditions and holds back the promises, or even providing sanctions, if the country fails to meet the required conditions.

Political parties are most important in the process of compliance with EU conditions, since they are the “most proximate source of domestic policy change” (Vachudova M. , 2008). Since the 1990s, the “returning to Europe” became a new ideology supported by many political parties and integration of the *acquis communautaire* into national law during pre-accession became a common process. However, as noted above, the treatment of nonmember states had a big impact on how and when Europeanization gained traction in the sphere of domestic politics. Thus, CEECs that quickly developed liberal democracies followed a distinctly different path to Europeanization than those with illiberal or authoritarian governments. This is echoed by Ladrech (2007), who finds that most political parties in the CEECs not only adapted to the EU integration process, but based their platforms on being part of the EU from their onset.

Ladrech (2007) further explains that Europeanization as applied to political parties means exploring dimensions such as the party organization, party manifestos and programs, the party-government relationship and the patterns of party competition. Not only does Ladrech’s approach explain differences between the experience of CEECs and the older member states, but it also shows that the EU has been very important in influencing strategies, ideologies and orientation of political parties.

Furthermore, Vachudova and Hooghe (2009) found that pro/anti-EU platforms have become uniquely intrinsic among CEEC political parties. Political competition is positioned on two dimensions: left/right economic dimension and gal/tan (where “gal” signifies green/alternative/libertarian and “tan” signifies traditional/authority/nationalism). Due to a shared communist history, the “demarcation magnet” aligns cultural traditionalism with left-wing economics while the “integration magnet” attracts parties to cultural liberalism and liberal economics. Not surprisingly, party positioning in CEECs is different and, when comparing the CEECs with their Western counterparts before accession, it emerges that that pro-European attitudes are associated with “right” and “gal” positions and anti-Europeanism with “left” and “tan” parties (Hooghe & Vachudova, 2009).

So far, we have covered the progression of Europeanization as a process that becomes embedded, and even determinate of party politics. Much like the process of institutionalization, we find that postcommunist countries have a different experience than their Western counterparts, elite actions are of utmost importance, and strategy plays a major role in the issues that become politicized. It is at this juncture that the importance of information presents itself again. Essentially, the EU provides information on two levels; to the political parties regarding the policies that they should adopt, to the citizens regarding the benefits of membership. This dual communication level changes the information-sharing dynamic between the two.

At this stage, the country as a whole provides information to the EU as well. As we've seen above, electoral volatility is the electorate's response to elite actions. What is often researched is the effect that the EU has on domestic policies in postcommunist countries. However, the case of Serbia and Croatia allows us to analyze the effects of domestic policy on Europeanization due to their shared requirements and different results so far. The following case study will show how information asymmetries have played a major role in hindering Serbia's accession into the EU. Before that, however, it is important to discuss the EU's additional requirements for Serbia and Croatia as it sets these former Yugoslavian counties apart from other postcommunist studies.

A new chapter has emerged on the conditional requirements that the EU gives to prospective members and the reactionary measures taken by the prospective accession countries when bargaining for their inclusion in the EU block. The leverage or conditionality exercised by the EU is of particular importance in Serbia and Croatia because all negotiations are dependent on "full cooperation with the ICTY"(Maki, 2008). As mentioned above, respect for human rights is one of the EU's conditionality requirements. Due to the shared history of war in the former Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia are required to cooperate fully with the ICTY in order to ensure that the two countries have come to terms with atrocities committed by and against people from

both countries, ultimately breaking free of the nationalist ideologies which led to the war in the 1990s (Batt & Obradovic-Wochnik, 2009).

Within this paradigm, the Stabilization and Association Process (SAA) was launched in 1999 in order to establish a formal process that would both bring the Western Balkans closer to the EU while ensuring that new political leaders would redefine national goals and reconcile their history of violence (Batt & Obradovic-Wochnik, 2009; Maki, 2008). As I will discuss in more detail below, cooperation with the ICTY is of utmost importance for two reasons. First, it has become an important source of information for the EU, political parties and voters because of the politicization by elites. Second, the degree to which each country has complied with the ICTY is at the very heart of the difference in the Europeanization in each country.

Konitzer (2010) further explains that the countries have negotiated with the conditionality wielding EU while at the same time managing EU-skeptic/anti-EU parties that were supported by a nationalistic public. Even though the two countries obtained relatively stable Freedom House democracy scores since 2000, opposition from within exists, with some parties pushing for policies that contradict the requirements of the EU. Until recently, important parties in Serbia have been openly opposed to the EU integration, largely due to EU policies towards Hague and the active role that some EU members played in the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the war in the 1990s (Batt & Obradovic-Wochnik, 2009; Konitzer, 2010; Subotic, Forthcoming). This has played a major role in the different approaches to the conditionality of states in joining EU, an approach that had not been observed in the pre and post communism era in the region.

