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It's Not What You Know...: Europeanization and Informal Networks in Former Yugoslavia

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Abstract

More than three decades since the dissolution of Yugoslavia the history of integrating the region into the wider European system is, at best, mixed. Of the original six republics, plus Kosovo, only two are current members of the European Union (EU) while the rest remain at various stages of accession. This study examines three of the countries – Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia – to attempt to contribute to the literature surrounding the widely varied experiences of Europeanization in former Yugoslavia. Specifically, this piece seeks to answer the question of under what conditions do informal political networks impact the EU accession process of former Yugoslav states.

Within this overarching question Europeanization is conceived as a process of diffusion of norms or "ways of doing things" (Radaelli 2002, 3) to a candidate state with the end goal being accession. The External Incentives Model (EIM) emphasizes the role external actors play in driving this change in candidate states (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). Alternatively, Europeanization can also be conceived as a process of policy learning whereby actors learn either in a hierarchy, with top down diffusing of norms, or in epistemic contexts, where learning is driven by problem solving and expertise (Dunlop and Radaelli 2018). In combination with these approaches, this thesis also draws on insights from the study of informality and, in particular, informal networks which posits that behind formal processes lies a second world of unwritten codes and practices which act to enable and constrain certain types of behaviours (Helmke and Levitsky 2004).

To test this interaction this thesis uses Social Network Analysis (SNA) to examine the impact of informal political networks within the parliaments of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia on their respective roads to accession. All cases are examined in the period between their first agreements with the EU and accession, or until 2020 in the case of Serbia which is still a candidate state. This provides a timetable of 1992-2004 for Slovenia, 2000-2013 for Croatia, and 2008-2020 for Serbia. In each case, the

parliament is analysed by combining both quantitative insights from SNA with qualitative interviews conducted with policymakers in the region. This research reveals that while the impact can be subtle, the structure and nature of the informal networks in each of the cases acted to enable and constrain the accession process helping to explain some of the variation in the length and experience of accession, and thus of Europeanization.

Lay Summary

This thesis examines the experience of three countries in South-East Europe as they have either joined or attempted to join the European Union (EU). Through this analysis this thesis attempts to address the question of why some states have done better than others in the region while at passing the necessary reforms to become member states of the EU. The EU is a very exclusive club and requires potential member states to significantly reform their laws and administrations to make them fit with the EU's own standards.

There has been much research on the explanations for why some states have been able to pass the reforms more quickly than others. This thesis tests two of these theories, the External Incentives Model and Europeanization as Policy Learning, by examining the experiences of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia as they have joined or attempted to join the EU. Further, this thesis also attempts to combine these two theories with a third academic approach: the study of informal politics. Informal politics argues that there is more to politics than simply the formal procedures such as votes or debates in a parliament. Instead, there are also other forms of social behaviour which can impact these formal processes. Do people get along in the politics? Do people eat lunch with people from a different political party? Are there social groups? Or does everyone just go home immediately after work?

This thesis is a first attempt to try and bring the study of these informal practices into academia by studying the impact of informal political networks which exist or existed in the parliaments of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. Each of the parliaments is studied in turn and maps of relationships were made for each parliament including the different types of connections that each parliamentarian possessed. What party were they part of? Did they join any committees? Were they on any parliamentary research trips abroad with their colleagues? Once these maps had been drawn, interviews were conducted with current or former members of the relevant parliaments to see what they thought about the informal workings of their parliament.

Altogether, this thesis found that the informal networks did have an impact on the process of joining the EU in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. In Slovenia, the close

working relationships of individuals helped them work together to solve problems and pass the required changes. Alternatively, in Serbia the informal networks slowed the accession process as individuals did not work together as well and, indeed, the informal networks actually acted to support corruption and the theft of state resources which has slowed the accession process. Croatia's experience was in the middle. This was an interesting finding as including the study of informal politics allowed for a richer understanding of the experiences of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia than just using the existing theories. It is hoped, then, that this thesis will help contribute to research on the impact of informality and will help policymakers in South-East Europe.

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A Note on Language

As this thesis deals entirely with the region of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia it is important here to provide a short declaration on the language which will be used throughout the piece. This thesis takes no stance on the historical or present existence or naming of any language group which would apply to any or all the successor countries of the region. Whether or not the continuum of languages or *sprachbund* which stretches from Slovenia to Bulgaria constitutes one language group, one language, or a variety of dialects is a fascinating question but one which is external to the requirements of this thesis. Furthermore, this thesis recognizes the complexities surrounding the naming of any language group which may or may not exist in some or more of the countries and makes no claim as to the mutual intelligibility of the languages or the appropriateness of any naming scheme. All the following names were used by the author or by interview subjects during the research process and were recognized:

- Serbian
- Croatian
- Slovenian
- Serbo-Croatian
- Croato-Serbian
- Serbo-Croat
- Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian
- Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian
- "*Naš jezik*" (Our language)

For simplicity each of the national chapters will use the local word for whichever topic is being discussed. In the case of the shared Yugoslav institutions this means that in Chapter 4 (Slovenia) the Slovenian name is used while in Chapter 5 (Croatia) the Croatian name is used for the same institution. For the ease of the reader the Serbian Latin alphabet, as opposed to the Serbian Cyrillic script, has been used as much as possible. Appendix 4 provides a note on the pronunciation of names and characters for those not familiar with Slavic spellings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In life, it is sometimes said that what matters is not *what* you know but *who* you know. No human being is an island, to paraphrase John Donne ([1624] 1975, p. 122), and all individuals, excepting the most remote of hermits, find themselves in a dense network of interpersonal connections. Everyone has an internal rolodex of connections they possess including family ties, friendships, work relationships, or, sometimes, forms of regional kinship or clan based relationships. Taken together, these connections constitute an informal network in which individuals find themselves embedded, creating obligations and opportunities which others may not experience. Many cultures, for example, have a "godparent" style relationship which involves appointing an individual a spiritual and pastoral guide to a young child. In some cultures, this practice can be loose, with the godparent perhaps taking the child out to dinner or offering small sums of cash to the child periodically. However, in the countries of former Yugoslavia, the practice of being a godparent (*kum*) can involve a tight bonding of family or clan units together sometimes for multiple generations (*Kumstvo (Montenegro) - Global Informality Project*, 2021).

In politics these types of ties come in many forms. Some connections are loose. For example, it is doubtful that all 705 Members of the European Parliament (MEP) have deep and meaningful relationships with each other. Conversely other types are closer, such as those which bond MEPs from both the same party and member state. Other points of connection such as shared membership of committees produce middling levels of connection between MEPs, built on shared years of service, if not ideological or cultural similarity. In each country there are formal rules regulating such connections to a certain extent. Rules on lobbying or conflicts of interest are common examples of attempts at formal regulation. Again, however, these regulations and their enforcement are culturally dependent: they are moulded by a set of *informal* rules. While such informality does not always interfere with political action it is always present, helping to shape the realm of what is possible by impacting the flow of information to individuals and providing alternative centres of power within political structures. This thesis attempts to contribute to the scholarship on the impacts of such

connections by identifying under what conditions informal political networks of former Yugoslav states impacted their attempts to join the European Union (EU).

Research Puzzle

In the 30 years since the collapse of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socialistična Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*[1]*/Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*[2], SFRJ) two successor states have become members of the EU while the rest are either candidate states or potential candidate states (*Check current status*, 2016). Slovenia, the frontrunner, became a member state in 2004 while Croatia acceded in 2013. Further, Serbia and Montenegro are frontrunners among candidate states, North Macedonia has started negotiations, and Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina are potential candidate states (*Check current status*, 2016). Thus, of the six or seven independent countries which emerged from the collapse of the SFRJ[3] two are member states, three are candidate countries, and the final one or two are potential candidate countries. What explains this variation in levels of Europeanization in a region which was, only thirty years ago, not only one country but also the first socialist country to sign a cooperation agreement with the, then, European Community (EC)[4]?

As has been pointed out by other scholars, and may indeed be simply obvious, a large portion of this variation can be explained by factors external to the accession process. The levels of violence experienced within each state during the collapse of the SFRJ varies significantly from case to case. Slovenia, as the first to secede, experienced the lowest level of violence with a brief "Ten-Day War" (*desetdnevna vojna*) as the only mass conflict it experienced. Alternatively, Bosnia and Herzegovina saw some of the fiercest fighting and the conflict in Serbia and Kosovo was not ended until an intervention by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999 (United Nations Security Council, 1999; Judah *et al.*, 2001). Thus, much of the variation in the pace of EU accession has been explained by their various experiences of conflict in the 1990s.

[1] In Slovenian.
[2] In Croatian and Serbian.
[3] This thesis does not take a position on the *de jure* independence of Kosovo.
[4] For a history of SFRJ-EC relations see: Obadic, 2014.

This process of explaining the variety of trajectories began in the 1990s itself, with many attributing the collapse to what, from a modern perspective, appear to be wildly essentialist reasons, such as attributing some sort of violence and non-European attributes to the "character of the people" (Job, 1993, p. 54). While this was a popular attitude at the time it has, thankfully, waned, at least in academia, and other more theoretically grounded approaches have emerged. Some continue in a cultural vein attempting to explain the variation in terms of the actions of leaders or historical memory (Lindstrom, 2003; Subotić, 2013). To these were added those derived not from the specificities of Yugoslavia and its collapse but instead from the general experience of EU expansion such as those focusing on each state's institutional or organizational capacity, internal governance architectures, party coalitions, or economic development (Jachtenfuchs, 2001; Anastasakis, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2005; Dimitrova and Dragneva, 2009; Börzel, 2010; Iusmen, 2014).

While these explanations are illuminating and explain some of the variation especially on the macro- or state level, there remains more to the story. Regarding economic and institutional capacity, although some of the former Yugoslav countries are among the poorest to attempt to join the EU to date, Bulgaria was the poorest relative to the EU average with only 24% of the EU's GDP per capita in 1995 when it applied for membership (European Commission, 1997b, p. 20). Admittedly the EU average GDP decreased following the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, with the accession of the relatively poorer post-socialist states, but this is still a remarkable discrepancy. Further, the EU adjusts the amount of pre-accession aid to a country dependent on both the amount of need and absorption capacity (ADE s.a, 2019, p. II). Within the limits of the absorption capacity of the candidate state this is intended to help ameliorate factors such as levels of economic development in determining the pace of accession.

Turning to more political factors, both former Yugoslav states and other new EU member states have experienced similar degrees of favourable and unfavourable party coalitions to foster accession. The Mečiar government of Slovakia from 1994-98 stands as a particular example of unfavourable government (Higley and Pakulski, 2012), yet Slovakia joined successfully with the rest of the 2004 wave. Indeed, the experience of Slovakia under the authoritarian and corrupt Mečiar highlights the main, political, explanation which has been given for the relative divergence in accession

prospects for the region: corruption and authoritarianism. This, then, brings the discussion again to the central puzzle of this thesis: why have some countries in former Yugoslavia successfully Europeanized and why have some become politically frozen "stabilitocracies" (Wunsch *et al.*, 2017, p. 95)?

Setting the Stage: Literature, Methods, and Logic

To address this, the thesis examines two theories of Europeanization: The External Incentives Model (EIM) and Europeanization as Policy Learning. As this thesis concentrates on EU accession, Europeanization here focuses on the accession process with a country being successfully Europeanized once it has become a full EU member state. This definition is compatible with the chosen theories of Europeanization, the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning, with the former even explicitly examining the accession process as one of Europeanization (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2017). Further detail on the theoretical framework will be given in Chapter 2, Theories of Collapse and Accession, but, fundamentally, this thesis tests the explanatory power of the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning. However, beyond such theory testing, which has been done elsewhere for other cases (Zürn and Checkel, 2005; Trauner, 2009; Mendelski, 2011; Tzifakis, 2012; Vachudova, 2014), this thesis also tests these theories with insights from the emerging study of informality.

Each of the countries to be examined here has different informal political cultures which have impacted their ability to join the EU. Informality pervades formal systems embedding all actors in a dense web of informal connections. In politics this results in the creation of a network of informal connections which can enable and constrain various types of political action, helping to determine political outcomes in a way which may not be expected from state level factors alone. Readers will be familiar with the informal practices which dominate in their own country[5], but the study of how such informal practices affect politics has only relatively recently begun to be studied in earnest. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist world provided a particular impetus for such academic interest as the region attempted to

[5] For a global perspective on informal practices see Ledeneva, 2017, 2018.

modernize not just its industry but also political and economic practices (Ledeneva, 2009).

As such, this thesis represents an attempt to advance the study of informality and to combine its insights with those of the study of Europeanization. This provides an opportunity to test the importance of state level factors as well as individual and network level factors to understand the conditions under which such informal networks may impact formal processes. The intention here is not necessarily to overturn any of the theories examined but simply to identify *if*, *how*, and *why* the inclusion of the study of informal political networks can add analytical value. That informal factors *could* affect formal processes has been identified before (Fewsmith, 1996; Helmke and Levitsky, 2004; Hidetaka, 2005), but this study represents a first attempt to identify the conditions under which they can do so while also attempting to produce quantifiable data to that effect.

To achieve this task Social Network Analysis (SNA) is used, which has been demonstrated elsewhere to provide insight into the impact of political networks on a within case basis (Kostiuchenko, 2012). This is combined with the comparative method, specifically the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), to isolate lines of causation by controlling for variables across three cases (Lijphart, 1971). As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Comparative Social Network Analysis and Reflexivity, primary data was collected from publicly available sources to construct various network maps which were then complemented with interviews conducted with politicians and policymakers in the region. This was then compared both within and across cases to identify how and why the informal political networks impacted the explanatory power of the tested conditions as derived from the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning literature. This mixed methods approach ensures that any insights generated from this research are valid within the cases while also generating useful and meaningful theoretical insights of wider application (Hussein, 2009; Flick, 2018; Vidicki and Stojšin, 2021). Taken as a whole, this thesis represents a first attempt to combine SNA with studies of Europeanization and Policy Learning, particularly in terms of accession.

In line with MSSD, three cases were identified out of the six or seven successor states to the SFRJ, and the scope of the research was reduced to ensure the cross-comparability of the cases. As such, this thesis examines the impact of informal political networks on the EU accession process of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. While the cases are not identical, as no two let alone three cases are, the comparability of the three cases was further enhanced by examining the impact of informal political networks within one institution in each case: the parliament. Table 1.1, on the following page, presents a brief overview of the relevant factors in each to demonstrate, at this early stage, the underlying logic of the case selection.

As Table 1.1 shows there is a not inconsiderable level of similarity between the cases from a political standpoint. All are parliamentary republics, all use some variety of a proportional system, and all have some level of guaranteed minority representation in their respective parliaments. While the relative size of the parliaments does vary from 90 to 250, they share further institutional similarities which will be discussed both in Chapter 3 and in the chapters on each individual case.

Table 1.1: Institutional Comparability of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia

Variable	Slovenia (1993)[6]	Croatia (2000)[7]	Serbia (2007)[8]
Population	1.99 million	4.47 million	7.38 million
GDP per capita	8557.4 (ECU)	€5,800	€4,002
President	Head of State	Head of State	Head of State
Head of Government[9]	*Predsednik Vlade* (Prime Minister)	*Predsjednik Vlade* (Prime Minister)	*Predsednik Vlade* (Prime Minister)
Government type	"Incomplete" Bicameral Parliamentary Republic[10]	Unicameral Parliamentary Republic	Unicameral Parliamentary Republic
Size of legislature	90	150-160[1112]	250[13]
Electoral system	Proportional Representation (PR), Party List[14]	Proportional Representation (PR), Party List	Proportional Representation (PR), Party List
Electoral districts	8[15]	12	Single District
Distribution of seats	D'Hondt, 3.5% threshold (in each district and nationally)[16]	D'Hondt, 5% threshold (in each district)	D'Hondt, 5% threshold
Minority Representation	2 MPs	8 MPs[17]	8 MPs[18]

[6] Unless otherwise stated the source is: European Commission, 1997a.
[7] Unless otherwise stated the source is: European Commission, 2012b.
[8] Unless otherwise stated the source is: European Commission, 2009c.
[9] Technically all these titles translate to "President of the Government" but they all function as Prime Ministers, this will be addressed in more detail in Chapters 4-6.
[10] The parliament consists of one chamber, the National Assembly (*Državni zbor*) but there is also a National Council (*Državni svet*) which can give opinions on and propose legislation and ask the *Državni zbor* to engage in another debate but cannot block legislation (European Commission, 1997a, p. 15).
[11] The number of MPs in the *Sabor* was not fixed in the period but varied depending on the number of votes cast by Croatians living abroad in the XII electoral district.
[12] Source: *Ustav Republike Hrvatske*, 1990, l. 72.
[13] Source: *Ustav Republike Srbije*, 2006, č. 100.
[14] Source: Bebler, 1995, p. 26.
[15] Source: Bebler, 1995, p. 26.
[16] Source: Bebler, 1995, p. 26.
[17] Since the 2002 amendment on national minorities (*Ustavni zakon o pravima nacionalnih manjina*, 2002).
[18] Although the number of minority MPs is not set by law, minority lists are exempt from the 5% threshold, and the number of such MPs per parliament fluctuated between 8 and 12 from 2008-20.

Thesis Outline

As will be inferred from references already made to later chapters, the thesis is divided into several chapters to address the question: under what conditions do or did informal political networks affect the EU accession process of former Yugoslav states? Chapter 2 begins by presenting some of the relevant theories of the collapse of the SFRJ before moving on to the main theories of Europeanization. The EIM, the rational choice based approach, is presented first with a distillation of its underlying logic into the conditions under which Europeanization occurs. This is followed by a presentation of Europeanization as Policy Learning. The two types of policy learning being analysed in this thesis are: Learning in Hierarchy (LIH) and Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC). Following this is a presentation of the relevant literature on informality, including a discussion of its intellectual history while also siting the concept of informality among other theoretical and philosophical approaches to human organization. The intention is to reduce the broad understandings of informality, being as it is a polysemic concept (Steenberg, 2016, p. 296), into a series of key factors which are then combined with the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning conditions to create testable conditions in the synthesis section and conclusion.

Chapter 3 further refines the theories as presented in Chapter 2 into testable conditions which will form the basis of analysis in the case study chapters. This is followed by a presentation of the methodologies, SNA and the comparative method, and a discussion of the data collection process. Within this section is a longer justification of the case selection, which was presented in brief in Table 1.1, with a discussion of relevant caveats and non-comparable factors between the cases. Chapter 3 also includes a discussion of the interview process, reflexivity, and ethical considerations. While it is impossible to remove all bias from a project, especially one which involves interviews, this section addresses some of the challenges encountered in the research and the steps which were taken to mitigate bias where possible. The intention being to highlight how the project evolved in response to both foreseen and unforeseen challenges in the field, and to the COVID-19 pandemic. By this stage, the relevant logics have been presented and a general framework has been constructed which is then employed in the following chapters to test the theories and highlight the

ways in which the inclusion of the study of informal political networks adds value to prior formal studies of Europeanization.

Chapters 4-6, then, do precisely this and employ the constructed framework on a case-by-case basis to test the conditions. The discussion proceeds from the success[19] case, Slovenia, in Chapter 4 by presenting a brief history of the country before moving on to a detailed analysis of the network structure in the parliament for each electoral period under study, and of the accession progress made. This is followed by a discussion of the conditions and how well the base EIM conditions and Europeanization as Policy Learning conditions explain the rapid pace of Slovenian accession. Finally, Chapter 4 tests the insights from the modified conditions which include the impact of networks and concludes with a summary of the relevant findings and a discussion of the relative explanatory capacity of the theories. This process is repeated in Chapter 5 for Croatia and Chapter 6 for Serbia, proceeding from the more successful to the relative failure case as represented by Serbia.

Chapter 7 seeks to move beyond theory testing to theory building, by examining the conditions not on a case by case basis but by evaluating them on a condition by condition basis to examine their relative explanatory capacity. Specifically, Chapter 7 proceeds through each of the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning conditions in turn comparing them both against each other and with the modified informal conditions. This is further buttressed by the inclusion of more data to highlight some of the ways in which SNA can be used to capture the important impact that informal networks can have on formal processes. While, again, it is not the intention here to discount the valuable work of others, Chapter 7 finds that the inclusion of the study of informality does add significant explanatory value in identifying factors which help explain the variation in the accession processes across the cases as compared with the base conditions of the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning.

[19] As with the definition of Europeanization used here, "success" is defined as accession whereas "failure" is defined as not becoming an EU member state. The use of the terms is not to imply any value judgment about the EU or accession, but simply reflective of the linearity of the accession process.

With this process complete, Chapter 8, the Conclusion ties up the thesis beginning with a summary of the presented findings. In particular, this section provides a space for the relation of the case specific insights here to be related back to the wider literature both in terms of accession and more widely. However, the conclusion also highlights some of the limitations of this research and the methodological steps which were taken to control for some sources of bias. Finally, the thesis concludes with a discussion of areas for possible future research and some insights for policymakers who may be interested in understanding and addressing some of the concerning trends seen in the former Yugoslav region today.

Conclusion

Briefly, as there will be a more in depth discussion of this in Chapter 8, the purpose of this work should also be spelled out in more detail. As previously stated, in the Research Puzzle section of this chapter, this thesis attempts to address the question of under what conditions do informal political networks affect the EU accession process of former Yugoslav states. In this regard, this thesis attempts to build on the work of previous scholars of Europeanization by introducing insights from the study of informality to identify ways in which the inclusion can add explanatory value to the analyses of the cases studied here and, hopefully, more widely.

The intention here is not to, necessarily, *de-throne* any of the previously existing approaches to Europeanization but to highlight how the inclusion of the study of informality produces a richer explanation. As will be demonstrated here, this does not invalidate the underlying ontologies of the theoretical approaches here as the concept of informality, as a broad sociological concept, has equally broad applications. Although philosophically the concept of informality owes much to the scholarship of Jurgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, among others; it is, at this stage, ontologically diverse, as it must be to encapsulate the wide variety of practices and understandings of informal practices which can be found across the globe (Ledeneva, 2017, pp. 3, 19). While this situation presents obvious challenges for researchers attempting to tackle such a topic, it is hoped that the process of refinement in Chapter 2 will provide a model for those in the future seeking to understand the impact of those social practices which are “easy to identify but difficult to define”

(Ledeneva, 1999, p. 152). As will be expounded on in Chapter 8, the insights within this thesis also open further avenues for research and, perhaps, further ways in which informality could inform other approaches to Europeanization. Perhaps, also providing some answers for policymakers interacting with the former Yugoslav region and more broadly.

Chapter 2: Theories of Collapse and Accession

To begin the discussion of the relevant theories, an obvious first point is to situate this work in the wider body of literature on the region in question, that of former Yugoslavia, to highlight some of the other approaches which have been taken to the discussion and analysis of such a complex place. This is followed by defining what is meant by Europeanization, as this term has been applied in a wide variety of contexts and, as such, there is a risk of concept stretching if this definition is not clearly articulated. Once the concept has been defined, this chapter moves on to the two main theories of Europeanization and their underlying logics. This is followed by a more formal and rigorous discussion of the concept of informality, building on what was mentioned in the previous chapter but also expanding and situating the theory within a philosophical space. Following this the "synthesis" section which, as the name implies, attempts to make a synthesis of the underlying logics of the theoretical approaches previously discussed. The chapter concludes by making explicit the exact conditions under which it is expected that informal political networks will impact the EU accession process of former Yugoslav states, something which will be tested in the coming chapters.

The Region: Former Yugoslavia

With the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*, SFRJ) into civil war in 1991 much has been written and theorized about *why* it collapsed in the way it did and how that may impact the future of the region. The initial response was heavily weighted towards historical explanations emphasising the ancestral hatred of communities in the country, mirroring the talk of policymakers and often those involved in the conflict (Job, 1993, p. 54). While this did help to frame the conflict, providing some form of a narrative understanding, it relied too much on an understanding of the conflict and the region which were at best simplistic and at worst part of a historical trend to "otherize" the region. Through this discursive practice the term "balkanisation" was coined bringing together various historically held assumptions of the "backwardness" of the region and fusing them with the ongoing conflict (Todorova, 1994, 2005). This approach was

gradually superseded by other approaches emphasising the actions of leaders (Oberschall, 1996; Tanner, 2010), political psychology and tolerance (Massey, Hodson and Sekulic, 1999; Somer, 2001), or the failure of the federal model more generally (Critchley, 1993).

As the immediate crisis waned, the focus of scholarship turned to attempting to understand the divergent paths of the newly emerged countries. In line with the "cultural turn" in political science and international relations, this divergence in terms of paths has been explained by examining the narratives and cultural identities of states in the region (Guzina, 2003; Stojanović, 2011, 2017; Subotić, 2013). Through this lens the analysis focuses on the rhetorical and discursive tools used by politicians to shape and control the narrative within and regarding their country, emphasizing the "Europeanness" of their country in opposition to their "Balkan" neighbours (Lindstrom, 2003). This is also tied up intimately with the politics of wartime memory, with continual discussion and debate surrounding the role of the nation in historical conflicts (Subotić, 2019), and even a continual contestation of memories of the more recent wars of the 1990s (Horelt and Renner, 2008; Pavlaković, 2010). In this lens, then, the process of joining the EU was a process of national reformation and myth making: intended to display the "civilized" characteristic of the nation using the EU and EU membership as a marker of prosperity and civilization (Horvat, 2015).

Other drivers of the internal policy dynamics of the states in the region have been postulated outside of the "civilized" v. "Balkan" dichotomy. International security, and geopolitics more generally, has been highlighted as a possible cause for diverging trajectories as the now smaller states in the region seek to join with the larger economic and security blocks to ensure their stability and survival (Delcour and Wolczuk, 2015). Institutional differences between former Yugoslav countries have also been highlighted, as certain states line up more easily with the EU's system of multi-level governance than others (Jachtenfuchs, 2001; Börzel, 2010). These institutional dynamics have helped to drive political interactions in some states leading them towards the political and cultural norms of the EU, thus helping to explain the divergence in political trajectories (Dimitrova and Dragneva, 2009; Iusmen, 2014). However, while these theories do provide certain insights, and it is only possible to do this work in part because of them, they do not provide an answer to the core question

posed here: under what conditions do informal political networks impact the EU accession process?

Europeanization and Accession

As the EU has expanded both in terms of geography and in terms of competences, scholars have attempted to make sense of *why* these changes have occurred and how these changes are to be understood. Attempts to pin down exactly what impact the EU, or its predecessor the European Community, were having on the politics of member states and the region began almost in lockstep with their creation. However, there was a renewed drive to define and understand these processes with the end of the Cold War and the EU's push to expand to the newly independent and democratic Central and Eastern European (CEE) states.

Running through many of the theories of Europeanization there is an emphasis on considering the EU as an external actor, as an independent variable which drives policy and political change in countries (Ebbinghaus, 1998, p. 304). This understanding of Europeanization, that of forced political change, has certainly been contested within the EU. Indeed, given the internal power dynamics and institutional structures the EU, and thus Europeanization, has been compared favourably with new and alternative modes and methods of democratic expression (Schmidt, 2006). The complexity inherent in the study of the impact of an organization as unique as the EU across such a wide variety of policy and geographical areas has resulted in a variety of definitions of Europeanization (Radaelli, 2002).

However, given the particular situation and experiences of CEE states, certain specificities arise which proscribe several understandings of Europeanization such as those found in literature focused on Western Europe or rounds of enlargement prior to 2004. Unlike these previous rounds of enlargement, which were marked by *negotiation*, the process of accession for those in CEE and South-Eastern European (SEE) states has been marked by *adoption*. CEE and SEE countries, unlike previous candidate states such as Ireland or Austria, were marred by collapsing economic and rapidly evolving political systems. Thus, the process of accession for these states was not about harmonizing legislation, or negotiating opt-outs, but about the adoption of Western practices and the "convergence towards West European parliamentary

practices, party-systems, political and commercial lobbying networks, the slow and costly upgrading of physical and telecommunications infrastructures and environmental regulations to West European standards, the gradual adoption of West European health, safety and product standards, the promotion of EU-compatible financial and taxation systems, and the organization, representation and consultations of entrepreneurs/employers and trade unions (the 'social partners') and interest groups, and the linking of these to their West European counterparts" (Ágh, 1994; Bideleux, 1999, p. 28).

This must, then, impact the understanding of Europeanization used here to encapsulate the specificities of this process as opposed to the experience previous states such as Denmark or Austria. Given these constraints, the definition of Europeanization employed here shall have as its starting point an understanding that Europeanization is a process of "(a) construction, (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli, 2002, pp. 3–4). While this is a rather broad definition, it is considered appropriate here as, again unlike in other instances of enlargement, CEE and now SEE candidate states are held to much higher and more stringent standards and are unable to negotiate opt-outs or special treatment to the same degree as previous candidate countries (Grabbe, 2002). Thus, Europeanization is considered an *all-encompassing* mission which the candidate states are undertaking in their attempt to join the EU which requires substantial changes to their domestic structures, policies, and political framework whereby *abnormal* outsiders and their internal frameworks are contrasted with *normal* systems which exist within the EU (Majstorović, 2007). Once all the required changes are made and the candidate state has fully aligned itself with the internal requirements of the EU, the candidate country is allowed membership, thus signifying its transformation from *abnormal* to *normal*. With this in mind, the question then becomes *under what conditions can the EU promote this change in candidate states*?

Europeanization as the External Incentives Model

One primary attempt to answer the question of *why* states undergo such a wrenching change and what factors drive this change has focused on the structure of the accession process and in particular on the active reward/punishment system referred to as conditionality. In this system the EU uses "positive reinforcement" to promote policy change in candidate states, breaking down the accession process into various stages and goals which must be met before further rewards can be unlocked (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005). Political conditionality operates on the "logic of consequentialism" (Schimmelfennig, 2008, p. 920), in Europeanization studies known as the External Incentives Model (EIM) (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2017), where actors will align themselves with the EU in order to unlock rewards and avoid negative sanctions. Specifically, this relies on four key assumptions (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, p. 830):

1. Actors are motivated by self-defined political preferences, which are material and power-oriented.
2. Socialization works through reinforcement.
3. Actors weigh the costs and benefits of compliance.
4. Actors manipulate norms strategically to avoid or reduce the costs of socialization, rhetorically.

Ideally, conditionality would lead to a virtuous cycle of reinforcement as each individual stage made the following stage more likely to take place, helping to chisel away at the required reforms until the final stage (Kubicek, 2003). To take the example of Croatia, accession involved 38 stages beginning with the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), its entry into force, the adoption of an accession framework, initial reviews of legislation, the opening of chapters, and then finally the closing of chapters and the signing of the accession treaty. Each of these stages thus represents a *political* moment when various, and at times wrenchingly painful, choices had to be made to overcome resistance to the required reforms.

To put it in terms of the assumptions stated above, the accession process is broken down into discrete political stages. At each stage the authorities in the candidate state must choose whether to comply with the norms, as given in recommendations

from the EU for policy changes or in the *acquis communautaire*, or to defect with all the risks that this would entail. This distinctly *political* choice requires active engagement on the part of the candidate state where they balance the costs of compliance against the benefits provided by EU membership or against the immediate benefits offered by the EU through its various pre-accession assistance mechanisms. This requires them to evaluate not only the costs of compliance in terms of the potential financial costs of making the required adjustment to their physical and institutional infrastructure but also the potential economic or political costs of altering legislation and, often, the welfare systems of their state in order to align with the EU (Bruszt and Langbein, 2017).

There are also two other conditions required for effective socialization under the EIM: membership incentives, hence the inclusion of the word incentive in the name, and the existence of favourable party constellations in the candidate state (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, pp. 832–8). Membership incentives can take various myriad forms but largely focus on the financial incentives to offset some of the costs of altering domestic institutions as well as technical expertise, through various seconding programs and the like, which aim to help ease the burden on the institutions themselves as they make these changes (Börzel, Dimitrova and Schimmelfennig, 2017, p. 164). Thus, raising the size of the incentive offered to those making the change increases the likelihood of change being made (Börzel and Schimmelfennig, 2017).

Beyond the financial calculations, though, these changes can also impose a *political* cost on the candidate state as choices will have to be made regarding the distribution of resources available to political actors. Politically favourable coalitions in candidate states can thus help further increase the chance of compliance as making the required changes will be less costly politically if they are already anticipated by the electoral manifestos of political parties. This is in line with the concept of "anticipatory adaptation" where governments will enact liberalizing reforms to pre-empt the conditionality that will be imposed upon them during the EU accession process (Schimmelfennig, 2005, p. 836). Overall, then, according to the logic of the EIM the EU is best able to promote Europeanization through an application of its resources when dealing with a pro-EU liberal regime in the candidate state. In

situations where the domestic cost of a reform is lower than the reward being offered by the EU the chance of the policy reform occurring is high. In the cases of the poorer countries of Central and Eastern Europe it is very likely to find that the costs of reshaping the bureaucracy or privatizing certain failing industries is lower than the offered sum (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2017). Importantly, though, any change in the candidate state enforced by conditionality is not *necessarily* indicative of internalization of norms and behaviour but simply of compliance with the rules being imposed (Schimmelfennig, 2005). The assumption being, though, that repeated compliance will lead to socialization, as per the stated assumptions above (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, p. 830).

A further factor in this model of Europeanization is the issue of credibility: a measure of the ability of the EU to instil confidence in its rewards and threats during the negotiations (Schimmelfennig, 2008, p. 920). What qualifies as a credible reward or threat, though, is contextually dependent upon both the reward/punishment in question and the specific policy issue which is being discussed. Issues of minority protections, in particular, have complicated the accession process due to accusations of double standards and the inherently political nature of even the designation of a group as a national minority (Heimbach, 2011). The difficulty of constructing formalized measures of success/failure during the accession process further hampered the ability of the EU to apply specific pressure to policy fields (Dimitrova 2002). This, in turn, hampered their credibility as the moving of targets and the evolution of the process from case to case led to charges of discrimination, and accusations that politics was intruding on a technocratic process. Regardless of whether or not this is true, and it is debatable the extent to which these changes in tactics and process do actually qualify as discrimination (Schimmelfennig, 2008), the mere appearance of discrimination or the political use of it significantly impacts the credibility of the EU and, thus, the calculations of the political actors involved in the process.

This has been contested, however, by those who question the centrality of a "membership perspective" to attempts to promote reform in the countries of CEE and SEE and instead emphasize the importance of short to medium term rewards. While for those countries close to the core of the EU, such as those in the first wave of enlargement to the east, membership was a clear and tangible possibility while for

those trapped in the limbo of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) the impetus to reform is less tangible and more abstract. Why pursue the painful, expensive, and possibly unpopular and difficult reforms in line with the EU's recommendations when, even when finished, the country will remain stuck outside (Magen, 2006)? Even for those countries in the Western Balkans, and thus outside of the ENP and theoretically eligible to join the EU, this remains a persistent fear as the accession process continues to lengthen and further conditions are added. This collectively hampers the credibility of the process by making the ultimate reward, that of membership, appear further and further away. These fears are further reflected in survey data from the SEE region regarding domestic opinion towards the chance of EU membership (Tzifakis, 2012). Continual and recurring setbacks, such as the decision of French President Emmanuel Macron to block the opening of accession talks with North Macedonia in October of 2019 (*BBC News*, 2019), have caused the goal of EU membership to further recede in the public consciousness.

Europeanization as Policy Learning

Rather than focusing on the rational calculations of actors when faced with the choices of conditionality, other explanations of Europeanization instead emphasize the continuous nature of the process and the role of interaction between actors and the EU. Through the breadth of these interactions with candidate states, at multiple levels and involving a broad transference of knowledge, the EU can trigger policy learning within the candidate state, an accumulation of which can be termed Europeanization. The learning literature is divided on the exact triggers for learning to occur, but it broadly falls into two camps based on the type of learning: crisis based learning and more incremental learning. Crisis based learning occurs when a crisis forces a rapid revaluation of knowledge and practices as the existence of the crisis demonstrates the inadequacy of previously held forms of knowledge (Levy, 1994; Kamkhaji and Radaelli, 2017). Throughout a crisis actors draw upon previously held forms of knowledge to provide solutions and after the crisis has ended a process of cognition begins whereby, they attempt to learn from the new experience (Deverell, 2009). The beginning of the transition away from state socialism certainly presented such a crisis, with the rapid transformation of the entire legal, political, and economic order. However, with the signing of the SAAs between the EU and the former Yugoslav

states, except Slovenia which was granted candidate status in advance of the launch of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), this early period crisis had ended, and a more incremental process of policy learning had begun.

Outside the conditions created by crises, various forms of learning can occur depending on two factors: problem tractability and the certification of actors (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 4). In times of low problem tractability, or high uncertainty, policymakers acknowledge the absence of pre-established solutions to policy problems. This results in either one of two situations depending on the level of perceived expertise possessed by those interacting with the policy makers: learning in reflexivity where actors refer to a wider social debate in the absence of individuals claiming, or being allowed to claim, expert knowledge (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 6); or epistemic learning where experts, i.e. those with a high level of social certification, provide a basket of solutions (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5). Conversely, when problem tractability is high, two other forms of learning emerge: learning as a by-product of bargaining, when policymakers interact with "non-expert" individuals in a bargaining system to negotiate one of an available set of settlements (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 7), or learning in hierarchy, where policymakers have a set list of options and the experts have measures or standards which can be monitored (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, pp. 8–9). These conditions are summarized in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Types of Learning

		Problem Tractability	
		Low	High
Certification of Actors	Low	Learning in reflexivity	Learning as by-product of bargaining
	High	Learning in epistemic contexts	Learning in hierarchy

Source: Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 4

While these various forms of learning can occur across various policy areas the structures of the accession process, and thus of Europeanization, limit the possibilities.