Essentially, Europeanization can only be as successful as the domestic sphere will allow, which is why this paper focuses on the effects of information on Europeanization. Similarly to Konitzer (2010), who established a link between EU conditionality and public attitudes that created incentives for elites to change platforms over a series of elections, I use volatility scores to analyze a similar relationship.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAJOR PARTIES AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

As I have discussed, political parties determine the efficacy of EU conditionality and both institutionalization and Europeanization rely on information gathered over time to reach consensus or balance. Since electoral volatility scores illustrate institutionalization of party systems, we can compare Croatia and Serbia's path to the EU as a result of elite actions, based on information surrounding specific elections.

Since the 2000 elections, Croatian politics have been dominated by two main political parties: the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Led by Franjo Tudjman, the HDZ won the first ever multi-party elections in 1990. Initially the HDZ's platform was based on liberation from a federal center, ethno-nationalist divisions, the scapegoating of Serbs, and the promise of "salvation through national sovereignty" (Vachudova, 2008). Due to the abuses of power and economic populism, the decade after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) is considered an authoritarian period and neither the reformed Communists nor the moderate right parties were strong enough to compete against the HDZ. Then, following the death of Tudjman, several moderate right and left parties formed an "anti-HDZ" coalition led by the SDP and won control of parliament. As I will discuss in greater detail below, HDZ's new president, Ivo Sanader, managed to successfully move the party in line with a pro-EU stance while gaining support from previous nationalist supporters (Konitzer, 2010). This allowed the HDZ to win back parliamentary control in the 2003 and 2007 elections and continue to be a prominent center-right political presence in Croatia.

Croatia's second main political party, the SDP, was also initially formed just before 1990 as a left-wing opposition to the Communist party. Led by Ivica Racan, the SDP was not able to establish itself as a prominent political force until the 2000 elections when they formed a coalition with the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLs) and five other parties against the HDZ. The new center-left, pro-EU government managed to move Croatia closer to the EU, however disagreements regarding the extradition of war criminals to the ICTY caused a split with the HSLs in 2002 and a marginal loss to the HDZ in 2003. Even though the SDP has failed to win majority of parliamentary seats again, they have remained a strong political force in the country by supporting Stjepan Mesic and consistently winning a large vote share. Since the adoption of a pro-EU agenda by the HDZ, the SDP has established itself as a center-left party running on social democratic platform (Kasapovic, 2003).

Meanwhile, Serbia's main political parties have undergone multiple coalition and platform switches since the 2000 elections. The Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) was a coalition led by the moderate Democratic Party (DS) and its president, Zoran Djindic, and the conservative Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and its president, Vojislav Kostunica. As will be discussed in much greater detail below, Kostunica and Djindic were tenuously united against Milosevic and managed to push the SPS out of power. Although both parties have remained powerful political contenders, they have been forced to coalesce with other smaller parties in order to maintain parliamentary control, even briefly reuniting in 2007. The main point of departure between these parties has been that of Europeanization. The DS has been pro-EU since 2000 and willing to make vast reforms and cooperate (albeit begrudgingly) with the ICTY and eventually formed the most successful pro-EU coalition in 2008. Meanwhile the Kostunica-led DSS has only conditionally supported EU reforms and is now seen as a strategic nationalist party since Kosovo's declaration of independence.

Since 2003, the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) has been the most consistently supported political party. In 2000, the overwhelming support for the DOS left the SRS with only 8.6 per

cent of the vote; however, they quickly recovered and have maintained just below 30 per cent of the vote so far. Their extremist and nationalistic agenda has kept the SRS out of parliamentary control and maintained a strong anti-EU, anti-ICTY and firm opposition to the independence of Kosovo. However, there has been a major schism in the party due to a disagreement among party members regarding Europeanization. A new faction of the SRS has formed – the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), as a center-right, pro-EU alternative to the Radicals. According to Konitzer (2010), changing public attitudes sparked a strongly supported break from the Radicals that would appear logical and strategic given that the international community's ban on cooperating with the SRS. Even though the effects of this break cannot be fully determined until the next election, this is a perfect example of a new party entering the political scene prepared to battle against the older (and perhaps outdated) agenda of the previously successful SRS.

Two other parties that haven't won many seats in parliament, but indicate a liberal shift in Serbia are the SPS and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). First, the LDP, a pro-EU, pro-ICTY, liberal party that recognizes Kosovo's independence split from the DS in 2005. So far, due to their unwillingness to change their stance on Kosovo, the DS will not form a coalition with them (Sebastian, 2008). Second, SPS was the most prominent party in Serbia throughout the 1990s. Headed by Milosevic, the true political nature of this party, other than to stay in power, is still up for debate. However, in 2000, the ousting of Milosevic relegated SPS power to a minor player in the political field. Additionally, Milosevic's supporters were encouraged to vote for the radical SRS. It is because of Milosevic's influence and the international community's open disapproval of the party that the SPS wasn't really able to reform like Croatia's HDZ. However, according to Konitzer (2010), the SPS's recent coalition with the DS was a strategically viable move for both parties. Not only does it indicate a willingness to reform on the part of the SPS (and both a domestic and international acceptance of that reform), but it also shows that the ideological similarities between the two parties were more important than politicization of historical events.

Before I begin discussing elite actions since the democratic elections, it is important to briefly discuss the contributing effect of electoral institutions on volatility scores. Since 2000, Serbia and Croatia employed the d'Hondt method of seat apportionment with a 5 per cent threshold for parties and coalitions (Songstad, 2004). This has very significant implications for the mechanical effects of their respective electoral systems (Best, 2010). According to Schuster et al (2003), the d'Hondt method apportions seats at the legislative level that is often not proportional to votes received, favoring larger parties at the expense of smaller parties. Within this framework, district magnitude plays a big role in determining the size of party systems, often reaching a point of equilibrium with the three largest parties. Also, the party with the highest number of seats gets to choose the government with seats allocated after coalitions are formed, in order to ensure majority (Schuster, K. et al 2003).

Since the 2000 elections, Serbia and Croatia's electoral systems have developed in a very similar pattern. Both the 2000 and 2003 parliamentary elections were held by popular vote and then changed to closed party lists in 2007. In all elections the d'Hondt method was used in order to determine seat allocation.¹ However, Croatia is divided into 10 districts with 14 elected members in each – in addition to allocated seats for the diaspora and minority parties (Songstad, 2004). Serbia, on the other hand, has one nationwide district, with no electoral threshold for ethnic minorities. To some degree, this explains the variance between electoral scores in the two countries since an increase in district magnitude results in a lower number of seats to apportion. Therefore, it is expected that Croatia's electoral system would reach equilibrium at two or three parties, while Serbia's PR system can absorb a higher number of parties.

The following analysis pays particular attention to the effects on Europeanization on political parties' platforms and agendas. Essentially, how elites adapted their agendas to current

¹ In order to develop a thorough understanding of Serbia and Croatia's respective electoral systems, outcomes and seat allocations, I relied on multiple websites. Different information was provided in various formats, with focus on various aspects of the electoral process. For the purpose of this study, I relied on ipu.org, aceproject.org, electionguide.org and parties-and-elections.de to compile comprehensive data on both countries.

situations and how they used that information to maneuver into powerful positions. As discussed above, increased volatility indicates weaker programmatic cues and political competition based on clientelism, individual leaders and nationalism. The dilution of too many parties makes it difficult to gather information on ideology, policy formation and governance. When a government adopts a pro-EU agenda, the main political parties reach a consensus of a reform-minded government focused on the promotion of policies that revolve around the political and economic benefits of EU membership. The legitimacy of political parties and their labels is important since the fluidity of party labels lowers legitimacy and increases the likelihood of domination of charismatic leaders. We can see these mechanisms at work in both Croatia and Serbia; however, the impact of new parties in Serbia is where the two countries diverge. The impact of new party labels, such as the For a European Serbia party (ZES), means voters are switching parties and are in fact informed and choosing parties whose ideology encompasses current important issues. The following section will show how issues surrounding Europeanization – cooperation with the ICTY and reformation of the political, physical and economic landscapes – affected information gathering and provided opportunities for elites to politicize various issues in order to win votes and gain and/or stay in power.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSES OF ELECTIONS

2000 Elections

To begin, Croatia's volatility score of 34.6, while not exorbitantly high, indicates a significant shift in power. The HDZ lost 20.8 per cent of the previous years' votes while the SDP and the HSLs formed a coalition to win the majority with 40.8 per cent of the votes. This election came shortly after the death of Franco Tudjman, the previous decade-long authoritarian president. The HDZ lost this election due to growing discontent surrounding Tudjman's isolationist policies, evidence of corruption and anti-democratic moves to stay in power (Konitzer, 2010). The SDP and HSLs coalition signals a liberal base in the population. The SDP-led coalition ran on a platform of change, purging corruption, and above all European integration. (CSCE, 2000). Emerging from its "Homeland War" and the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict as both a victim and victor, Croatian politicians began work on reintegrating with the international community, clearly moving toward EU membership by cooperating with the ICTY, and focusing on domestic economic concerns (Jovic, 2009).

Elected as HDZ president in 2000, Ivo Sanader was initially thought to be a compromise for both the hard-line nationalists and the emerging liberal camp. His immediate pro-EU stance, willingness to cooperate with other political parties and openness about mistakes made by the previous regime managed to transform HDZ's platform while simultaneously mobilizing the party's traditional base (Konitzer, 2010). Domestically and internationally the signals were clear – the path to the EU was imperative, cooperation with the ICTY was non-negotiable and the

electorate wanted someone to stand up for Croatia as a victor of the “Homeland war” while still making progress with the EU.

Serbia’s volatility score of 70.15 signals an extraordinary shift in power with the ousting Slobodan Milosevic and his party, SPS. With 64.1% of the vote, DOS won a sweeping victory over the SPS and the SRS. The DOS was a coalition led by the conservative DSS and its president, Vojislav Kostunica, and the moderate DS and its president, Zoran Djindic. United against Milosevic, Kostunica and Djindic were left to deal with the burden of dealing with the still-ambivalent effects of the war during the 1990s.