The EU as an actor presents itself and is presented automatically as a source of prestige and expertise not solely in matters of accession but in policy areas more generally (Klumbytė, 2011, p. 851). This is further reinforced as candidate countries are *required* to defer to the EU on various matters with policy prescriptions and legislation being given by the accession process. At a very minimum this removes from consideration those categories marked by a low certification of actors as, by the very act of attempting to accede, the EU is placed in the higher category. Thus, the EU then acts as a source of ideas, solutions, and *expertise* for candidate countries (Kamkhaji and Radaelli, 2017).

The type of learning is, then, reduced to two categories: learning in epistemic contexts (LEC) and learning in hierarchy (LIH). Through the formalized structure of the accession process, broken down into stages and with significant reporting and measurement, it can be said it most resembles LIH. This sort of learning can be said to mirror that of conditionality, where actors learn through behaviour what the boundaries of the rules are and what the penalty is for non-compliance (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 8).

Alternatively, when problems are less tractable and uncertainty is higher, the EU acts as a source of epistemic knowledge and thus fosters LEC. Active participation on the part of experts is key to this form of learning as experts take part in discussions and negotiations to reduce uncertainty and provide explanations and understandings which help drive learning in actors (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5). This is particularly apt given the EU's multi-level engagement process where EU policy makers and experts are inserted into various departments of the candidate state to help them process the changes that are taking place and to contact all the relevant stakeholders (Palmowski, 2011). These efforts make up a key part of the EU's socialization efforts as it attempts to extend its modes of functioning into various bodies within the candidate state using long term placements if necessary to drive these efforts (Johnston, 2005).

Indeed, the active secondment of individuals from EU countries to candidate countries is a key aspect of the EU integration process. This "twinning", and the organization of various meetings and seminars and training sessions for local actors,

is intended to "benefit" local actors and organizations by providing them with such expertise as is required (Gąsior-Niemiec, 2003, p. 41). It is hard to overstate the extent of these efforts in candidate countries. Various EU related bodies, again either through "twinning" or through the active participation and work of the EU Delegations in the candidate states, are involved in areas such as education (Powell, Bernhard and Graf, 2012), journalism (Petrović, 2015), politics (Kocijan and Kukec, 2016), and of course legal and institutional reform (de Witte, 2012). Through these programs, then, the EU can be said to be pursuing a strategy of maximum engagement, of attempting to insert selected experts into as many dialogues and decision making apparatuses as possible.

As is implied through the metaphor of teaching, used in relation to LEC (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5), this process of learning and indeed all processes of learning operate on a different logic than the EIM. As opposed to conditionality, where actors weigh the costs and benefits of compliance at discrete political moments in time, Europeanization as Policy Learning operates via the logic of appropriateness. This is because actors are embedded within institutions which are themselves both representative of the political will of actors and act as constraints on what is politically possible, framing not only the policies available but also the conception of what is possible (Radaelli, 1995). Collectively the policies involved in accession aim "… to entrench a culture of the rule of law, respect for individual rights, mature economic management in a way which makes forward momentum towards the EU **irreversible** (emphasis original)" (European Commission, 2002, p. 8). Learning is, in this sense, a transfer of knowledge to actors or organizations which is intended to fundamentally alter processes. Or, more succinctly, "*An entity learns if, through its data processing of information, the range of its political behaviors is changed* (italics original)" (Huber, 1991, p. 89). Thus, in line with the logic of appropriateness, actors process information and arrive at new foundational systems of understanding that proscribe certain behaviours without needing these behaviours to be articulated (Dunlop, 2020, p. 27). This is not to imply that actors will always learn the "right" lesson but that, through information acquisition or importation they are always learning (Huber, 1991, p. 89).

If organizations are always, to some degree, learning, the question then comes to what fosters and inhibits policy learning? Regarding LIH, learning is not taking

place between equals but under conditions of authority and rules imposed from those who have been vested with such authority. This combination of both fostering learning through approval and punishment drives a two-fold logic of interests and norms depending on the severity of the enforcement of the rules, the interest coalitions against whom the rule is being enforced, and the previously existing normative framework in society (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 12). Crises also provide the necessary impetus to perform the often complicated, expensive, and time consuming task of investigating organizational and ideological structures for potential fault points (Deverell, 2009, p. 185). In the case of LEC, the participation of norm entrepreneurs and "*cooperative informal institutions*" (emphasis added) can help drive such processes by fostering connections and identifying key shared aspects of social understanding to drive the necessary changes (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 9).

Culture of Informality

As implied in the last condition above, the processes of Europeanization, whether through the explicit conditionality of the EIM or through the more *longue durée* processes of policy learning, are not projected solely upon a *tabula rasa*: they interact with the distinctive political, social, and economic features of the candidate state. Each candidate or potential candidate state brings to the accession process a different blend of domestic institutional and political features which can, according to historical and institutional approaches to Europeanization, determine the pace of accession negotiations and explain the variation in levels of compliance with EU regulation in member states (Börzel, 2001a, 2001b; Risse, Cowles and Caporaso, 2001; Börzel and Sprungk, 2009). However, the concept of the culture of informality seeks to go beyond examining solely the *formal* institutions and practices within an organization, such as a state, and instead seeks to examine how *informal* practices both shape and are shaped by formal institutions and processes (Bill, 1973).

What are these informal practices? And how is informality to be understood? In the broadest sense, informality shares some similarities with Habermas' concept of "lifeworlds", which were opposed to the "system" of formal and rational relations. Just as in the "lifeworld" concept, the culture of informality helps individuals provide order to their lives through coordination of their intentions, i.e., "social integration", which

helps to define their preferences in advance of action (Heath, 2014, p. 75). Within this logic the study of informality *could be seen as* the study of a sub-set of the "lifeworld", the study of the remainder as the process of rationalization on the part of the "system" which has differentiated itself via an uncoupling between itself and the lifeworld (Heath, 2014, p. 85). Thus, only through the creation of the *formal* can one observe the creation of the *informal*, as the "system" rationalizes itself to enable the complex forms of cooperation required to sustain the transition to capitalism. Thus, it is possible to view informality as the remainder from a process of modernization or "rationalization", to borrow Weber's term, or "social-evolution", in the language of Habermas (Thompson, 1983), and it is not uncommon and formed the basis for much of the early scholarship in the field (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 3). The formal-informal dichotomy itself clearly draws upon the application of dichotomies within the social sciences in an attempt to understand the growth of "modernity" (Koutkova, 2016).

While this historical-theoretical approach to the development of informal practices provides some insights into the origins of informality, it does not capture its essence. The origin of many informal practices *can be argued* to lie in the response of the lifeworld to systemic imperatives as the rationalist demands of the "system" as it develops through increasing rationalization, beyond the understandings present in the normative concepts of the "lifeworld" (Heath, 2014, p. 85). The practice of *blat*, "the use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain goods and services" (Ledeneva, 2008, p. 120), in the Soviet Union stands out as a prime example of this:

> "[In the Soviet Union] an economy of shortage generated an economy of favours, whereby *blat* represented an indispensable set of practices that enabled the Soviet system to function, made it tolerable, yet also subverted it. *Blat* was intrinsically ambivalent: it both served the regime and the people, while simultaneously undermining the regime and corrupting the people" (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 5)

However, as the quote makes clear, informality is not confined to the "lifeworld" itself, and involves an element of both individual and systemic instrumental reason beyond the cognitive, moral, and aesthetic reasoning qualities ascribed by Habermas to the "lifeworld" (Heath, 2014, p. 85). Fundamentally, the concept of informality encompasses actions which bridge the "system"-"lifeworld" dichotomy being (Heath, 2014, p. 84), as they are, actions which are both cultural, personal, economic, and, in

some cases, supported by the state. While such conceptual breadth does make it difficult to operationalize informality, it is necessary to encompass the variety of informal practices observed in the world, to which the global span of the *Global Encyclopaedia of Informality* (Ledeneva, 2017, 2018) can attest. Thus, although the concept of informality owes much to the work of Habermas it must, by nature of the phenomenon, be broader, including diverse practices of cultural, normative, instrumental, and economic impact (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 5).

Insofar as the culture of informality is understood as a cultural phenomenon it also shares significant features with the sociological concept of habitus. Now commonly associated with the scholarship of Pierre Bourdieu, although its roots are much deeper (Kuzmics, Reicher and Hughes, 2020), habitus is defined as "a system of lasting, transposable disposition – which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems" (Bourdeiu, 1969, 100; in Hayes, 2020). Further, an individual's position within society, or within the "field" to continue with Bourdieu's terminology, shapes the habitus of an individual who in turn shapes the habitus of others (Crossley, 2001; Hayes, 2020, p. 22). Habitus, then, is an outcome of intersubjective processes of understanding based on the mutually constituted actions and views of individuals (King, 2000). Individuals, incorporate social structures as habitus and perpetuate them by repeated action, or almost by force of habit (Crossley, 2013, p. 141).

Given the mutually constitutive nature of habitus, within Bourdieu's work, change is rare and difficult, possible only under overlapping situations of crisis and opportunity where new "common sense" takes hold (Mihai, 2016). It is possible to generalize habitus to the extent of ascribing countries a "national habitus" (Loyal and Quilley, 2020), which could include scribing to nations or states a certain habitus of functioning, or a "habitus of informality" (Bryceson and Ross, 2020), based on culture and history. Such a habitus would, then, be relatively unchanging except for in the aforementioned times of crisis. That social relations are relatively durable is something which forms a core part of the study of informality, as social relations take on a logic of their own and are replicated through practice. However, unlike habitus, informality

is both firm *and* fluid (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 5), and yet, like habitus, the concept attempts to bridge both the rational and irrational divide by positing the cultural and utilitarian value which individuals place on informal practice. As such, it is possible to say that the study of informality borrows much from the work of Bourdieu, as indeed it does from the work of Habermas, but is distinct in its ontological plurality, which is necessary to capture the full range of informal practices observed in the world (Markovicky and Henig, 2017).

What, though, *is* the culture of informality? The polysemic nature of the phenomenon makes it very difficult to define succinctly: "Informality, to paraphrase Friedrich Nietzsche, is a term that has history rather than a definition… [informality refers] to the world's open secrets, unwritten rules and hidden practices" (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 1). In this broad, almost all encompassing definition informality is both a fact of life and yet also process oriented, with informal practices conceived of as "ways of getting things done" (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 1). Factors such as a shared language, traditions, rituals, or even shared animosity can all shape this culture of informality within which political actors find themselves embedded.

The structure of this "culture of informality" is locally and culturally determined, with variations across states and within certain groups depending on shared experiences and histories (Lomnitz, 1988). Linguistic minorities, for example, affect the construction and reproduction of state discourses, both through action on the part of those groups and simply through the symbolic effect of their existence (Trenz, 2007). In turn, this affects the culture of informality by creating nested groups some of whom share closer ties with their co-ethnics and by creating divides, either real or symbolic, between those from different ethnic backgrounds. This is especially true in Eastern Europe and was an issue that the EU was particularly strict with throughout the accession process (Łodziński, 2009). In the case of the former Yugoslav states, the intensity of the recent violence pushed the issue of minorities to the top of the agenda and resulted in constitutionally guaranteed representation of minority groups in national parliaments, which created small groups who share informal bonds among themselves but not necessarily with the wider, dominant, ethnic group.

Cultural factors also affect the way in which political actors relate to each other and how they organise within the formal structure. Trust, for example, is a characteristic of bonds between individuals but the mechanisms by which trust is established and maintained are locally and culturally dependent (Odera, 2019). These cultural mechanisms enable certain forms of political action and informal connections between actors within the formal system (Williamson, 2009). Largely resistant to change, these factors are also generally hard to identify but they are the very practices which the EU interacts with in the region (Radaelli, 2003; Hooghe and Marks, 2009). Indeed, in the region specifically and CEE more widely, low trust in political parties has led to significant levels of turnover which has helped to solidify the informal practices by preventing new knowledge from diffusing through the political class (Kostova, 2016).

This culture of informality, thus, forms the underlying bedrock of the informal networks of political actors, both in the region and more widely (Hidetaka, 2005; Ferraro, 2008; Harvey and Maclean, 2008). These networks act as maps of informal actions taking place between actors, showing the frequency of interaction between them and, thus, the intensity of their relationship. As they are specifically informal networks, they also act to highlight the connection points between actors engaged in informal practices and relationships such as clientelism or patronage, which take place both within and without the formal constraints imposed by institutions and rules (Bliznakovski, Gjuzelov and Popovikj, 2017). It is these networks, and the culture of informality which comes with them, which the EU interacts with through formal processes.

Formal structures, such as the organizational makeup of a state, levels of centralization and the structure of bureaucracies, also affect the network setup with which the EU interacts, providing different opportunities for actors to either resist or promote the Europeanization process (Schmidt, 2005). These factors shape the formal makeup of the state, creating boundaries for political interaction and new arenas for ties to form between actors. Ties which exist within these formal institutions, which create links between actors due to their participation in formal institutions and practices are, in turn, classified as formal ties. Formal ties do not preclude the existence of informal ties between actors but the existence of formal opportunities for interaction

can be the impetus for the creation of informal ties by interrupting previously existing ties and networks. Such an interruption, in turn, lowers the opportunity costs of forming new ties and helps foster them by creating new paths for information and power to flow between actors (Leifeld and Schneider, 2012).

Returning to the culture of informality itself, the collective practices help to constrain and enable certain forms of political action. Or, more succinctly, these practices "determine informal constraints" which are "created, communicated and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels" (Helmke and Levitsky, 2004, p. 727). These constraints and practices are, as stated previously, "intrinsically ambivalent in their function" (Ledeneva, 2009, p. 260), as they serve both those with power and those seeking power by offering alternatives to the formal practices which are open to all. In times of scarcity, as with the example of *blat*, individuals will turn to those who they know or who are in their network to attempt to ameliorate the situation using personal contacts, thus allowing them to acquire crucial resources and aiding those in power who have access to the resources to maintain their influence (Ledeneva, 1999, 2009).

However, this mechanism of functioning persists even when the condition of scarcity ends as it becomes an embedded cultural practice. This is because even if individuals leave the network, the internal functioning of the network will likely remain the same as the new actor or actors who assume the position will have been socialized into the informal practices of the network (Ledeneva, 2009). Thus, these informal activities exist in the interstices of the formal system, both thriving on the inefficiencies and inadequacies of the formal system and helping to perpetuate them through practice (Lomnitz, 1988; Williams and Franic, 2016). The culture of informality, then, as alluded to by the previous discussion of habitus, can be resistant to change as previously instrumental actions legitimate and perpetuate themselves via practice, beyond the conditions in which they were created (Grødeland, 2007; Aliyev, 2015).

However, the instrumentality and rationality of informality should not be discounted. Each informal networks relies on internal modes of conduct and accountability whereby the ties in the network are seen to have value in the long term, and thus an ability to provide a long-term "grease" which helps both the actors and the

functioning of the institutions in which they operate (Romzek, LeRoux and Blackmar, 2012, p. 451). In the former socialist world, these informal networks can be and are quite widespread, with some even being sufficiently well known that they have their own nicknames (Grødeland, 2007). Such networks adapted to the conditions of the socialist period, providing both economic and social avenues for advancement, and the meeting of an individual's economic as well as social needs. It is impossible to separate the duality of informal relations, being as they are social, instrumental, both, and neither depending on the context and character of each individual relationship (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 31; Markovicky and Henig, 2017).

As previously mentioned, this ontological ambivalence complicates attempts to employ the concept of informality analytically. Following in the footsteps of previous attempts to do so, both in the context of the former Yugoslav region (Bliznakovski, Gjuzelov and Popovikj, 2017; Cvetičanin, Popovikj and Jovanović, 2019) and elsewhere (Kostiuchenko, 2011, 2012), the following section combines the insights from the study of the culture of informality with the underlying assumptions of the previously discussed theories of Europeanization. This is all to understand how the existence and structure of informal networks has impacted the accession process and, more generally, how these networks have affected *formal* policy and political processes of states in the region.

Synthesis

How do these understandings of the theoretical approaches to Europeanization, and the mechanisms that follow from them, inform this project? Specifically, how do the *formal* processes involved with EU accession interact with the *informal networks*, as governed by the culture of informality, present in the candidate states? This section discusses how informality affects the underpinnings of the theories stated thus far and highlights the tensions between the two which this study seeks to address. As stated above, one primary factor of which to take note is that all of the complexities inherent in the Europeanization process are being projected onto *something*. Indeed, this *something* can be the thing that is decisive in making the difference about whether or not a state is able to make the necessary changes in order to join the EU (Mendelski, 2009).

Returning to the discussion of conditionality, the underlying assumptions of the EIM model argue that actors' preferences are independently organized and that by raising the rewards the EU can help promote compliance (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005). However, it is unclear from this how the preferences of the actors are calculated, and at what level. While the actors clearly must act upon them, as otherwise there would be no role for incentives (Checkel, 2001, p. 556), how do they calculate their own preferences and understand the value of things being offered by the EU? Are their preferences set at the outset? Or reformulated with each interaction? How do the actors evaluate the political and economic costs of the reforms? Under what conditions does the presence of informal networks alter these calculations and, thus, alter the predictive capacity of the EIM as postulated above?

This brings us to the first point of interaction: the generation of actor interests and the possible *irrationality* of that process. As opposed to the objective rationality assumed by rational choice based approaches, where actors are assumed to have full information and act rationally in relation to their interests or in the wider interest of the institutions or state which they find themselves, actors are instead embedded in informal networks which alters their internal decision making mechanisms. Actors' embeddedness helps them progress in society, helping them to advance their careers, but it also imposes upon them a sense of obligation to others due to fears of exclusion from the network (Dobovšek and Meško, 2008; Šimić Banović, 2019). This network of obligations can affect the ability of the EU to use external incentives to promote change in candidate countries. While, from the perspective of the EU, offering substantial financial rewards for reshaping the bureaucracy of the country and aligning regulations with that of the *acquis communautaire* as required for accession may appear to be a sufficient incentive to induce change in the candidate state, when the positionality of the involved actors is considered this may not be the case as actors may have their own individual motivation to avoid making the changes which are *objectively* rational for the state as a whole, due to the rewards on offer from the EU, but which may go against their *subjective* interests. For example, in situations of strong clan based party competition, managing to promote any change which would be against the interest of some key actors in the clan network becomes nigh impossible (Collins, 2004).

When faced with challenges to the established order, actors will attempt to make use of their network contacts to alleviate pressure on their individual positions and, in certain cases, to defend the position of their sub-networks within the wider informal network. This mediation blurs the lines between the reformer and the subject of the reform, further complicating the process and the EIM required calculation as the *subject* of the required reforms thus becomes entangled with the actors tasked with enforcing change (Wedel, 2003). It can be particularly painful for an individual to try and reform the very system that allowed them to rise to the top. The nature of a clientelist, machine party system can make any attempts to change it quite difficult and even beyond the capabilities of some of the powerful executives in the region in question, even if they were so inclined as to make the necessary changes (Hale, 2011; Gherghina and Volintiru, 2017). In small states, or smaller organizations, this is a particular concern as individuals will often blur the line between being explicitly political actors, economic leaders, and individuals embedded within their own social and personal networks (Veenendaal, 2019).

This is not to say that the power of informal networks will always overwhelm the benefits provided by the EU but that the question is *under what conditions does the presence of informal networks affect this calculation*? As stated in the formulation of the EIM the underlying assumption is that any changes that candidate states are required to make involve costs of some kind and that the number of veto players in the system may raise those costs (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2017, pp. 3–4). When examined with an understanding of informality and of the impact of networks on this process, however, what emerges is that what matters is not the presence, necessarily, of veto players, as veto players will always exist in any process, but the *position* of the veto players in the system. Obviously if there are sufficient veto players in any system then change will become impossible, thus setting a threshold, and if there is a system which hypothetically possesses no veto players then change will be significantly facilitated. This is acknowledged specifically by the other condition for the EIM: that the presence of favourable party coalitions will ease the passage of the necessary reforms (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, pp. 832–8). Again, though, this is not necessarily the case as the mere presence of overall favourable party coalitions does not *necessarily* mean that these coalitions will have sufficient network power to

overcome the resistance of the less than enthusiastic members of political institutions. Identifying how and *why* certain coalitions of parties and actors were able to overcome such veto power under specific conditions is one of the key questions of this work in relation to the EIM. This, and the other insights here, will be distilled into testable conditions at the conclusion of this chapter.

The embeddedness of individuals in informal networks also has an impact beyond the rational calculations of actors by impacting social learning and norm diffusion. While the literature on policy learning is, as mentioned earlier, less focused on discrete decision making than the EIM literature there still remains an emphasis on the rationality of actors and a goal oriented approach taken by those involved in the processes (Paraskevopoulos, 2001, p. 257). Fundamentally, though, "learning is crucially dependent on the way in which the system of institutional interactions is shaped, on the adequacy of information and communication flows, and on the presence of forums for dialogue among the actors" (Paraskevopoulos, 2001, p. 254). While the *formal* institutions can be shaped in such a way as to foster learning, for example through widespread "twinning" or secondment of individuals to candidate states, the underlying informal networks provide a secondary and alternate structure which, under certain conditions, may interfere with the diffusion of information which can obstruct learning.

One of the first ways in which the presence of this secondary layer of informal connections may interact with the learning process is by providing an alternative means of communication and organization. While the exact nature of this alternative and informal world may have been initially shaped by the experience of socialism, with its inherent system of overlapping responsibility and formality penetrated by those looking to exploit or gain access to scarce resources (Wedel, 2003), the network remains. Indeed, these systems are not solely phenomena of former socialist states and such networks exist across various regions (Rothstein *et al.*, 1999, p. 252). It is crucial to recognize, though, that these networks are pervasive and often continue despite the creation of formalized institutions or systems of relations which were created to supplant the need for these informal systems (Baez-Camargo and Ledeneva, 2017).

This is because these informal networks, the hidden secondary system of relations, can perform some of the same functions of the formal one, if not more. Actors have been socialized into the functioning of the networks through action, thus preferring to continue to use the informal channels regardless of the existence of overlapping formal ones (Humphrey, 2012). Even when the conditions which precipitated the creation of the informal networks have lapsed, for example as the conditions of late-socialist period scarcity eases, they will continue to reproduce the informal practices (Ledeneva, 2009, pp. 261–2). Actors continue to persist in their behaviour as not only has it become a habit but, crucially, because the rules of the informal network become self-reinforcing as *all other* actors involved follow the internal rules. This continued reproduction of practices within the networks provides not only material rewards for those most able to advance within the networks but also a sense of belonging and secure informal relations with other actors, anchoring the self in times of change (Ledeneva, 2013).

As will be familiar to anyone who has seen a teacher attempt to discipline an unruly yet popular student, this secondary layer of informal connections can, under certain conditions, prove to be stronger than the formal system in place. For LIH, this can prove a significant constraint as actors who are embedded in these networks will have significant secondary rules and assumptions of behaviour which may fall outside the remit of the formal rules. Indeed, under conditions where the formal rules offer even the slightest hint of malleability, actors in the informal networks will quickly become adept at exploiting these weaknesses by obeying the letter but not the spirit of the law to advance personal, network, or client based interests (Hale, 2011). As these informal networks were established to specifically advance these sorts of interests in the face of intransigent formal systems during the socialist period, this form of passive resistance to learning on the part of the informal networks is a specialty of the region (Lomnitz, 1988). In particular, during times of change in formal rules and procedures the inefficiencies in the system are laid bare and actors are forced, even if not individually inclined, to attempt to access limited resources or channels of power through the establishment of often transactional ties (Skokic, Lynch and Morrison, 2019). This only further reinforces these alternative systems and can thus further weaken the coercive power of those doing the “teaching” under LIH.

The EU's efforts to promote epistemic learning may, under certain conditions, also be complicated by the presence of these informal networks of relations. While the twinning program may be an effective way to mobilize a large number of individuals from outside the candidate country to go and impart their expertise to those in the region, thus fulfilling a condition of effective learning through the involvement of experts in decision making processes, these individuals have to contend with pre-existing informal relations of which they may not be aware. Through their role as experts, and while pronouncing on policy in various meetings and discussion groups, they may be fulfilling their own vision of their role, but it is not guaranteed that their information will be received as intended as they may not be fulfilling the informal and cultural expectations of the local actors present in the room (Li, 2009, p. 42).

As those seconded officials are also not necessarily placed within positions of authority, or at least not vested with significant formal authority over those with whom they are interacting, they are also poorly placed to attempt to interrupt the processes of informal accountability they may be encountering. Those doing the teaching, i.e. the foreign actors, are responsible to their superiors for ensuring the delivery of information and those doing the learning, i.e. the domestic actors, are also responsible to their superiors within the formal hierarchy and tasked with taking on board the suggestions and knowledge being imparted by the foreign experts. However, they are also *informally* accountable to other people in the network, who may or may not be at the same position within the formal hierarchy as them or in fact may be above or below them. This informal system of accountability emerges from repeated and expected behaviour and can be used to punish non-compliance of actors *regardless of their compliance or non-compliance with formal rules* (Romzek, LeRoux and Blackmar, 2012, p. 443). Punishment in such systems of informal accountability can be brutal as it is not based on any generalizable principle which is applied to all but meted out on a case by case basis along with clientelist rewards (Hale, 2011, p. 583). Thus, although there may be actors representing the epistemic community imparting knowledge to various actors within the candidate state, whether or not learning occurs is dependent upon the extent to which such knowledge contravenes the practices, norms, and interests of actors in the relevant informal networks. Fundamentally, diffusing knowledge to an organization to transform their "ways of doing things" (Radaelli,

2003, p. 6) can be significantly complicated by unwritten, informal codes governing "ways of getting things done" (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 1) in the target organization, in this case a candidate state.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated here regarding the literature on Europeanization, while there broadly exists two camps discussing the mechanisms of policy and norm diffusion to candidate states it is not sufficient to simply take the candidate states as passive actors. Instead, it is imperative to break down the domestic makeup of the candidate state to identify other possibly inhibiting structures. The task, then, becomes identifying under what conditions the informal networks inhibit or assist in the Europeanization process either according to the EIM or Europeanization as Policy Learning conditions. Are there conditions under which the informal networks can significantly interfere with the functioning of Europeanization as expressed through these theories? And are there conditions under which these informal networks can actually contribute positively to the Europeanization process?

The EIM, to summarize the discussion above, functions through the construction of a reward-punishment matrix whereby completing certain conditions will unlock financial or political rewards from the EU. Thus, the two primary factors contributing to successful Europeanization, as per the EIM, are the size of the reward and its credibility. When the size of the reward is larger than the cost of making the change and when the punishments for non-compliance, as well as the rewards, are seen as credible by the candidate state it is assumed that change will occur. However, when informal networks are present the cost-benefit calculation is changed as actors are no longer beholden solely to the overall cost-benefit calculation of society at large but are also held to the individual or network based calculation of interests which *may* contradict that of the overall calculation. Under conditions where it does so it is expected that actors will attempt to skirt the rules or activate their networks to minimize the changes required, to minimize their potential losses, while still unlocking the rewards and avoiding the punishment, thus slowing the Europeanization process while continuing to benefit. Conversely, when actors and their networks would benefit from making the changes, i.e., when their interests align with the goals of the process,

it is expected that they would actively participate in the process and eagerly push for the changes required. Thus, the ability of the EU to promote change is dependent on whether the rewards and threats from within the network *outweigh* the rewards and threats on offer from the EU.

The issue of credibility is also locally determined and depends both on the credibility of the rewards and punishments on offer and on the credibility of the network based rewards and punishments which actors, and their immediate networks, face through making the changes. As predicted by the EIM, under conditions of low credibility, of both the rewards and punishments from the EU, the impetus for change will be weakened as actors will neither expect the rewards for pursuing the difficult changes required nor will they expect to be punished for not doing so or violating conditionality in other ways. The "rhetorical trap" of enlargement, that the EU has committed itself to the accession of all liberal states in Europe (Schimmelfennig, 2001), is a crucial factor in determining if this condition is present as actors know that the EU is committed to enlargement to the region and can thus take advantage of that commitment to skirt some of the more onerous requirements. Local and network factors, though, impact upon this as well as, even in a situation where the rewards and threats from the EU are viewed as credible by domestic actors, their individual position may be such that it is still not worth undertaking certain changes if it will result in individual sanction by the wider community or of a loss of network power through action. Thus, it can be said that the credibility of the EU's conditionality mechanism is a factor *under the condition that it is not outweighed by the credibility of rewards and threats coming from within the state*.

As with the EIM, and as previously highlighted, informality and informal networks also interact with the conditions for Europeanization as Policy Learning. Unlike the EIM the Europeanization as Policy Learning model presented here has a two-fold structure which determines first the type of learning taking place before the interaction with the informal networks takes place. Where there is low problem tractability, or high uncertainty, learning occurs in an epistemic context whereas if there is high problem tractability, or low uncertainty, learning occurs in hierarchy.

Under LIH the conditions for success are similar to those as presented through the EIM, where *if* the rewards and punishments are credible and *if* they outweigh the chance of punishment from within the network then learning is likely to take place. The reverse is obviously true under conditions where there exist informal rules, norms, and practices for which the penalty, if violated, would be *greater* than any rewards directed towards the individual or organization by the EU.

For LEC to function the expert actors must be both seen and treated as authorities and, thus, this forms the first condition for the success of epistemic learning. *Under conditions where the experts acting to promote the diffusion of EU norms and knowledge are perceived as sufficiently expert by those involved in the process, by for example successfully following or adapting to local custom such that they fulfil the expectations of an expert held by those who are doing the learning, then learning and Europeanization will likely take place*. This completes the first condition for epistemic learning: that the experts are treated as experts. However, when informal accountability is included, this can create other obstructive measures which can impede the diffusion of knowledge through the informal networks. *Under conditions where the norms of functioning of the informal network are biased against the importation of knowledge, or when the existence or functioning of the networks themselves would be threatened, then it is expected that the informal networks would hamper the process of LEC*. However, when the informal networks are positioned to aid the transmission of knowledge from the experts to the wider community it is expected that this form of Europeanization would be accelerated.

Chapter 3: Comparative Social Network Analysis and Reflexivity

This section lays out the methodology used in attempting to identify the impact of informal political networks on the EU accession process of the chosen cases under the conditions as postulated in Chapter 2. As this study is focused on how informal networks affect policy outcomes across time and cases a mixed methods approach will be used since the research requires the identification of these networks, a study of their impact, and a comparative study to produce more generalizable insights. This approach therefore combines methodologies and practices from across the social sciences to best understand the complexities of the research in question. However, it is understood that such an attempt to combine insights from a variety of intellectual traditions brings significant risks to the research project as a whole (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). It is hoped that the clear presentation in this chapter of the steps taken during the research process will assuage those fears and will prove that such steps were not only possible but *necessary* to identify under what conditions informal political networks affected the European Union (EU) accession process of former Yugoslav states.

To begin, this section formulates the conditions to be tested as drawn from the theoretical insights which were presented in the Chapter 2. Following this, Social Network Analysis (SNA), the central network methodology, will be presented and its selection justified with a discussion of its roots and application. This is rounded off with a discussion of the comparative method, including a some of the variables which have been controlled for through the case selection process.

Once the case for the use of the chosen methods has been established, this chapter then proceeds through the data collection process. The first part of this is a discussion of the methods of data collection, to ensure that the research is conducted in a transparent and open fashion. Following on from this the chapter proceeds through the interview process, through some of the decisions taken as part of the interview process and through a discussion of some of the challenges experienced both in the field and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in turn followed by a discussion of the reflexivity of the researcher, to again ensure that all is done in an open and public

fashion. However, before this can take place, it is important to return to the beginning and to operationalize the conditions derived from the literature.

Conditions

As per Chapter 2, the first theory of Europeanization being examined is that of the External Incentives Model (EIM) whereby conditionality, as a reward and punishment mechanism, drives the Europeanization process. Specifically, conditionality drives Europeanization assuming that:

- (EIM 1): The size of the reward on offer from the EU is larger than the cost of making the societal changes OR
- (EIM 2): The size of the punishment for non-compliance is greater than the potential rewards of non-compliance AND
- (EIM 3): The EU's rewards and threats are considered credible by the candidate state

Under such conditions it is assumed that candidate states would comply and thus further Europeanization, as defined in Chapter 2, by adopting further EU regulations and continuing to adjust themselves to the requirements of the EU. As demonstrated theoretically in the previous section these assumptions only hold on the following conditions:

- (EIM/I 1) That the structure of the informal networks in which actors are embedded are not aligned against the changes (or conversely that they are aligned with the changes) AND
- (EIM/I 2) That the credibility of the rewards and threats emanating from the EU outweighs the credibility of any rewards and threats emanating from the informal networks

Europeanization as Policy Learning also possesses its own conditions which foster Europeanization and learning in candidate states. This is conditioned first by the two track learning process in which it is necessary to identify the levels of problem tractability in a particular policy area to determine the type of learning which is to take place. Thus:

- (LIH) Under conditions of high problem tractability/low uncertainty learning takes place in hierarchy
- (LEC) Under conditions of low problem tractability/high uncertainty learning takes place in an epistemic context

Within both types of learning further conditions must take place for learning to be fostered. For learning in hierarchy:

- (LIH 1) Under conditions where these rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor then learning is fostered
- (LIH 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered

And for learning in an epistemic context:

- (LEC 1) Under conditions where the actors doing the "teaching" are experts learning is fostered
- (LEC 2) Under conditions where the "experts" are inserted into the relevant decision-making bodies learning is fostered

As with the EIM, while these conditions hold in theory, they are further complicated by the pre-existing informal political networks present in the candidate states. Thus, LIH can be said to take place in a candidate state:

- (LIH/I 1) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments outweigh contradictory rewards/punishments emanating from within the network.
- (LIH/I 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishment for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments are MORE credible than those emanating from the veto players in the network

And LEC takes place:

- (LEC/I 1) Under conditions where the "expert" actors are considered experts by members of the informal networks learning is fostered

- (LEC/I 2) Under conditions where the inserted "experts" are positioned not just in the correct formal position but also at the correct *informal* position to transmit knowledge learning is fostered

With these conditions in mind, the problem then becomes one of operationalization: how to identify the networks? And how to identify the key players in the networks, the veto players, and to understand how the mechanisms of informal accountability interfere with both Europeanization via the EIM and Europeanization as Policy Learning? Fortunately, in the age of computers, there exist certain techniques which make identifying these informal networks easier and create a mechanism by which their impact can be compared both within one case and across cases.

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

SNA begins with the supposition that networks pervade human society and exist not solely as mode of human organization but also have an impact in and of themselves on the functioning of society and human systems (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005, p. 198). Recently there has been a blossoming of studies across a variety of subfields of the social sciences attempting to understand exactly how the structure of human organization, as represented in the network model, impacts social and political outcomes (Ikeda and Richey, 2005; Choi, 2007; Kaiser, 2009; Newig, Günther and Pahl-Wostl, 2010; Salvini, 2010; Eveland and Kleinman, 2013; Subramanian R and Mehta, 2013). This project builds upon the work of scholars of political networks and, in particular, of informal political networks.

Evolving from its origins in sociology (Scott, 1988), SNA has been recognized as providing a methodological foundation to a range of political science disciplines (Abrams, Iversen and Soskice, 2011; Kostiuchenko, 2011). SNA focuses the research on the characteristics of networks which determine the flow of information between members of the network. These members, who are referred to as nodes, are embedded in a web of social and institutional ties which bind them together into various groups. Unlike institutions, these networks and the ties which make up their structure are not necessarily set in stone but are instead flexible (Wellman, 1988). However, once embedded in the network the agency of any actor is proscribed, their decision-making

and action being guided, at least in part, by the structure of the network in which they find themselves embedded (Mizruchi, 1994).

To operationalize the concept of a network, SNA comes with a set of tools and measures which can be used to describe both the structure of the network and an actor's position within it. First the ties within the network are assigned values depending on the intensity of the connection, in this case from zero to one. Once all ties have been added to the network map it is then possible to compute various values for the nodes in the network, such as (Hafner-Burton, Kahler and Montgomery, 2009):

- Betweenness centrality: a measure of the number of shortest paths in the network that pass through a node, gives a measure of the dependence of the network on the given node.
- Clustering coefficient: a measure of the embeddedness of a single node by computing the number of possible connections among neighbouring nodes which are realised
- Degree: a measure of centrality which assigns a score based on the number of ties of a given node
- Weighted Degree: a measure of centrality which assigns a score based on the number of ties of a given node, weighted by the relative weight of these ties

These measures are also computed for the overall network including their averages, arithmetic means, which gives standardized measures for the network and produce a benchmark for levels of connections within the network. This is in addition to the network wide measures:

- Diameter: the width of a network map
- Density: the extent to which all nodes are connected (Rice and Yoshioka-Maxwell, 2015, p. 376)
- Modularity: the tendency of a large network to contain smaller, more densely connected sub-networks (Newman, 2006)
- Average Path Length: the average distance between all possible pairs of nodes, measured in node steps

Collectively, these measures allow for both an understanding of the structure of a given network and for the comparison of these networks across time within a case and between cases.