Specifically, Serbia (then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) did not emerge from the 1990s as a unified country. After the war in Kosovo in 1999, the United Nations Security Council agreed to end NATO bombing of Serbia and established interim control of government in the former province of Serbia. The UNSC Resolution 1244 is considered vague by some, with Serbia believing it established Kosovo as a permanent part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Kosovo believing it to be a reaffirmation of sovereignty (Sell, 2001). Also, backed by the UN, attempts by Kostunica to keep Montenegro a part of the Republic created tension between the two remaining states in the FRY (Konitzer, 2010; Sell, 2001). The uncertainty regarding the FRY’s future left Serbian politicians with an unstable and insecure nation. Additionally, the international community was particularly uneasy since the peace afforded by UNSC Resolution 1244 was based on the FRY remaining a state.

Further complicating issues, Milosevic was still alive with resonant political power throughout the electorate and political institutions. The question of what to do with Milosevic created tension between the Prime Minister, Djindic, and the president, Kostunica (Subotic, 2010). Djindic was actively pro-EU and reformist and wanted to arrest Milosevic for abuses of power. Kostunica, on the other hand, preferred to grant Milosevic a de facto amnesty, worried that extradition would undercut support from donors (Subotic, 2010). Djindic eventually had Milosevic arrested and transferred to The Hague in June, 2001. During his incarceration, the SPS

was forced to balance the need to reform and build a new political base with the support that Milosevic still received. In 2002, to further complicate the political landscape, Milosevic ordered the SPS to back the SRS candidate, Vojislav Seselj, in the upcoming presidential election (Konitzer, 2010). The encouragement by Milosevic to switch parties not only makes support for Milosevic hard to measure, but it also signaled to the electorate that the SRS was an acceptable alternative to the recently powerless SPS.

Despite the domestic tension, Serbia was rewarded by the international community for the “democratic revolution” and reformist efforts. Within the first year of the DOS government, Serbia was admitted in the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, the United Nations, became a member of the International Monetary Fund and had resumed diplomatic relations with the USA, Germany, France and Great Britain (Orlovic, 2008). The expectation that Serbia would be quick to purge itself of Milosevic-era “relics” was high, and even though Serbia’s perception of the EU was tepid, the pressure to continue to extradite war criminals was immediately very high (Obradovic-Wochnik, 2009).

2003 Elections: More Information, More Navigating

Leading up to the 2003 elections, both Croatian and Serbian political parties experienced dramatic shifts in their political landscapes. Although strongly discouraged by the EU, the Croatia’s SDP president, Racan, had applied for EU membership leading up to the election (Forto, 2004). Meanwhile, Serbia struggled to deal with the assassination of one of its most prominent and pro-EU politicians, Zoran Djindic.

In Croatia, the 2003 election saw another large shift in power with a volatility score of 34.75. There was no change in electoral laws, legal framework, or constitution since the previous election (OSCE, 2003). There was almost universal support for EU accession among all parties and the HDZ won a small majority over the SDP with 33.9% of the vote based on economic and domestic issues and was granted a mandate to form the next government. In fact, both the HDZ

and the SDP, Croatia's two largest sustaining parties signed an informal "Pact for Europe" in order to support each other's efforts in meeting EU conditions. When it came time to form the post-election government, the HDZ had to form an alliance with other seat-winning parties in order to effectively govern. The HDZ was able to reform and gain considerable power due to Tudjman's successor.

After winning presidency of the HDZ again in 2002, Sanader managed to strategically eliminate political rivals within his own party, particularly right-wing nationalist, Ivic Pasalic, and eliminating nationalist rivals from within the party (Forto, 2004; Konitzer, 2010). In 2003, Sanader invited "hundreds" of foreign ministers the HDZ's 8th national congress to assure the international community that he was clearly pro-EU and willing to cooperate with the ICTY as long as individual acts were not treated as collective or political guilt (Konitzer, 2010). This allowed the HDZ to successfully run for parliament without outright discouragement from the international community.

In order to establish and maintain a positive relationship with the EU, several anonymous European diplomats, including Doris Pack, an EU Parliamentarian, warned Sanader not form an alliance with the right-wing, nationalist Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) (Konitzer, 2010). This proved to be successful since the post-election coalition government was formed with the SDP's former ally, the HSLS and even other minority parties, including the Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS) (Jovic, 2006; Songstad, 2004). The EU foreign ministers responded by calling on the new government to fully cooperate with the ICTY in order to continue accession negotiations (Songstad, 2004). The transformation of the HDZ and its continued efforts to bring Croatia closer to the EU has shown a significant example of party adaptation and political strategization of an unclear landscape (Konitzer, 2010).

As part of EU requirements, each country must respect minority rights, so immediately after the election the HDZ and the SDSS signed a coalition agreement facilitating the return of Serb refugees and restitution of property lost during the 1990 wars (Jovic, 2006). Additionally,

Sanader bolstered Croatian foreign policy by promoting regional cooperation by signing a bilateral minority rights agreement with Serbia and even visiting Belgrade in 2004 (Jovic, 2006). Within a few years, Sanader managed to purge the HDZ of the remaining Tudjmanists, increase regional cooperation, improve relations with Serbia and Montenegro and increase minority rights of ethnic Serbs. This prompted the EU Commission to issue a rather positive Opinion on Croatia's Application for Membership of the EU in 2004, calling Croatia a "functioning democracy" with a "functioning market economy" (EU Commission, 2004). However, Croatia's accession process remained a stop and go process, due to issues cooperating with the ICTY.