SNA and the Conditions of Europeanization

Once the network structures have been produced and the values computed it is possible to identify exactly how the networks interact with the given conditions for Europeanization as stated above. A necessary first stage is the identification of veto players in the network system and other actors who oppose the changes required. This includes actors who oppose these changes either *formally*, through membership of parties or organizations which have the explicit aim of opposing these changes, or *informally*, through membership of informal groups which oppose the changes or through a personal dedication to oppose the changes.

As is also clear from the conditions stated above, it is not simply the *existence* of veto players which can obstruct the processes of Europeanization but the *position* of these veto players within the network. SNA, since it both produces a map of the overall network and allows for the identification of the positions of individual actors within the network, provides just the set of tools required to do so. Once the veto players are identified, both the formal veto players who belong to oppositional parties or the informal ones who attempt to stall the process from within the network, their positions allow their impact to be understood and identified. To put it in terms of the conditions as stated above analysing the position of the veto players to the network allows for the identification of the impact of EIM/I 1. In cases where there are both sufficient veto players and sufficient centrally located veto players in the network, they may be able to overwhelm the EU's ability to promote change through conditionality. This is, again, further conditioned by EIM/I 2, the issue of the credibility of rewards and punishments from the EU as balanced against those from within the network but this is only identifiable through the interview process, which will be expanded on later along with the data collection process.

Similar principles apply to the conditions of LIH as a subset of Europeanization as Policy Learning. Through the identification of key actors and their positions it is possible to identify key individuals who oppose the change despite the existence of

formal rules. This interacts with LIH/I 1 in the same way as it interacts with EIM/I 1, whereby under the condition that veto players are centrally positioned enough in the network they will be able to prevent the diffusion of knowledge via the rules based LIH model and thus interrupt the Europeanization process. Again, the credibility of the rewards and punishments emanating from these actors cannot be identified solely from the overall network data and, as such, interviews were conducted which will be expanded upon later in this chapter.

As given above, for LEC it is not solely that the "experts" are treated as such but that they are positioned in proper places within the decision making bodies in order to diffuse their "expertise" into the system. While, again, the "expert" quality of the individuals cannot be considered solely from the network data alone, their points of contact with the network can be identified. That the "experts" seconded from the EU to the region, or other "experts" intending to diffuse knowledge, are often involved in *formal* decision-making bodies is generally a given as that is the entire purpose of the secondment process. However, as is given by LEC/I 2 what is also important is not just the formal bodies but their positions within the wider political network. While the seconded "experts" are excluded from the network analysis here, as the networks in question only include members of parliament in the chosen countries, what is included is the centrality of those with whom they interacted. Under the condition that the "experts" interacted solely or largely with peripheral members then their ability to transmit knowledge to the core of the network, and of course to other peripheries of the network, would be compromised. Thus, the process of Europeanization as Policy Learning via epistemic contexts would be compromised as well.

While it may be possible to demonstrate that these network factors and conditions do have *an* impact from the use of SNA alone it is not necessarily possible to draw definite lines of causation. To this end, this study examines not just one country or one session of parliament but examines multiple cases to isolate the causes and to control for extraneous variables. More specifically, this study follows in the comparative political tradition to try and best isolate the meaningful impact of the informal networks on the formal processes from unnecessary factors.

Comparative Method: Most Similar Systems Design

Specifically, a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) approach is used to compare between the cases to draw out lines of causation (Lijphart, 1971). This method was chosen because of the overarching similarities of the cases in question as rigorous application of MSSD allows for the correct identification of the causal variable or variables. Given the shared histories of the country cases and the structural similarities of the accession process, MSSD allows for the most rigorous investigation of the question at hand. This shared history controls for a large number, but not all of course, of the possible variables, a crucial factor for analysis (Przeworski and Teune, 1982).

Part and parcel of the comparative method is the case study, involving a deep investigation into the specificities of the cases. As this study is concerned with three different country cases a cross-case comparison of their various experiences of joining the EU will form a large part for the comparison. Thus, the main body of comparison will consist of comparing the experiences of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia as they join the EU. However, this will be supplemented by intra-case comparisons to identify how the candidate countries were impacted by the structure of the informal networks at various times in their accession process. The cases were also selected for their unique qualities and to allow for the maximum control of variables, while also allowing for an investigation of a wide variety of variables, as per the requirements of the comparative method (Lijphart, 1971).

In terms of accession to the EU, the combination of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia provides a timeline which extends from the first phase of the eastward expansion of the EU to one of the EU's current candidate countries. Croatia, which acceded in 2013, provides a middle case. This provides a unique triptych of Europeanization, bridging the gap between the first round of accession to Eastern Europe and the experiences of current candidate states. While such a comparison is perilous, as of course the global situation has changed dramatically in the interim, it is important to capture such a timeline to understand the impacts of informal political networks across time to establish their fundamental importance.

The three cases also share certain distinct similarities which help to control for various possible other causal variables. All three cases emerged from the same social and political unit, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socialistična federativna republika Jugoslavija*[20]*/Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*[21], SFRJ) which, as the name implies, was a socialist federal republic. While this does not control for all economic variables, as there were economic disparities between the constituent republics of the SFRJ, all countries had, by and large, the same economic structure at the moment of independence. They also shared the same legal structure and, until the introduction of multi-party elections, the same political structure, that of a one-party communist state under the various national branches of the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Zveza komunistov Jugoslavije*[22]*/Savez komunista Jugoslavije*[23])

With the collapse of the socialist system and the subsequent disintegration of the SFRJ the countries begin to diverge, dramatically. To control for the divergence of the states, and their very different experiences of the 1990s, the decision was made to standardize the comparative timelines. This was done by beginning the study for each country with their signing of their association agreement with the EU, in the case of Slovenia, or the signing of a Stabilisation and Association Accord (SAA), in the case of Croatia and Serbia. Thus, the timeline for study of the countries is 1992-2004 for Slovenia, 2000-13 for Croatia, and 2008-20 for Serbia. Choosing these agreements as a starting point provides for a standardization of the timetables as, despite them being signed at different periods, the signing of the agreements signals the beginning of the largely standardized, formal process of accession.

These agreements are also only signed with certain countries when basic criteria have been fulfilled. All countries who sign these agreements have been judged to possess at least a minimum of democracy and stable political institutions as defined by the Copenhagen Criteria for EU membership (European Commission, 2016a). This creates a base for comparison as, despite the fact that the agreements were signed at

[20] In Slovenian.
[21] In Croatian and Serbian.
[22] In Slovenian.
[23] In Croatian and Serbian.

different times, the existence of this threshold for the process precludes the existence of significant extenuating factors or conditions, such as the existence of an autocracy or of a socialist economic model, and thus controls for them to a given tolerance. While the three countries were and still are at different levels of economic development and have their own unique economic advantages, disadvantages, and challenges this standardization of the timeline excludes from analysis any and all egregious differences which may dramatically taint the analysis.

Choosing the selected timelines for each country also controls, to an extent, for the impact of the political models on the Europeanization process. While Slovenia had the same political system from 1991, that of a parliamentary democracy with a directly elected president with largely ceremonial duties, Croatia and Serbia did not. After the death of Croatia's wartime president, Franjo Tuđman, in 1999, Croatia changed its constitutional structure from a semi-presidential system to a parliamentary democracy with a directly elected president, like Slovenia. Like Croatia, Serbia has undergone several changes in political structure since the 1990s. Indeed, Serbia began the 1990s as part of the SFRJ, then was a member of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna Republika Jugoslavija*, FRY), and then a member of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (*Državna Zajednica Srbija i Crna Gora*). Serbia was, thus, not fully independent until 2006, after the independence referendum by Montenegro led to the end of the State Union. Throughout this period, it also had various constitutions but, by 2006, had also settled on the parliamentary model with a directly elected president. While across the cases there are minor variations in the *formal* power of the presidents, they are all intended to act as heads of state with the position of prime minister acting as head of government. Thus, all three countries have unicameral legislatures, although Slovenia has an additional national body which serves minor legislative functions and is considered an "incomplete bicameral system" (Mrak *et al.*, 2004, p. 56), a directly elected president, and variations on the proportional representation system for parliamentary elections which helps to control for variables such as electoral models and the impact of presidential versus parliamentary systems in relation to Europeanization.

Unfortunately, as with all comparative political science, there remain certain variables which cannot be perfectly controlled for. One of the primary ones any scholar

faces when conducting research relating to Serbia is the issue of Kosovo. Although claimed by Serbia historically, as it was the site of the important battle of Kosovo Field (*Kosovo polje*) between the medieval Serbian Principality and the Ottoman Empire, in the SFRJ Kosovo was a special autonomous region which was only loosely under the control of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (*Socijalistička Republika Srbija*) within the overall framework of the federal SFRJ. The province of Kosovo achieved *de facto* independence after the Kosovo War in 1999 when the NATO bombing campaign in the FRY forced the withdrawal of FRY troops from the province. In 2008 the government of Kosovo formally declared independence from what was by then Serbia, although its independence is not recognized by Serbia.

Indeed, the lack of recognition of Kosovo as an independent province is one of the factors that, to an extent, allows this to be controlled for. While Kosovo has been recognized by a number of states there has, as of yet, not been complete recognition of its independence, and indeed there is not even consensus on the number of countries which do indeed recognize its independence. As of 2021, either 93 or 117 countries recognize Kosovo (*Дачић: „Сијера Леоне је 18. држава која је повукла признање тзв. Косова“*, 2020; *Politika e jashtme - Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Republic of Kosovo*, 2021)[24], out of 193 UN member states, including only 22 out of 27 EU member states. Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Romania, and the Slovakia continue to not recognize the independence of Kosovo, for a variety of reasons. This mixed recognition even from within the EU shapes the EU's interaction with both Serbia and Kosovo (Jović, 2018). As there is not total recognition within the EU there is, then, *no formal push for the recognition of independence of Kosovo on the part of Serbia by the EU*. Relevant documents pertaining to the region continue to carry the disclaimer that any reference to Kosovo within the documentation is made "without prejudice to its position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence" (High Representative of the European Union for For Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2013, p. 1). While there is pressure on the Serbian government to "normalise" relations with Kosovo, Serbia's progress on other chapters of the *acquis* is not conditioned on progress in this field (European

[24] The former is the count by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo and the latter that of the Serbian Government.

Commission, 2016b). Obviously, the "normalisation" of relations is a prerequisite for accession, but the issue has not, as of 2021 forestalled progress in other chapters.

Another factor which does not allow for full cross-case comparison is the longer term impact of the war which took place during the collapse of the SFRJ. As the first country to secede from the SFRJ, Slovenia achieved independence after the Ten-Day War. Croatia and Serbia, though, both entered the year 2000 with outstanding warrants for the arrest of suspected war criminals by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). While further detail will be given on how exactly the various indictments played out when it arises in the analysis, it would be hard to overstate their importance as political events within the countries in question (Horelt and Renner, 2008). The EU conditioned accession progress explicitly on ensuring sufficient access for international investigators and judicial authorities to the countries and on the arrest of the indicted individuals to face trial in the Hague. As such, the ICTY indictments do, or did, play a role in the accession process of Croatia and Serbia, but not Slovenia.

The network approach via SNA is intended, then, to control for these factors by shifting the focus of the study from political events in and of themselves to the study of how these factors have *shaped* the informal networks in question and how that, in turn, has impacted the Europeanization process. Fundamentally, these issues are not the primary focus of the study. While the issue of Kosovo may present political challenges for Serbia, and it indeed does (Viceré, 2019), these problems are factored in as events but are not considered central. Kosovo, or more specifically those members of parliament who represent districts in Kosovo, are captured as part of the network map and parties which have positions on Kosovo are also represented, as are various political actors who were for and against the extradition of individuals extradited under the ICTY framework. Thus, these issues are represented in the networks as all political issues are represented in the political networks of the day.

What matters, then, for SNA is not that these issues exist but how these issues are mobilized by actors and how that affects the classification of actors in terms of their level of opposition to the EU project. Actors who express strong opinions on the independence of Kosovo, a strong preference for Russian friendship rather than

membership of the EU, or strong anti-capitalist or anti-EU sentiment due to past socialist associations or because of the ICTY's various rulings are classified as veto players in the system. It is *not* crucial what their exact opinion is on the subject. What matters is their position within the network and their ability to use that position, their centrality to the overall network or their ability to act as a gatekeeper to manage information flow across the network, to act upon those views. Opposition without power is meaningless and power is captured through network positioning.

Data Collection

With this in mind, the question then turns to how the data was collected and how the network maps were made. The first stage of the research was to compile the data set of individuals present in the parliaments of the selected countries for the years in question. Each of the countries in question, like many countries, maintains a publicly available website of MPs with information on the activities of the various MPs, their party affiliations, and their roles in parliament. Since the various committees in the parliaments were formed during each parliamentary session the data was gathered at the end of each cycle, i.e., in 1996 for the 1992-6 Slovenian parliamentary period, or at the moment of accession, i.e., in 2013 for the 2011-15 Croatian parliamentary period. For Croatia and Serbia, the collection of data from these websites was relatively straightforward; it simply involved copying the relevant political and biographical information from the profile pages of MPs into Microsoft Excel sheets. This produced tables of data for each successive parliament including information on the position and work of every MP. However, Slovenia was more complicated as the Slovenian government does not maintain such a website for parliamentary sessions before 2000. Thus, information for the prior parliaments had to be assembled from a variety of digital copies of parliamentary documents which, although more difficult to assemble and then input into an Excel document, essentially yielded the same result.

With the data assembled in these tables the research could then move on to the next stage: beginning the network analysis. In order to turn the tables of actor characteristics into the network maps GEPHI, a free open source SNA tool, was used (Bastian, Heymann and Jacomy, 2009). The Excel files were imported into GEPHI and then ties were constructed between actors possessing certain characteristics. These

ties were also weighted according to their relative importance, with lower weighting going mainly to those groups which met less frequently. This weighting was confirmed by interviews which were conducted in the region, as will be discussed shortly. While the output from this process will be discussed in detail in Chapters 4-7 the relevant types of ties and their weightings are given here:

- Slovenia:
    - *Politična stranka* (Party): 1
    - *Komisije*/*Odbore* (Commissions/Committees): 0.35
    - Speaker (Connection from Speaker of the *Državni zbor* to individual MPs): 0.2
    - *Delegacije* (Delegation): 0.1
    - Deputy Speaker (Connection from the Deputy Speaker to individual MPs): 0.1
    - *Skupine prijateljstva* (Parliamentary Friendship Groups): 0.01
- Croatia:
    - *Stranka Pripadnost* (Party): 1
    - *Klub* (Parliamentary Club, determines seating): 0.5
    - *Odbore* (Committee): 0.25
    - SPK (Connection from the President of the *Sabor* to individual MPs): 0.2
    - Com (Non-*Odbor* Delegation/Committee): 0.15
    - PP (Connection from the Deputy Speaker[25] to individual MPs): 0.1
    - PGP (Country Specific Friendship Committee): 0.01
- Serbia:
    - *Politička Stranka* (Party): 1
    - *Poslanička Grupa* (Working Group, determines seating): 0.5
    - *Odbore* (Committee): 0.25
    - SPK (Connection from the President of the *Skupština* to individual MPs): 0.2
    - *Radna Tela*/*Delegacija* (Working Group and other Delegations): 0.15

[25] Technically "Vice President" (*Potpredsjednik*) of the *Sabor*.

- PP (Connection from the Deputy Speaker[26] to individual MPs): 0.1
- *Prijateljstva* (Country Specific Friendship Committee): 0.01

The above ties were chosen to encapsulate the variety of ties possible within a given parliament as well as to ensure cross-comparability. While it is recognized that including political party affiliation as a type of tie within the networks could overdetermine the interconnectedness of certain individuals it was necessary to include it to ensure the cross-comparability of the parliaments. As Slovenia does not have any sort of working group or parliamentary club system it was necessary to include the ties to ensure that there was some clustering effect due to party membership. Further, the inclusion of party ties was considered necessary given the importance that all interview subjects placed on party affiliation, but this was a post-facto confirmation of the choice to include the ties.

Once the information had been entered, an initial overview analysis was possible to compare the overall network structures of the various countries and of their parliaments across time. All the ties included in these maps are representative of formal connections through formal political positions held in the formal political institution of the parliament. Further detail will be given in Chapters 4-7, but the initial results of that process are presented in Table 3.1, on the following page. This initial analysis, crucially, allowed the identification of key network actors within each parliamentary sitting. Specifically, once the network maps had been created it became possible to rank the actors of the networks not only by their name or political affiliation but by their relevant SNA centrality measures.

With this data in hand, it became possible to begin moving to the second stage of data gathering: field work. To identify the informal networks, understand how they function, and how they may impact the formal processes conducting interviews was a crucial part of the research process. While SNA based upon the formal network maps generated above, which show the extent of formal ties between members, yielded some interesting maps and insights into the structures of parliaments without conducting interviews in the region it would not be possible to gain an understanding of how the actors within the networks view the formal ties and what other sorts of *informal* ties

[26] Technically "Vice President" (*Potpredsednici*) of the *Skupština*.

exist between the members of parliament which are not captured through the official and *formal* political biographies of the parliamentarians available through the government websites.

Table 3.1: Comparative Network Values

Country/ Year	Av. Degree	Av. Weighted Degree	Dia-meter	Density	Modularity	Av. Clustering Coefficient	Av. Path Length
SL: 1992-6	77.711	34.76	2	0.873	0.262	0.694	1.375
SL: 1996-2000	95	41.211	2	1.067	0.256	0.741	1.327
SL: 2000-4	160.311	41.661	2	1.801	0.228	1.388	1.169
HR: 2000-3	106.609	41.896	2	0.711	0.522	0.684	1.607
HR: 2003-7	165.493	60.144	2	1.111	0.341	0.727	1.469
HR: 2007-11	328.471	85.064	2	2.161	0.41	0.803	1.353
HR: 2011-13	291.669	69.254	2	1.944	0.408	0.8	1.339
RS: 2008-12	197.552	84.413	2	0.793	0.495	0.687	1.534
RS: 2012-14	300.904	60.791	2	1.208	0.439	0.75	1.386
RS: 2014-16	645.424	126.638	2	2.597	0.164	0.886	1.209
RS: 2016-18	681.864	91.641	2	2.738	0.236	0.873	1.233

Interviews

Interviews were conducted in the region in several stages from 2019-20. The initial aspirations for the interviews were, admittedly, grandiose due to the immense size of the networks and the need to triangulate the impact of the networks. As the focus was on parliaments the boundaries for the networks were, simply, the MPs of a certain country. This meant that the networks for Slovenia include all 90 individuals of the Slovenian National Assembly (*Državni Zbor*), all 151 individuals for the Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski Sabor*, *Sabor*), and the 250 individuals of the Serbian National Assembly (*Narodna Skupština*, *Skupština*). For each electoral cycle a number of interviews would be needed in order to identify and triangulate the impact of

informal networks which lay behind the formal network structures as identified in the use of SNA. Ideally, the intention was to speak with a variety of political actors to identify the impacts that informal networks had both at the centre, by speaking with those who had successfully made use of such networks to advance their careers, and at the periphery, by speaking with those in a more marginal position in the networks. Representation from various national minorities was also considered necessary to identify the informal impact that nationality, language, and ethnicity has on the formation of network ties.

With this in mind, an ideal number of interviews per case was identified to attempt to capture this complexity. For the Slovenian and Croatian cases this number was ten, which would allow for representation from the main parties as well as some of the myriad smaller groups in their respective parliaments. In Serbia, this number increased to fifteen given the significantly larger size of the *Skupština* and the significantly larger number of parties, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. Importantly, these numbers were also intended to be *per electoral cycle* as the informal networks, their structure and impact, would change with each election as the list of MPs in the parliaments changed. This was then tempered by the fact that many MPs were re-elected and, thus, would be able to provide insight into the functioning of the parliament over multiple time periods. As such, the ideal number of interviews was around 60-80 across all cases but it was expected that the real number of interviews would be lower due to time and access constraints.

However, as may be implied by the use of the conditional voice in the previous paragraphs, even this plan did not survive contact with reality. Due to issues of access and the COVID-19 pandemic the number of interviews was reduced significantly. Indeed, in the end only five interviews were conducted in Slovenia, six in Croatia, and nine in Serbia. It is recognized that this does introduce a possible element of bias into the study, as without access to a wide variety of individuals it is possible that only certain voices would be heard thus tainting the data collected. To control for this a standard list of questions was constructed which was asked across all subjects, although space was also left to pursue interesting tangents which arose during the interview. Each of the interviews was expected to last for about an hour and a half. In practice, one interview lasted only 45 minutes while the longest lasted two and a half

hours. On average, interviews lasted approximately an hour and a half as expected. The general questions pertained to informality, party structure, and how the MP found that their respective parliament worked. This decision was taken to help identify the "common sense" truths of politics which is easier for some to speak about rather than themselves and their own actions, in line with other studies finding that informal practices are much easier to identify when employed by others than by oneself (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 7). Such duality was useful, then, in helping to identify the ways in which *other* MPs and parties made use of informal networks which, when collected, produced the tapestry discussed in Chapters 3-6. Collectively, then, this fits with the paradigm of the semi-structured interview, where there were standard questions asked of the individuals with time made available to follow particularly interesting lines of inquiry which arose during the interview process.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the interviews were conducted in a variety of methods which introduces another possible source of bias. While the Serbian interviews were all conducted in person, as they were conducted pre-pandemic, the Slovenian and Croatian interviews were not. Three Slovenian interviews were conducted via Skype, one via Zoom, and one was simply a questionnaire which the subject replied to. For Croatia one was a WhatsApp call, one a simple telephone call, three were conducted via Zoom and, once again, one was a questionnaire. Obviously, this level of variation is not an ideal situation but represented a capitulation to the realities of research. Due to the pandemic, research visits to Slovenia and Croatia were out of the question which precluded in-person interviews. The use of questionnaires was not a preferred method of communication, but the Croatian subject simply said they did not have time for a call and another, the Slovenian, was too old to be familiar with much technology beyond email (Slovenia – Interview 1, 2020). Indeed, technological issues plagued the Slovenian research due to the advanced age of the interviewees as, for obvious reasons, individuals who were in the *Državni Zbor* in 1992 were of a rather advanced age by 2020, if they were still alive at all. While this was not an ideal situation, as it meant the interviews were not directly comparable, such pitfalls are not uncommon in social scientific research.

To control for these issues, I decided to not record any of the interviews unless asked to by the subject. Initially, this decision was taken to assure the interviewee that

their responses would be anonymous and to help put them at ease. With coffees and biscuits between us, rather than a microphone, the in-person interviews became rather convivial which I believe significantly helped with the data gathering process. However, to ensure the cross-comparability of the interviews as much as possible, I also decided to not record the virtual interviews except in two cases where the subjects suggested it would be wise to do so. As it was their suggestion, I decided to follow it but the quality of my notes taken from these interviews does not differ significantly from the notes taken during the non-recorded interviews. Obviously, the most detailed responses came from those who sent written answers to a list of questions, but they were also, unfortunately, the ones to whom no follow-up questions could be asked.

However, while such issues may represent practical limits to idealized methodological practice it was also important to attempt to control for any errors in the analysis which could arise. To do so, a greater emphasis was placed on the networks as previously identified and on EU documentation. This was supplemented by interviews with EU representatives, i.e., individuals seconded from the EU to the candidate country, to gain an outsider's perspective on the accession process. Clearly, this was not an ideal solution, but it allowed the research to be grounded in objective data which was then to be supplemented by insights from the interviews. Such an approach can be seen in Chapters 4-7 wherein insights from the interviews and EU's yearly reports are used to triangulate insights from the groupings as presented in the network maps to determine the impact of the informal networks even if their structure is not necessarily captured in the maps. The responses from the EU representatives were used to understand how these informal networks affected their ability to interact with representatives in the candidate states, further providing a triangulation of data by corroborating information from the network maps with insights from individuals in the networks and those who had to interact from a position outside them. While, once again, the number of such interviews was low, at only two interviews across the cases, this was all that could be interviewed given the time, pandemic, and other constraints of the project[27]. Such an outcome for the project was, obviously, less than perfect but

[27] For example, I was denied access to files and contact information regarding individuals who had worked in Slovenia by the Europe Direct Contact Centre of the European External Action Service as my request for information did not fulfil the public interest requirement for the release of personal information.

the triangulation of insights from multiple sources helps to ensure the epistemological rigour of this research (Hussein, 2009; Vidicki and Stojšin, 2021).

Taken together, then, the interview process did not proceed entirely as planned but did produce some very interesting results which provided full coverage for the parliamentary periods under study. Several of the interview subjects had been in their respective parliaments for multiple periods, and a few were in the parliament for the entirety of the period under study. They often would be members of multiple committees which provided a good coverage for the overall functioning of the parliament. This was complemented further by aforementioned interviews with EU representatives who could speak both to the pace and challenges of the overall process during their time in the country as well as to their understanding of the impacts of the informal networks. Thus, while the interviews did not cover all parties and all possible committees, they did provide an insight into the accession process in all countries, across all parliamentary periods, and even into the functioning of the relevant EU accession committees in all the countries.

Ethics and Reflexivity

Turning to the conduct of the interviews themselves, they were conducted as part of an iterative process of data gathering followed by a further refining of the questions and of the methods of data collection. In line with the requirements for ethical social scientific research, most initial contacts or attempts to contact individuals were through public channels and involved a statement of intention as well as a statement regarding the subject of my work. Other than two interviews in Serbia, discussed below, all individuals were informed of the overall subject of the interview beforehand and were all aware that the overall research was focused on the impact of informal political networks. This decision, while ethically correct, did not necessarily facilitate the interview process and, as such, other performative personal aspects were used to attempt to gain access. Interviewees were all informed that their responses would be kept entirely anonymous to ensure their safety and to prevent any harm from coming to them, bodily or otherwise, through their participation.

The field work began in Serbia in 2019 with two trips to the region, one in May and one in November and December. Of these two trips the first was facilitated by my

having completed a master's degree at the University of Belgrade and through personal connections in the city. This facilitated access to some individuals as I was able to procure their telephone numbers through previous contacts and was provided with their personal email addresses to which could be sent a request for an interview. The irony that research into the impact of informal networks was facilitated by my own connections (*veze*) in Belgrade is not lost on me, and it is understood that this process would not necessarily be replicable to another researcher.

Further, both this first trip and the second trip in December were facilitated, to a certain extent, by my position as a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Edinburgh. This position as a Western educated individual, and one whose previous qualifications also included time spent at the University of Belgrade, proved to be quite useful for gaining access. Individuals representing groups with a western orientation were, often, very eager to talk with someone "from the West" who had previously studied in the country and had returned to study it once again. Many interviews began with discussions of Edinburgh, Scotland, and even of Boston, U.S.A., my birthplace, which served as signifiers of the Western orientation and experiences of the interviewee and helped to establish my credentials as both an outsider and yet an expert.

In relation to the question of being an outsider it also proved quite useful that I possess a Serbian name and have Serbian heritage. As a half-Serbian American citizen who is in possession of an American passport and European education, and yet still has a Serbian last name even if it has been Anglicized[28], this put me in a good position, in some interviews, to be both "of" the country without being "from" the country[29]. I am also certain that my gender, that of a man, also helped significantly due to patriarchal tendencies within the region. All of these helped facilitate *certain* interviews in the first stage but were also problematic later.

Once in Belgrade for the second trip, and after speaking with other academics about doing research in the region, it was decided that I should pursue other routes to

[28] From "Mesarović" to "Mesarovich".
[29] For example, the ability to cross myself in the Orthodox fashion proved to be quite helpful during an interview with a member of a right-wing Serbian political party as it confirmed my membership of the religious and national group via the appropriate hand gesture.

contact politicians besides tapping my informal network. Following this advice, a further round of emails was sent to the media contact information of Serbian political parties to attempt to cut through the static of the formal, open channels. Following on from this, I made business cards and attempted to visit the headquarters of political parties in Belgrade to break the deadlock. I visited the offices of the Democratic Party (*Demokratska Stranka*), Democratic Party of Serbia (*Demokratska Stranka Srbije*), Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička Partija Srbije*), United Serbia (*Jedinstva Srbija*), Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (*Savez Vojvođanske Mađare*), among others, often unannounced in an attempt to force a meeting. While most of these meetings were not *hugely* productive, from the exercise I did learn some interesting things. In the vast majority of cases when access to the office was granted, which it was not always, the offices looked, more or less, quite similar: usually being situated in some office block with a woman between the ages of 25-40 behind the front desk. My accent immediately gave me away as a foreigner which did not, initially, prove to be significantly problematic.

However, when attempting to contact the Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*), the former ruling party of Serbia under Slobodan Milošević, my accent did prove slightly problematic. Unlike the standard greeting, whereby the person at the front desk invites you in and asks you to state your business, the SPS experience was quite different. The headquarters of the SPS is on one of the main squares in the centre of the city, on Students Square (*Studenski trg*) specifically, in a grand and venerable old building. Upon entering I was greeted by the mid-50s or early 60s security guard sitting at a desk with an ashtray next to him. After explaining that I was there to try and arrange an interview with one of the MPs he told me to wait while he picked up the phone and, possibly not thinking that I would understand him, called someone to explain that "some foreigner" (*neki stranac*) was here to talk to somebody. Unsurprisingly, this did not lead to the successful organizing of an interview with anyone in the organization.

In conversation with several academics in Belgrade, and with those individuals whom I did successfully interview, several things were learned about why I struggled to arrange the interviews. First and foremost, in a country like Serbia, with a recent memory of devastation during the 1999 NATO bombing campaign, being an

"American" was in no way helpful when attempting to speak with the less-Western minded members of certain political parties. I was also told that my lack of official documentation on this trip, such as a stamped document from the University assuring individuals that I was indeed a Doctoral Candidate, could also have explained some of the issues I encountered. Serbia, like many post-socialist countries, still relies extensively on hand stamped documents as a form of bureaucratic power and legitimacy[30] and, as a foreigner who was lacking such a document, I could, perhaps, have looked too much like an outsider to gain the required level of access to the networks. This null result does, though, reveal much about the political culture in Serbia and the importance of the informal ties which act to bind the individuals together and which, in fact, open up the possibilities of interaction between the individuals. While these issues were partially addressed in my third research visit, in February 2020, the structural issues remained and only four further interviews were conducted while in the country.

Obviously, it is important not to extrapolate too much from the failure of a single individual to gain access to a wide variety of MPs, but it is also not inconceivable that the difficulties involved are indicative of a wider culture which does not favour openness and access and instead acts to close out inquisitive eyes and outsiders. It is perhaps indicative of the wider culture that the quickest responses were organized through a personal connection in my first research trip. I simply went for coffee with said acquaintance, they called the interviewees, and the interviews were scheduled in the following couple of days. This contrasts starkly with the relative difficulty of arranging interviews through formal channels, although, again, this is not necessarily a solely Serbian phenomenon as better academics than I have encountered difficulties with access while in the field.

[30] An extreme example of this from the region is the case of the missing stamp in Sarajevo where the incoming city government, in 2020, found that the official government stamp was "missing", possibly taken by the outgoing government, which meant that they could not publish any new laws in the Official Gazette, an important step in the passage of any law ('A gdje je pečat iz Skupštine Kantona Sarajevo?', 2020).

Slovenia and Croatia

Following on from the Serbian interviews the intention was to undertake in person research in Slovenia and Croatia under the terms of a research grant from the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) and James Madison Charitable Trust (JMCT). However, this was not to be as the COVID-19 pandemic made this research trip impossible. As such, the interviews with Slovenian and Croatian subjects had to be conducted virtually, first from Serbia, where I was residing for much of 2020, and then from Edinburgh once the border restrictions had been lifted and I could return to the UK.

Following the advice of Serbian academics, it was determined that contact should be made with individuals in Croatia and in Slovenia in English first before switching to Serbo-Croatian if it was preferred. This decision was made to maximize the benefit of my Western background and to pre-empt any possible prejudice which could arise due to my use of Serbian as opposed to Croatian verb conjugations. As would be predicted, this led to the majority of the interviews with Croatian MPs being conducted in English as opposed to in Serbo-Croatian[31]. However, this was not the case in Slovenia as many of the subjects were elderly men who had a much better familiarity with Serbo-Croatian[32], given that it was the standard language of communication in the SFRJ, than with English. Indeed, it was repeatedly mentioned to me, when I would ask if they would prefer to speak in Serbo-Croatian rather than English, that they all knew it and spoke it well. This ability on my part, then to communicate with Slovenians in Serbo-Croatian[33], the language which they were taught in school growing up and which most of them spoke daily well into their twenties or thirties, and with Croatians in English, to emphasize my Western connections, proved quite useful in engaging with individuals from across the political spectrum in both countries. While this does impact the replicability of the research, as the interviews would possibly generate different responses with a different interviewer, it is important to note that any such bias from this is controlled for by the

[31] This is used without prejudice to the existence of the language, see "A Note on Language" at the start of the thesis.
[32] See above.
[33] See above.

inclusion of standardized data in the form of the network maps which helps triangulate and corroborate the information gathered.

Chapter 4: Europeanization and Informal Networks in Slovenia

Returning to the research question, this chapter attempts to identify the conditions under which informal networks in Slovenia impacted their European Union (EU) accession process. In addition to being the first country to secede from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socialistična federativna republika Jugoslavija*, SFRJ), Slovenia also became, in 2004, the first country in the region to accede to the EU. As such, Slovenia represents a "success" case for Europeanization. This chapter examines the experience of Slovenia during its process of joining the EU beginning with a discussion of the background of the Slovenian case, a timeline of their accession, and then a discussion of the evolving political situation in Slovenia from 1992-2004. Following on from this is the presentation of the network data and, in the analysis section, a testing of the conditions as stated in Chapters 2, Theories of Collapse and Accession, and 3, Comparative Social Network Analysis and Reflexivity.

Historical Background

Slovenia, like all the cases in this study, was one of the founding and constituent members of the SFRJ and of the various iterations back to the founding of the original Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (*Kraljevina Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev*) in 1918. During World War II, Slovenia was partitioned between Germany, Italy, Hungary, and the Nazi puppet state Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*[34], NDH). Hungary annexed the eastern region, where the Hungarian minority still largely resides, Italy annexed the west of the country, adding it to the Italian Littoral region, Germany annexed the north, and the remainder was given to the NDH. With the victory of the Yugoslav Partisans in 1945 the Italian Littoral was partitioned between Italy and the SFRJ, with the majority of the land going to the SFRJ while some areas, such as Trieste, remained with Italy (Zver, 2021).

While the SFRJ was stable, for a time, trouble began to emerge during the 1980s as the economic performance of the SFRJ began to decline. As the economic system disintegrated, with inflation being rampant especially in the latter half of the

[34] In Croatian, as that was the official language of the NDH.

1980s, so too did the complex and decentralized federal system along with the socialist party itself (Vladisavljević, 2010). In Slovenia this took the form of the publication of the Contributions to the Slovene National Program (*Prispevki za slovenski nacionalni program*) by dissident journal "New Review" (*Nova revija*) in January 1987 calling for the liberalisation of Slovene society and the establishment of democracy. The subsequent JBTZ Affair (*afera JBTZ*) in 1988, alternatively known as the Ljubljana process (*ljubljanska proces*), wherein four journalists and analysts were arrested and tried for leaking military secrets by the Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija*, JNA), further galvanized opinions against the federal institutions. On the same day, the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (*Odbor za varstvo človekovih pravic*) was founded to defend the arrested and, eventually, to promote wider human rights in Slovenia.

At the end of September 1989 amendments were passed in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (*Socialistična republika Slovenija*) which allowed for the holding of democratic elections and the formation of a formal opposition. The Democratic Opposition of Slovenia (*Demoratična opozicija Slovenije*, DEMOS) was created by the fusion of several opposition parties which, in turn, won the first multiparty elections held on 8 April 1990. The DEMOS coalition began the process of liberalising society, reforming the economy, and, importantly, organising an independence plebiscite which was held on 23 December 1990. This was followed by talks with the federal SFRJ government, which were unsuccessful, and then the eventual declaration of independence on 25 June 1991 (Haček *et al.*, 2013, pp. 1–13). Unsurprisingly, the federal SFRJ government was unwilling to let one of the constituent republics simply secede, so this declaration resulted in the Slovenian War of Independence (*Slovenska osamosvojitvena vojna*), also known as the "Ten-Day War" (*desetdnevna vojna*). The successful prosecution of the war by Slovene territorial army forces led to the removal of JNA forces and the signing of the Brioni Agreement on 7 July 1991 which brought the war to an end and resulted in *de facto*, if not immediately *de jure*, independence of Slovenia. The *de jure* process was completed, at the latest, by May 22, 1992, with Slovenian entry into the United Nations (UN) (*International recognition of Slovenia | Slovenia 20 years*, 2012).

Before independence, though, events were underway in Slovenia to reform its economy and political structure. Economic discussions on the privatization of property necessary to dismantle the Yugoslavian socialist self-management economic system began under the DEMOS coalition in 1990 and 1991 (Mencinger, 1996, p. 417). This dispute, however, proved too much for the DEMOS coalition which fractured into various smaller parties, triggering the 1992 elections. Before this, though, the DEMOS coalition was responsible for a key change, especially for this work given its focus on political networks: the introduction of a new constitution in December 1991 (Haček *et al.*, 2013, p. 15). This constitution replaced the previous tricameral parliament with an incomplete bicameral system, with the vast majority of power vested in the lower chamber. The constitution remains in effect today with only slight modifications and, thus, the 1992 election marks the official beginning for this study as, from that year onwards, Slovenia was an independent parliamentary republic on its way towards EU integration.