Only three months after the elections, Sanader's determination to fully cooperate with the Hague would be tested with the indictment of Croatian generals Ivan Cermak and Mladen Markac for atrocities committed during "Operation Storm". The Sanader government responded swiftly and effectively, without igniting any nationalist backlash, with the immediate surrender of the generals and by arresting six remaining suspects (Subotic, Forthcoming). Yet, by 2004, the process was slowed again due to Croatia's inability to capture General Gotovina. After Croatia allowed foreign intelligence to help locate and arrest Gotovina, the ICTY Chief Prosecutor officially declared that Croatia was fully cooperating (Jovic, 2006; Jovic, 2009). In 2005, Sanader's Croatia was rewarded with the ratification of the SAA (EU Commission, 2005).

Additionally, Jovic (2009) credits cooperation with the Hague as a nationalizing force, as it served to secure and enlarge "the level of *de facto* sovereignty" that had not been achieved when most European countries had recognized Croatia as an independent state. Furthermore, Sanader's cooperation managed to end the international supervision and direct entrenchment on domestic policy that was prevalent during the 1990s, since Croatia was now seen as a viable candidate.

In Serbia, the 2003 elections saw another extremely high volatility score of 73.8. There were some structural changes, such as the 5% threshold for minority parties was abolished and the FRY had now become a loose federation with Montenegro (at this time named "Serbia and

Montenegro) (Orlovic, 2008; Subotic, 2010). Also, the assassination of Zoran Djindic drastically changed the political landscape and halted, if not reversed, reformation and Europeanization efforts.

Tensions were mounting between the DSS's Kostunica and the DS's Djindic, even before Milosevic's extradition in 2001. Not only did the two have disagreements of the management of resources and cabinet posts (Subotic, 2010), but they also disagreed on the process of reform in its entirety. Kostunica wanted to maintain continuity and proceed with economic and political reform gradually, retaining the preceding period's political and legal institutions. Djindic fought to replace the communist and authoritarian period quickly in order to speed up with European integration (Gordy, 2004). Therefore, the governing coalition quickly dissolved, with Kostunica abandoning the DOS in 2002. When Djindic was assassinated by an operation called "Stope the Hague", Kostunica quickly stepped in to blame the rapid reforms taking place and the unreasonable pressure placed on Djindic to cooperate with ICTY investigations (Subotic, 2010).

In Djindic's absence, the DS was unable to reestablish political clout before the election, so the DSS and the SRS were able to win a large majority of the 2003 vote. With 27.6% of the vote, the SRS won the largest percentage of the vote. Due to the extremist antics, "Greater Serbia" rhetoric and outright rejection of the West in favor of closer ties with Russia, the SRS was considered an international outsider. This forced the DSS, with 17.7% of the vote, to form a minority government with the G-17 Plus and the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) with the support from the SPS and various other deputies (Orlovic, 2008). Though not part of the coalition, the DS did manage to win 12.6% of the vote while Milosevic's SPS won 7.6%. Thus, Kostunica became the Prime Minister with a loosely joined coalition and announced that the new government would no longer transfer indictees to The Hague and that domestic courts would take over ICTY trials (Subotic, 2010).

Since Djindic had dissolved the FRY, the EU had to approach the accession of the new federation, "Serbia and Montenegro", differently. Therefore, a "dual track" track had been

devised so that the two republics could negotiate separately regarding economic issues, and a single state regarding political issues (Orlovic, 2008). By 2004, it was clear that failure to cooperate with the ICTY was not only preventing Serbia from moving forward with the SAA, but also isolating Serbia from the rest of the region (Subotic, 2010). Therefore, backed by the Serbian Orthodox Church clerics who issued statements that the entire country was suffering because a few individuals refused to surrender, Kostunica eventually responded by recalibrating cooperation as “voluntary surrenders” (Subotic, 2010).

To date, and based on the number of arrests, the period of “voluntary surrenders” has proven to be the most successful period of Serbian cooperation with The Hague (Konitzer, 2010). Subotic (2010) attributes Kostunica’s “change of heart” to broader political strategy. In addition to the likely negative report in the EU’s upcoming feasibility study, Serbia’s isolation was diminishing the likelihood of being included in any international decisions regarding Montenegro and Kosovo (Subotic, 2010). Kostunica’s strategy had worked and in April, 2005, the EU Commission confirmed that Serbia and Montenegro had made sufficient progress and were officially approved to begin negotiating a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) (EU Commission, 2005).