Population and Geography

Slovenia is the smallest of the countries to be examined here, with a population of 1.91 million in 1991 and 1.96 million in 2002 (*Population and households, censuses by YEAR and MEASURES. PxWeb*, 2021). It is situated at the south-eastern edge of the Alps bordering, as Map 1 shows, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia. This position meant that, for the majority of its time during accession, Slovenia was bordered by two EU countries and one non-EU country in the same accession group, Hungary. Croatia was also interested in joining the 2004 accession wave but, for reasons which will be discussed in the next chapter, was unable to.

Slovenia is, for a European country, rather ethnically homogenous with ethnic Slovenes making up 88.31% of the population at independence and decreasing to 83.06% according to census data by 2002 (*Population, censuses 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2002 by MEASURES, ETHNIC AFFILIATION and YEAR. PxWeb*, 2021). The Italian and Hungarian minorities are recognized as autochthonous and are guaranteed seats in the National Assembly (*Državni Zbor*), one apiece. The largest other minority groups are Croats and Serbs, at 2.76% and 2.48% in 1991 respectively, while all the other variety of minority groups represent increasingly small fractions of

the population. The Hungarian minority was, historically, concentrated in the east and the Italian minority in the west. The history of occupation by Italians in the inter-war period of western Slovenia, annexed to Italy after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and referred to as the Julian March, and, during the Second World War itself, of further sections of Slovenia resulted in significant ethnic tensions.

After the Second World War, with the partition of the Italian littoral region between Yugoslavia and Italy, significant numbers of Italians either moved of their own volition or fled reprisals by the Yugoslav Partisans and this issue remained sensitive. Until the resolution of the issue of restitution and property ownership by a constitutional amendment in 1997, the so-called "Spanish Compromise", which allowed foreigners to purchase lands in Slovenia these tensions also threatened to derail Slovenian aspirations for EU membership. This will be discussed further in detail in the analysis section.

Map 4.1: Geography of Slovenia

Source: (*Slovenia | History, Geography, & People*, 2021)

Economy

As the country closest to what was, at that time, the European Economic Community (EEC), and for other historical reasons which are too complicated to investigate here, Slovenia was also the wealthiest of the SFRJ republics at the point of secession. GDP per capita stood at 5,400 ECU[35] in 1993 (European Commission, 1998, p. 52), a level which is higher than Serbia's today (European Commission, 2020, pp. 123–5), and which was significantly higher than any other country in Eastern Europe at the time (UNDP, 2000). Unlike other countries in the 2004 enlargement, Slovenia's level of development and the specific nature of Yugoslav socialism precluded the need for some of the more dramatic privatization measures implemented by others, choosing instead a more methodical approach (Mencinger, 1996; Mesarovich, 2018). With the combined benefits of a gradual economic transition, relative wealth, and a short independence war, Slovenia managed to avoid the rapid demographic and economic decline of the other countries both in this study and in the wider region.

Political System

The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (*Ustava Republike Slovenije*), as all such documents do, governs the political structure of the Republic of Slovenia (1991). As per the constitution, Slovenia is a parliamentary republic with 90 deputies elected to the *Državni Zbor*, 88 by proportional representation with a 4% threshold and one each reserved for the Italian and Hungarian minorities (Article 80). Like Croatia, the country is split into electoral districts within which votes are divided among local electoral lists by the voting quotient system and any remaining seats are distributed nationally using the d'Hondt system (*Slovenia*, 1999). Uniquely, among the cases here, Slovenia also has a second chamber, the National Council (*Državni svet*), which functions as an amalgamation of employer, employee, farmer, civil society, and local interests (Article 96). It is, however, significantly less powerful than the *Državni zbor*, with the power to propose laws but not to block the passage of legislation (Article 97).

Confusingly, Slovenia has two presidents: one who is President of the Republic of Slovenia (*Predsednik Republike Slovenije*, President) and another who is President

[35] European Currency Units, a precursor to the Euro.

of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia (*Predsednik Vlade Republike Slovenije*, Prime Minister (PM)). The President acts as a symbolic head of state with limited powers except for the being the official selector of the PM (Article 107), acting as the head of the armed forces (Article 102), and having the ability to call for elections in the event that the government falls and is not replaced or fails to form after an election (Article 111). Alternatively, the PM has powers similar to that of a Prime Minister, hence the designation, and is responsible for the conduct of the government of the country and the appointment of ministers, with the *Državni zbor* appointing or dismissing ministers on the proposal of the PM (Article 112). If the *Državni zbor* so chooses, it may also replace the PM via a vote of no confidence (Article 116). The Constitution also, at the point of promulgation, banned the owning of property within Slovenia by foreigners but this was amended in 1997 as part of the "Spanish Compromise" (Article 68).

Slovenia and the EU

With the above information in mind, this section turns to the general history of Slovenia's journey towards EU membership. This began shortly after the Ten-Day War, or indeed right at the end of the war, with the signing of the Brioni Agreement which was brokered by the EEC. In terms of *formal* steps towards EU membership, though, Slovenia began progressing with a Europe Agreement in 1995 and proceeded methodically in lock-step with the other 2004 accession countries until accession in 2004. Table 4.1 highlights the important dates of this process.

As can be seen from Table and Graph 4.1, Slovenia proceeded through the negotiations of the *acquis* in a mere four years, quicker than any of the other cases examined here. Uniquely for the cases examined in this piece, Slovenia also was not alone in its accession. Along with the other members of the 2004 "big bang" enlargement, Slovenia proceeded through the negotiations as one of many states with all concluding negotiations in 2002 in advance of their collective accession in 2004. The date of Slovenian accession, then, was not conditioned solely on the level of preparation in Slovenia but was determined by the collective arrangements for the entire 2004 wave. However, a two year gap between the end of negotiations and

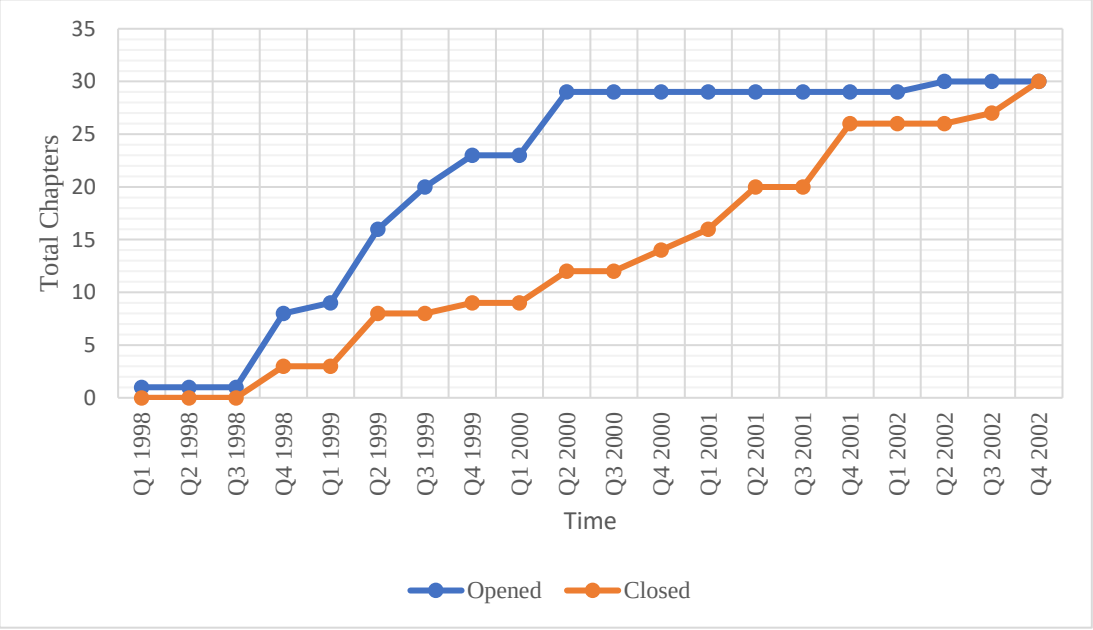
accession is not unusual, Croatia had a similar gap, and, as such, this is not considered divergent.

Table 4.1: Slovenian EU Accession Milestones

Date	Event
25.6.1991	Declaration of Independence
7.7.1991	Brioni Agreement Signed
1.9.1993	Assumed Rights of the Cooperation Agreement Signed with the SFRJ
15.6.1995	Initialled Europe Agreement
10.6.1996	Europe Agreement Signed, Applies for EU Membership
11.11.1996	Interim Agreement Signed (Commission of the European Communities 1997, 312)
15.7.1997	*Državni zbor* Ratifies Agreement, European Commission Recommends Negotiations Begin
31.3.1998	Accession Negotiations Begin
1.2.1999	Europe Agreement Takes Effect
12.2002	Negotiations Concluded
1.5.2004	Slovenia Acedes to EU

Source: ('Brioni Declaration', 1991; *Kako je potekalo vključevanje :: Evropa.gov.si*, 2014)

Graph 4.1: Slovenian Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire[36]



[36] Table A1.1, in Appendix 1, provides a detailed list of the dates of the opening and closing of the chapters of the *acquis*.

Slovenian Elections

Unlike many other countries, Slovenia's accession process is notable for the electoral dominance of one party, Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*, LDS). Although LDS is now an extra-parliamentary party, of little note, it was once the dominant party in Slovenia and formed the backbone of every coalition government bar one. Besides LDS, there were a number of other parties which emerged from the DEMOS coalition, such as the Slovenian Peoples Party (*Slovenska ljudska stranka*) or the Slovenian Christian Democrats (*Slovenski krščanski demokrati*), who all were in government with the LDS at some point during the accession process. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the electoral history of Slovenia from 1992-2004.

Table 4.2: Slovenian Governments and Elections 1992-2004

Year	Election	Prime Minister	Party	Coalition
1992	12.12	Janez Drnovšek	*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije* (LDS)	LDS-DS-SDSS-SSS-ZS-SDP
1993	-			LDS-SKD-SDSS-ZLSD
1994	-			LDS-SKD-ZLSD
1995	-			
1996	10.11			
1997	-			LDS-SLS-DeSUS
1998	-			
1999	-			
2000	15.10	Andrej Bajuk	*Slovenska ljudska stranka* + *Slovenski krščanski demokrati* (SLS+SKD)	SLS+SKD-SDSS
2001	-	Janez Drnovšek	*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije* (LDS)	LDS-SLS-DeSUS-ZLSD
2002	-			
2002	-			
2003	-	Anton Rop		
2004	3.10			

Key: LDS: *Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*, DS: *Demokratska stranka*, SDSS: *Socialdemokratska zveza Slovenije*, SSS: *Socialistična stranka Slovenije*, ZS: *Zeleni Slovenije*, SDP: *Stranka demokratične prenove*/*Socialdemokratska prenova*, SKD: *Slovenski krščanski demokrati*, ZLSD: *Združena lista socialnih demokratov*, SLS+SKD: *Slovenska ljudska stranka + Slovenski krščanski demokrati*, SLS: *Slovenska ljudska stranka*, DeSUS: *Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije*.

As Table 4.2 shows, the political scene in Slovenia was not stable during the period in question with not only the coalitions changing but even the parties in the *Džavni zbor* changing from electoral period to electoral period. This was not in any way uncommon in Eastern Europe in the early post-socialist period as newly created parties were lacking in the deeper historical and popular roots which sustained the existence of Western European parties (Bértoa, 2013). The constellations of parties in Slovenia during the period were centred around the dominance of LDS and, in particular, of PM Janez Drnovšek. As shown in Table 4.2, other than a six month window in 2000, 7 June to 30 November when Andrej Bajuk was in power, Drnovšek was PM and his party, LDS, was the central figure in all governing coalitions. Indeed, Anton Rop only took over from Drnovšek as PM because the latter had won the presidential election. Table 4.3 provides further detail on the dominance of LDS and the size of the ruling coalitions during the period with the seats being out of 90, the size of the *Državni zbor*.

Table 4.3: Slovenian Governing Coalitions and Party Fragmentation

Election	Governing Coalition	Seats	Parties in *Državni zbor*
12.12.1992	LDS-SKD-ZLSD-SDSS	54[37] LDS: 21 SKD: 15 ZLSD: 14 SDSS: 4	10
(None, end of "grand coalition")	LDS-SKD -ZLSD	53[38] LDS: 23 SKD: 16 ZLSD: 14	11
10.11.1996	LDS-SLS-DeSUS	49[39] LDS: 25 SLS: 19 DeSUS: 5	9
(7.6-30.11.2000)	SLS+SKD-SDSS	44[40] SLS+SKD: 29 SDSS: 15	8
15.10.2000	LDS-SLS-DeSUS-ZLSD	58[41] LDS: 33 SLS: 10 DeSUS: 4 ZLSD: 11	10

SNA: *Državni zbor* Networks and the EU Accession Process

Moving on from the overview, this section provides a detailed chronological presentation of the composition of *Državni zbor* during each parliamentary session: 1992-6, 1996-2000, 2000-4. Specifically, this section deals with each of the parliamentary sessions in turn, presenting their composition broken down by seat distribution. This is followed by the network map constructed for each cycle with the weightings given here:

- Slovenia:
    - *Politična stranka* (Party): 1

[37] Distribution as of February 1994.
[38] Distribution as of November 1996.
[39] Distribution as of November 1997.
[40] Distribution as of June 2000.
[41] Distribution as of December 2003.

- *Komisije*/*Odbore* (Commissions/Committees): 0.35
- Speaker (Connection from Speaker of the *Državni zbor* to individual MPs): 0.2
- *Delegacije* (Delegation): 0.1
- Deputy Speaker (Connection from the Deputy Speaker to individual MPs): 0.1
- *Skupine prijateljstva* (Parliamentary Friendship Groups): 0.01

As mentioned in the Chapter 3, the weighting of these ties was determined based on initial estimations of the importance of certain types, such as parties, with further weighting based on responses from individuals as to the relative importance of certain groups such as Commissions as opposed to the parliamentary friendship groups. A more complete discussion of the weighting and impact of these networks is presented in the Comparative Analysis section later in this chapter and a full list of Slovenian political parties is given in Appendix 3 (Table A3.1). However, as stated above, a necessary first step is a chronological presentation of the Slovenian data.

Državni zbor 1992-6

Following the 1992 elections, the first held under the present Slovenian constitution and the first in Slovenia as an independent state, LDS formed its second government, and the process of the post-socialist transformation could begin in earnest. While many of the parties in the previous parliament remained in office, the fracturing of the DEMOS coalition in the 1990-92 parliament had created political space for the emergence of new parties. Table 4.4 displays the distribution of parties and seats at the end of the parliamentary period. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this was chosen as at the outset of any parliament the committee membership was not established and many committees only became fully formed over the course of a parliamentary cycle. Taking the sample from the end of the period thus includes not only the construction of the committees but also includes the changes in seat distribution, due to party switching on the part of MPs, which was particularly frequent over the period.

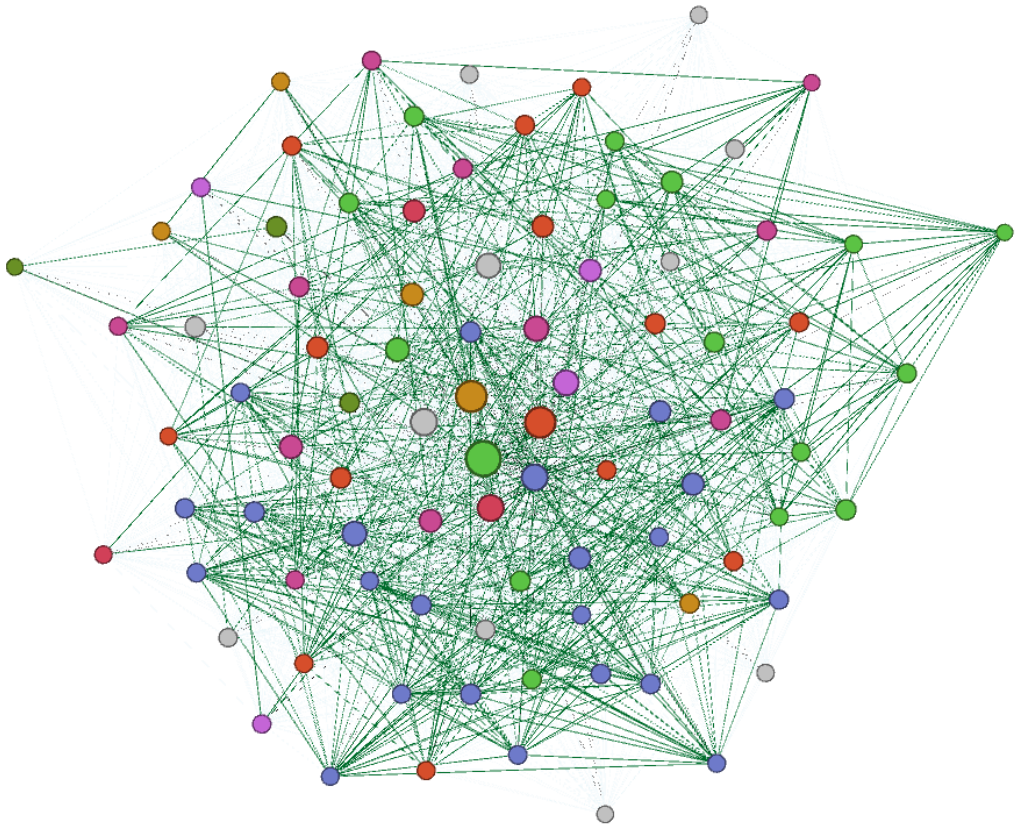
Table 4.4: Seat Distribution in the *Državni zbor* 1992-96

Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
LDS (*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*)	23	SLS (*Slovenska ljudska stranka*)	11
SKD (*Slovenski krščanski demokrati*)	16	SDSS (*Socialdemokratska zveza Slovenije*)	5
ZLSD (*Združena lista socialnih demokratov*)	14	Zeleni/LDS (*Zeleni/Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*)	5
		SND (*Slovenska nacionalna desnica*)	3
		SNS (*Slovenska nacionalna stranka*)	3
		DS (*Demokratska stranka*)	3
		Italian and Hungarian Minority MPs	2
		Unaffiliated	5
Totals	63		27

Key: Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

In this period, Slovenia managed to achieve a modicum of stability after the conclusion of its independence war and began the transition away from the previous socialist economic system. Privatization was begun of state enterprises or was begun in earnest as there had been some movement towards this in the previous 1990-92 parliament and towards the end of the socialist period in the SFRJ, and the general reorganising of society away from the previous socialist system continued (European Commission, 1997a). The first steps towards EU accession were also completed with Slovenia officially assuming the rights and responsibilities of the Cooperation Agreement signed between the EU, or EEC at the time, and the SFRJ; as well as Slovenia's initialling and signing of a Europe Agreement with the EU. Slovenia also submitted its application for membership in June 1996 and thus, by the end of this period, was judged to meet the Copenhagen Criteria and was officially on track to join the EU (European Commission, 1998).