In June, 2006 Montenegro held a referendum and voted in favor of independence, dissolving the loose federation of “Serbia and Montenegro” (Markovich, 2008). Faced again with new territorial boundaries, Serbia was put to the task of drawing up a new constitution. Supported by all parliamentary parties and passed by referendum, the constitution is hailed as a domestic political success and marker of an established democracy (Markovich, 2008; Stojanovic, 2006). The new constitution not only preserved Serbia’s territorial integrity, but it also strengthened political stability by calling early parliamentary, presidential and local elections (Stojanovic, 2006). It is also important because it commits Serbia to “European principles”, civil democracy, human and minority rights, abolishes the 5% vote threshold for minority parties, defines Serbia as

a market economy and allows for democratic and civil control of the army (Markovich, 2008; Stojanovic, 2006).

There are, however, a few criticisms of the new constitution; of particular concern is the treatment of Kosovo. Even though the preamble guarantees autonomy within an asymmetrical constitutional system, it “categorically asserts that the Province of Kosovo and Metohija is an inseparable part of the territory of Serbia” (Stojanovic, 2006). Furthermore, it obliges the president to not sign any agreement recognizing Kosovo independence from Serbia (Markovich, 2008). Even though these articles were included to appease the SRS and other nationalists, from a purely legal standpoint, they only require a change in the constitution should Serbia recognize an independent Kosovo (Stojanovic, 2006). A few months later, the EU gave a “green light” to the constitution and congratulated Serbia on the way it was instituted (Subotic, 2010).

Although the DSS’s minority government managed to keep the SRS from governing, Kostunica firmly established himself as a strategic nationalist. By effectively framing his cooperation with the ICTY as a patriotic duty by the individuals indicted, he managed to make progress with the EU. The tentative federation with Montenegro combined with the negative perception the ICTY created a very complex political situation. In combination with a desire to participate in the international arena and eventually join the EU, Kostunica’s changing political strategy throughout his first term as Prime Minister showed that he was only willing to compromise his nationalist stance in return for political gain.

2007 Elections: Institutionalization?

With a volatility score of 14.9, Croatia’s 2007 elections show a marked increase in institutionalization of political parties. Again, there were no changes in the legal framework regarding electoral law nor any changes to the constitution (OSCE, 2007). At this juncture we can expect that the drastic decrease in electoral volatility was due to a lack of new political parties, an increased level of expectation regarding the electoral system and the parties operating within that

system, a decrease of issue salience and an increase in information afforded to parties and their constituents.

With 36% of the vote, the HDZ won 5.2% more votes than the SDP and was granted the mandate to form the next government. The formation of the new government came after intense negotiations and an eventual coalition between the HDZ and several moderate and ethnic parties (Doric, 2008). The issues with the most political salience leading up to the elections were privatization, taxation, corruption and distributive outcomes (Henjak, 2007). Since the issue of statehood had finally begun to move off the political agenda, the two main political parties could now focus on domestic economic and infrastructure issues, such as the privatization of public companies or taxation of capital gains (Henjak, 2007). This means that, officially, no main political party is committed to hindering negotiations with the EU (Doric, 2008).

The negotiation process on the *acquis communautaire* was officially launched in 2006 (Sosic, 2007). Essentially, this places Croatia in line with other postcommunist countries at the beginning stages of accession, since full cooperation with the ICTY was a mandatory requirement prior to this stage. However, the negotiations were later slowed down due to insufficient reforms in judicature and corruption and a dispute with Slovenia regarding Croatia's reluctance to implement regulation related to the Protected Ecological and Fishery Zone in the Adriatic Sea (Sosic, 2007).

As of 2009, Croatia has made great progress toward EU accession, meeting key political criteria in most areas (Commission of the European Communities, 2009). Additionally, Croatia became a member of NATO and resolved the aforementioned dispute with Slovenia (Doric, 2010). Even though progress has been made, efforts to curb corruption and make further reforms in the judicature and the fight against corruption have been slowed (Commission of the European Communities, 2009; Doric, 2010). Also, the sudden and rather unexplained resignation of Sanader in 2009 caused some controversy, with some speculating that a new election would be held in his absence.

After some time, though, his predecessor, Jadranka Kosor, proved to maintain a stable and functional government and it appears that support for the HDZ has remained fairly strong (Doric, 2010). The next parliamentary election is expected to be held in late 2011. Considering the recent economic crisis, we can expect issues to be centered around more domestic economic concerns. Additionally, Sanader's resignation prompted some divergence in the two main parties, with multiple candidates from both the SDP and the HDZ becoming independent candidates (Doric, 2010). Therefore, we can expect volatility scores to increase again if the trend toward independent candidates continues.

Serbia's 2007 election had a drastic reduction in volatility. With a score of 19.7, we can see an increase in information from the previous two elections. In fact, both the SRS and DSS maintained their voter bases, only contributing about .5 each to the overall score. The biggest shift in power was centered around the liberal base. The DS doubled its vote percentage since 2003, with 22.7%, and the new pro-EU, pro-ICTY Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) surpassed the threshold with 5.3% of the vote. The sudden drop in volatility comes as a surprise, though, since Serbia had undergone drastic political and territorial changes in the years preceding the election. Issues such as, Serbia's new constitution, in addition to Milosevic's death while on trial at The Hague, the EU suspending negotiations for accession, and increasing tensions between the major political parties regarding the status of Kosovo should have created another uncertain political landscape.

In light of Montenegro's independence, the issues surrounding the 2007 elections centered on the status of Kosovo, EU reforms, and domestic economic concerns (Markovich, 2008; Orlovic, 2008). The SRS won 28.6%, the largest majority, of the vote, so the remaining parties were forced to form another minority coalition. This proved to be a difficult task since the DS president, Boris Tadic, and Kostunica disagreed on many major governance decisions, in addition to cooperation with the ICTY and EU negotiations (Markovich S., 2008). Djindic's successor and president of Serbia since 2004, Tadic, had rarely challenged Kostunica during the

previous government, especially concerning cooperation with the ICTY (Obradovic-Wochnik, 2009). Even though Tadic's previous timidity could largely be contributed to the "dark cloud" of Djindic's assassination (Obradovic-Wochnik, 2009), it no doubt contributed to the ability of the two leaders to govern previously without incident.

However, in light of the DS winning the second largest percentage of votes and the increasing importance of the status of Kosovo, it appears as though Tadic was ready to be more aggressive when dealing with Kostunica. The negotiations regarding the formation of government did not go well. Kostunica wanted to remain Prime Minister while Tadic preferred that former finance minister, Bozidar Delic, take his place (Markovich S , 2008). After Kostunica flirted with granting the SRS key political positions, Tadic decided to acquiesce. Less than an hour before the constitutional deadline, parliament confirmed the Kostunica-led coalition with the DS and the G 17plus.

Despite Kostunica's cooperation with the ICTY in 2005, the EU increased pressure on Serbia to turn over the six remaining ICTY indictees; specifically, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic (Markovich S., 2008). Kostunica's lack of response caused the EU to officially postpone SAA negotiations in 2006. However, after the implementation of the new constitution and the 2007 elections, technical negotiations between Serbia and the EU on the SAA were resumed and considered completed and initialed by November 2007 (Markovich, 2008; Subotic, 2010). This may have been a result of EU member states' disagreement regarding cooperation with the ICTY (Markovich, 2008) or a sign of the EU's softened policy in an effort to promote a stronger pro-EU enthusiasm (Subotic, 2010).

Despite a changing political and electoral landscape, electoral volatility decreased dramatically. This can be explained for two reasons. First, despite the secession of Montenegro and the resulting territorial and legislative changes, Serbian politicians didn't choose to politicize these issues. Instead, the major parties ran on the same issues as previous elections – domestic economy, the Kosovo status and a nationalist vs. European future. Second, no new parties were

politically viable enough to capture a large percentage of the vote. Even though the LDP has made an impact on the political scene due to its outspoken pro-EU, pro-ICTY stance and acceptance of Kosovo independence, it only managed to capture 5.3% of the vote. In addition to an increase of institutionalization, there was also a stark increase in Europeanization immediately following the 2007 election. By taking a broader look at what the volatility scores indicate, we can see that, despite the consistent SRS support, the electorate is supporting pro-EU parties and relegating power for strategic nationalists like Kostunica.

2008 Elections: Good news or Bad news?

The 2008 electoral volatility score more than doubled since the previous election, with a score of 41.25. Typically, a sharp increase in volatility score indicates a shift in power or the political system, resulting in a decline in information for elites and voters. However, as a result of the pre-election coalition between the DS, G17plus and the SPO, the ZES won 38.4% of the vote. The SRS maintained a consistent share of the vote, with 29.5%, and the DS dropped to 11.6%. The vote share captured by the ZES compounds the overall volatility score due to the amount of lost votes by the coalition's individual parties², even though there wasn't a significant change among the elites in power. As would be expected, the highly politicized and salient issue of Kosovo's independence status magnified Serbia's political landscape to a considerable degree and caused the dissolution of parliament.

As discussed above, the 2007 coalition between the DS and the DSS was tenuous at best. However, when the SRS responded to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence by presenting a resolution to condition European integration on recognition of Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia, the two parties decided they could no longer govern together (Sebastian, 2008).

² In fact, according to Powell and Tucker (2009), volatility caused by a pre-election coalition party should be treated differently than volatility caused by the entry and exit of new parties. Since coalition parties are essentially the same political elites under a new name, they give the appearance of higher volatility than what really exists. Therefore, they argue that two types of volatility scores should be calculated, Type A and Type B, in order to better capture the level of institutionalization.

The issue of Kosovo had crossed the threshold of an arbitrary political and rhetorical means of winning votes into an immediate realm of action. The differences between the DS and the DSS's nationalist vs. European goals had come to a head. Essentially, flimsy coalitions based on the necessity to keep the SRS out of government were no longer sustainable.

The SRS responded to the elections by adopting a populist platform devoted to ending economic losses, fighting against corruption and defending national sovereignty (Sebastian, 2008). Additionally, the Radicals outright refuse cooperation with the ICTY and continued to express the importance of strengthening economic and political ties with Russia (Sebastian, 2008). Thus, the SRS maintained its constituency in the 2008 elections with 29.5% of the vote. However, two novel and important differences occurred with this election. First, this was the first time since the 2003 elections that another party had won a larger share of votes than the SRS. Second, due to Kostunica's nationalist response to Kosovo's independence, the DSS was now willing to form a coalition with the SRS in order to keep the ZES from obtaining the mandate (Subotic, 2010).

According to Konitzer (2010), "decisions to hold early elections are implicit recognitions that the current level of perceived support is expected to decline". Therefore, Kostunica's decision to exercise his right as Prime Minister and call for early elections demonstrates two miscalculated strategies. First, Kostunica assumed that the electorate's dissatisfaction with Kosovo's proclamation of independence would result in a decline of support for the current government. Second, by asserting a stronger nationalist position, he assumed that the dissatisfaction would lie with the pro-EU element of the 2007 coalition and could maintain his political power by strengthening his nationalist platform. After joining forces with New Serbia (NS), the DSS-NS campaigned based on the fight for Serbia's territorial integrity, economic issues, and fighting corruption (Sebastian, 2008). After winning only 11.6% of the vote (5% less than the last election), the DSS-NS formed a coalition with the SRS in an attempt to form a minority government (Markovich S., 2009). However, the combined number of seats won by the

SRS and the DSS-NS were not enough to win the mandate. Therefore, the 20 seats won by the SPS became vitally important in determining the next government (Konitzer, 2010).

Led by Tadic, the ZES campaign stood firm in the same five principles that the previous coalition was based on; safeguarding the country's "integrity", continued effort for European integration, improving the domestic economic situation, the fight against corruption and continue cooperation with the ICTY (Sebastian, 2008). Of particular concern is the vague priority of preserving the "integrity" of the country since the ZES pledged for further negotiations and rejected the EU mission in Kosovo (EULEX) (Sebastian, 2008). Since Tadic did not present EU integration and Kosovo independence as setting a precedent for one or the other, the liberal president appeared to be taking a rather centrist, non-affirmative, stance on the issue of Kosovo. Whether he truly believed that further negotiations on Kosovo would eventually bear fruit or whether it was a strategy to win votes from a pro-EU and/or undecided-Kosovo electorate remains to be seen. However, leading up to the election, the general consensus was that the ZES would not win a substantial amount of votes (Markovich S., 2009). Therefore, the EU strategically decided to sign the SAA between the EU and Serbia in order to help increase the popularity of the party (Markovich S., 2009; Sebastian, 2008; Subotic, 2010).³

Both strategies worked and the ZES beat the SRS with a majority of the vote share for the first time since the 2003 elections. However, with only 38.4% of the vote, the ZES needed to form a coalition in order to form the government. Since the DSS-NS/SRS coalition was in the same position, the SPS was in a particularly advantageous position. Since the death of Milosevic, the SPS had struggled to establish itself as a truly reformed Socialist party and simultaneously maintain its "threshold-straddling" vote share (Konitzer, 2010). The 2008 election presented the SPS with the opportunity to make a firm decision regarding its political direction. Thus, in

³ Even though the SAA was signed, the EU put ratification and implementation on hold until the new government could demonstrate full cooperation with the ICTY (Markovich S., 2009).

coalition with the internationally supported, reformed SPS, the ZES was granted the mandate to form the next government (Konitzer, 2010; Sebastian, 2008).

Thus, Serbia's EU integration process had reached a turning point as a result of the 2008 elections. Almost immediately after the new government took power, Radovan Karadzic was arrested for war crimes during the Bosnia and Herzegovina war (Markovich S., 2009). Shortly thereafter, the SAA was ratified and implementation was scheduled to begin on January 1, 2009 (Markovich S., 2009). As of the 2010 EU Commission Conclusions on Serbia, the EU reports a high degree of commitment demonstrated by the government, but emphasizes the importance of Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic's eventual capture and extradition to The Hague.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In large part, Serbia and Croatia have been kept out of the broad comparative analyses of postcommunist countries due to their unique shared history and different political outcomes. The volatility scores of both Croatia and Serbia can be understood as a product of the internal and external forces that contribute to the course of institutionalization in two states that have tried to recover from the effects of political instability, communism, war, a changing political and territorial landscape and the advent of democracy. Although the historical experiences of the two countries are largely similar, the variation among their electoral volatility scores signal fundamental differences in their party systems and efforts to integrate with Europe.

Therefore, by analyzing electoral volatility scores, we can see the effect of information, which brings about institutionalization of party systems, on Europeanization as well. Serbia's changing political landscape since 2000 caused a lack of information that hindered institutionalization of party systems and efforts to integrate with Europe. As it turns out, volatility in the case of Serbia can be a good thing: Voters abandon nationalist, anti-EU parties as they learn more about them. This forces parties to reevaluate their agendas, especially as EU conditionality ramps up and voters are more likely to get more information. This has so far led to a change in party platforms and also the formation of new parties, such as the LDP. By comparing the Serbian and Croatian elections since 2000, I have shown how political elites rely on information to strategically win votes. This relationship, in turn, had a significant effect on Europeanization as well. This is why the spike in Serbia's 2008 volatility indicates both a higher

level of Europeanization and information gathering, even though it deviates from Croatia's more stable pattern of institutionalization.

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