Map 4.2: Network ties in the *Državni zbor* 1992-6[42]



Key: LDS, SKD, ZL, SLS, Zeleni/LDS, SDSS, DS, SND

Državni zbor 1996-2000

The 1996 election saw PM Janez Drnovšek win his second electoral victory, continuing LDS dominance into the second parliament. This resulted in a slightly different coalition from the previous parliament especially as some new parties, such as DeSUS, entered the parliament while other parties, such as the SND and DS, failed to cross the electoral threshold and disappeared from public life. Only nine parties, down from 11 in the 1992-6 period, are represented in this parliament as the party landscape temporarily shrank. The sample taken for this period, as displayed in Table 4.5, covers the period until 1 January 2000 to include the creation of the various committees while also excluding from the study the short lived government of Andrej Bajuk. Taking the sample during the Bajuk government would have returned a potentially erroneous result as many of the former cabinet ministers, and indeed the

[42] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20.

former PM Janez Drnovšek, had returned to the *Državni zbor* but did not take up positions on committees in the short period before the 2000 election. This also means the sample was taken before the merger of the SLS and SKD in June 2000, as part of the elevation of Andrej Bajuk to the position of PM.

Table 4.5: Seat Distribution in the *Državni zbor* 1996-2000

Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
LDS (*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*)	25	SDSS (*Socialdemokratska zveza Slovenije*)	15
SLS (*Slovenska ljudska stranka*)	19	SKD (*Slovenski krščanski demokrati*)	10
DeSUS (*Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije*)	5	ZLSD (*Združena lista socialnih demokratov*)	9
		SNS (*Slovenska nacionalna stranka*)	5
		Italian and Hungarian Minority MPs	2
Totals	49		41

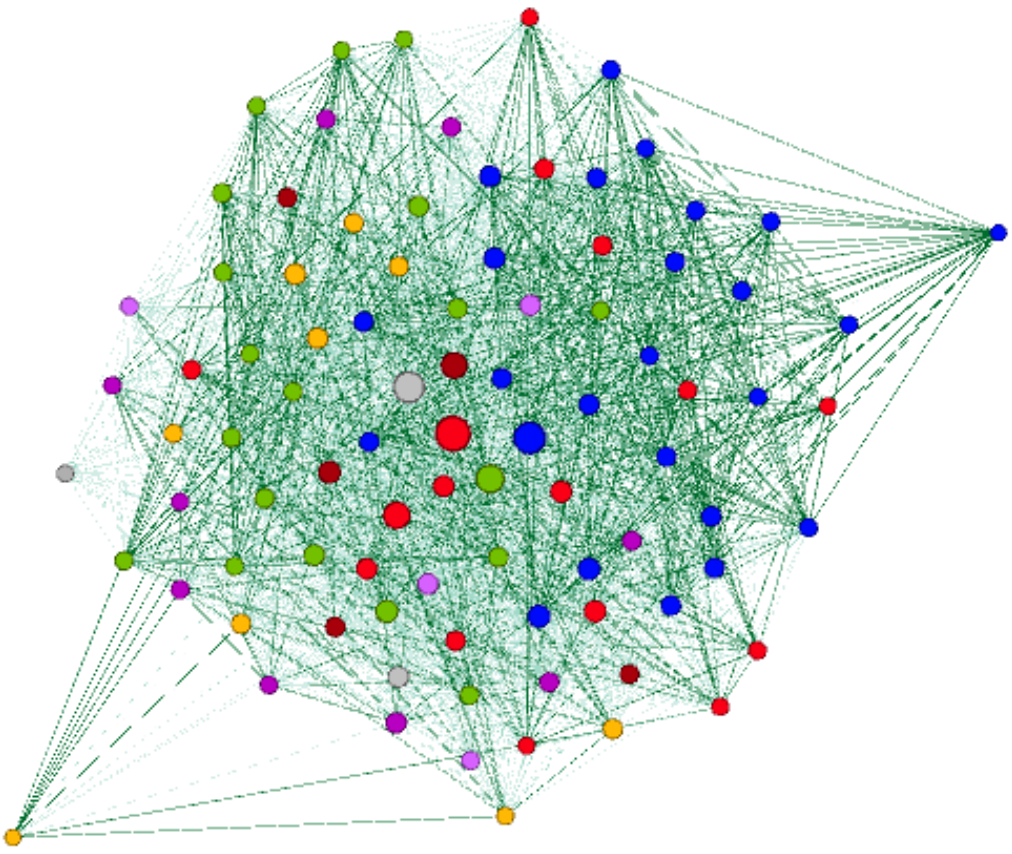
Key: Minority

Map 4.3, on the following page, presents the network map generated for this period and shows a relatively high level of mixing between parties and individuals across the space. There is, certainly, more differentiation than in the previous parliamentary period with LDS and the SLS taking up positions on the right and left parts of the map respectively. That they were in coalition together emphasizes the relative network strength of the government, with representatives in large numbers of committees and with access to all individuals in the *Državni zbor*. The strongest opposition party, the SDSS under their leader Ivan "Janez" Janša, is distributed throughout the map representing, again, their relative strength as their members also had seats on many committees. The SNS, under their long-time leader Zmago Jelinčič Plemeniti, is distributed throughout the map as well and has a central position which, due to their relative Euroscepticism, could have presented a problem for the diffusion of norms and the passage of reforms but, as will be discussed in the comparative section, this did not manage to interrupt the process in this period.

Turning now to the accession progress made in this period, this was a time of intense activity for the *Državni zbor*. The Europe Agreement had been initialled and signed in the previous parliament, so this parliament marked the beginning of the

accession negotiations and, as the negotiations were closed at the end of 2002, this parliament covers three of the five years in which the negotiations were taking place. By the end of the parliamentary period 29 out of the 30 chapters had been opened and 12 had been closed, with a further two being closed right after the election in October 2000. Significant changes, thus, took place in Slovenia during this period with a significant amount of the *acquis communautaire* being transposed into Slovenian law and reforms beginning to be implemented into the actual day to day functioning of the administrative structure (European Commission, 2000, pp. 78, 81). Of particular note in this period was the passage of the "Spanish Compromise", a constitutional amendment which allowed for foreign ownership of property in Slovenia, in 1997 which was a necessary step for accession negotiations to begin (Š, 2012).

Map 4.3: Network ties in the *Državni zbor* 1996-2000[43]



Key: LDS, SLS, SDSS, SKD, ZLSD, SNS, DeSUS,

[43] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20.

Državni zbor 2000-4

The 2000 elections, which brought an end to the short lived minority government of Andrej Bajuk, returned LDS and its leader Janez Drnovšek to power once again. This time the post-election coalition was slightly more left wing, perhaps in reaction to the right-wing minority government, and included once again the ZLSD, the reformed communist successor party and main left-wing opposition in the previous parliament. Once again there was some shifting in the parties with the SLS and SKD, formerly some of the largest parties in the *Državni zbor,* merging during the Bajuk government. The newly created N.Si party of headed by Bajuk himself also contested the election and entered into parliament. As with the other periods, the sample collected here is from the latter part of the electoral cycle, 31.12.2003 specifically, which, thus, includes the changes in the composition of the *Državni zbor* until then and includes the election of Janez Drnovšek to the office of President in 2002. Table 4.6 gives the seat distribution for this period and Map 4.4, on the following page, presents the network map constructed from this distribution.

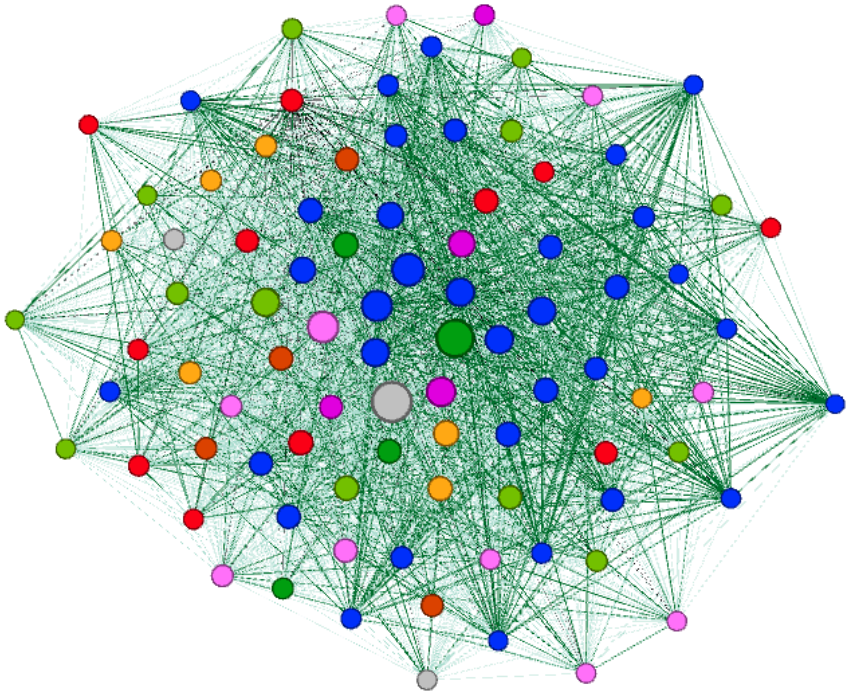
In this final period the shape of the network map returns, again, to the that of the initial 1992-6 period, one of relatively high mixing throughout. LDS, the main party of the governing coalition, is dispersed throughout the map with a cluster of individuals in the center. The other members of the coalition, such as DeSUS, are also distributed throughout the center. Even non-coalition members, though, are also distributed throughout the network with the minority party MPs, represented here as grey nodes, placed relatively centrally in the map due to their high level of participation in committees. This is to be expected as the minority MPs were not part of any party themselves and so have no other ties besides committees, hence their central position. Overall, the rather unique distribution is due to the shifting work patterns in the *Državni zbor* as the number of parliamentary friendship groups increased, in preparation for Slovenia's accession to the EU and increased international status, with 43 such groups in this period (Krašovec and Zobavnik, 2004).

Table 4.6: Seat Distribution in the *Državni zbor* 2000-4

Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
LDS (*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*)	34	SDSS (*Socialdemokratska zveza Slovenije*)	13
ZLSD (*Združena lista socialnih demokratov*)	11	N.Si (*Nova Slovenija – Krščanski demokrati*)	8
SLS (*Slovenska ljudska stranka*)	10	SMS (*Stranka mladih Slovenije*)	4
DeSUS (*Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije*)	4	SNS (*Slovenska nacionalna stranka*)	4
		Italian and Hungarian Minority MPs	2
Totals	59		31

Key: Minority

Map 4.4: Network ties in the *Državni zbor* 2000-4[44]



Key: LDS, SDSS, ZLSD, SLS, N.Si, SMS, SNS, DeSUS,

As can be inferred from the fact that this is the final network map, and thus the final case within the larger Slovenian case, this 2000-4 period also represents the completion of the Slovenian accession process. Negotiations were, in fact, closed in

[44] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20.

2002, before this sample was taken. This is not to say, though, that significant work was not done in this period. Some crucial changes to the legislative procedure and public administration were not complete until the 2000-4 period and reform of the judicial system, to help with a large backlog of cases, was also undertaken in the period (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, pp. 20–2). While these issues, clearly, had not prevented Slovenia from proceeding far in the accession process they are still emblematic of the substantial work which has to be done even in the final stages of the accession process.

Comparative Analysis

Within and across all these periods the networks within the *Državni zbor* underwent significant change, as displayed above in visual form. However, beyond the visual representations above GEPHI, the SNA tool used to generate the maps, is also able to compute standardized network values for each period. These values are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Comparative Slovenian Network Values

Value	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004
Av. Degree	77.711	95	160.311
Av. Weighted Degree	34.76	41.211	41.661
Diameter	2	2	2
Graph Density	0.873	1.067	1.801
Modularity	0.262	0.256	0.228
Av. Clustering Coefficient	0.694	0.741	0.852
Av. Path Length	1.375	1.327	1.169

As originally stated in Chapter 3, these values are representative of the structure of the networks in Slovenia. Degree and weighted degree are measures of the number of connections which each individual node possesses, with weighted degree weighting the values depending on the strength of the connection. The diameter of all the maps was two as the inclusion of ties to the speaker of the parliament and the deputy speakers resulted in a two width map, as all MPs are tied to the speaker who is then tied to all other MPs. While this does mean that the diameter measure is not

particularly interesting as a descriptive value it was necessary to include these ties to ensure that speakers and deputy speakers were centrally positioned, i.e., that they were not penalized by their low membership in committees since their time was taken up by their work as speaker or deputy speaker. An interpretation of the relevant measures is given below.

Comparative Analysis: The External Incentives Model (EIM)

The first conditions to be considered here are the EIM conditions which will be taken in the order they are appear in the Chapter 3. This section addresses the question of, in the Slovenian case, which, if any, of the conditions held true and which, if any, were affected by the informal political networks within the *Državni zbor*. The EIM conditions, as presented in Chapter 3, are as follows:

- (EIM 1): The size of the reward on offer from the EU is larger than the cost of making the societal changes OR
- (EIM 2): The size of the punishment for non-compliance is greater than the potential rewards of non-compliance AND
- (EIM 3): The EU's rewards and threats are considered credible by the candidate state

With the conditions modified by including informality to:

- (EIM/I 1) That the structure of the informal networks in which actors are embedded are not aligned against the changes (or conversely that they are aligned with the changes) AND
- (EIM/I 2) That the credibility of the rewards and threats emanating from the EU outweighs the credibility of any rewards and threats emanating from the informal networks

Given that Slovenia did join the EU the simple answer to the question is that the conditions above were held to be true throughout the accession process. EIM 1 and 2 were present in the case of Slovenia given that, while the changes required in the accession process were expensive, there was substantial aid on offer from the EU and Slovenia's economy was already geared towards exporting towards the EU. In terms

of direct financial transfers, the PHARE[45] program allocated commitments of €192 million from 1992-9, €33.4 million in 2000, €28.3 million in 2001, and a further €41.9 million in 2002 (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, p. 13)[46]. This is less, in aggregate, than offered to Croatia which received an average of €197m/y from 2007-13 (ADE s.a, 2019, p. 3)[47]. However, when the relative size of the population is factored in, it is not dramatically less with Croatia receiving an average of €28.14 per person, per year, and Slovenia receiving €19.95 per person in 2004, although Slovenia did receive less per person prior to this. This discrepancy is certainly notable but, as mentioned above, Slovenia was already one of the wealthiest of accession countries in the 2004 wave, the wealthiest in the wider region in fact (Business and Strategies Europe, 2015, p. 67), which entitled it to comparatively less aid than, for example, Bulgaria. However, given the uptake of the PHARE program aid on offer and the positive reporting on its effectiveness (Business and Strategies Europe, 2015, p. 306), it is clear that EIM I was in effect in Slovenia during the accession process.

While Slovenia was, in relative terms, a limited beneficiary of PHARE and other pre-accession funding mechanisms, the structure of the Slovenian economy was intimately tied to the EU, thus supporting EIM 2. In the first parliamentary period, 1992-6, trade with the EU increased from 1.6 to 4.2 billion European Currency Units (ECU). This was crucial as Slovenia was an export driven economy with exports accounting for 60% of GDP in 1996, of which 66% went to the EU (European Commission, 1997c, p. 8). This is not an aberration as, even while part of the SFRJ, Slovenia accounted for an outsized proportion of foreign trade (European Commission, 1997c, p. 19). While Slovenia *could* have persisted outside the EU, the dominance of trade with the EU made the prospect of membership of significant value and the prospect of being excluded, for such a small and export oriented country, rather less attractive (Brinar and Svetličič, 1999).

[45] PHARE being an acronym for the "Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies" program, a finance initiative originally directed solely towards Poland and Hungary before being broadened to include all accession countries.
[46] The numbers here are assumed to be in 2002 Euro values although it is not stated in the document, and it is unclear if the figures adjust for inflation. This is intended to simply give an estimate of the EU's contributions.
[47] See Appendix 2 for a comparison of financial support to Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia.

The credibility of EU threats and rewards, mentioned both in EIM 3 and EIM/I 2, was also proved true very early on through the "Spanish Compromise". In the Slovenian Constitution, at the point of promulgation, Article 68 prohibited the acquisition of property by foreigners except under conditions of reciprocity (*Ustava Republike Slovenije* 1991). This was considered unacceptable by the Italian government due to the historical claims of Italy to Slovenian territory. While a number of treaties had been signed between Italy and the SFRJ to settle the borders, the long-term resolution of issues stemming from the history of Italian occupation and the historical presence of Italians in the territory of modern Slovenia remained open. Italy attempted to "Europeanize" the issue, i.e., to raise the issue from a bi-lateral problem to the EU level, which it did successfully for a time in 1994 by blocking further accession progress with Slovenia (Geddes and Taylor, 2016, pp. 935–6). This, thus, represented to the Slovenian government the power of the EU to thwart the ambitions of accession candidates in defence of a member state, asserting the credibility of the EU's threats.

However, this was not only evidence of the willingness of the EU to act *credibly* on behalf of a member state. While there was significant pressure from sections of Italian society to condition Slovenian accession on their acceptance of historical property rights, if not territorial rights, of Italians in Slovenia this was not fully supported by the EU. As such a compromise was found, referred to as the "Spanish Compromise" as it was brokered by Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana during the Spanish EU Presidency in 1995, although the amendment was only passed in 1997 (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020). Under the compromise Slovenia agreed to alter its constitution, the only candidate country to date which has been made to do so, to allow for the purchasing of property by foreigners within four years of the opening of accession negotiations. This unblocked the conflict, resulting in Italy dropping support for restitution claims on behalf of those who fled Slovenia after the Second World War (Geddes and Taylor, 2016, p. 936). The EU, then, demonstrated credibility to the Slovenes both in terms of *threats*, with the possibility of exclusion, and in terms of *rewards*, as by cooperating productively with Slovenia to find a compromise the EU revealed its commitment to Slovenian accession.

Moving, then, to the issues of informality and the EIM, both conditions EIM/I 1 and 2 held true in the process of Slovenian accession. As stated above, Slovenia's general economic situation was broadly structured towards EU accession throughout the process. This was buttressed, informally, by the style of privatization chosen in Slovenia. Unlike in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Slovenia did not undergo any form of lustration which meant that there was no mass ejection of managers from industry or from the administration as would have been expected in a society in transition (Rožič, 2012). Unlike in countries such as Poland which went for the "shock doctrine" approach involving immediate and rapid privatization via sale of nationalized industries, Slovenia instead opted for a mixed model of privatization (Mrak *et al.*, 2004). Such a mixed model resulted in a selloff of shares in previously "worker managed" industries to workers and managers, some shares being sold to institutional buyers, and only in a limited number of cases, the wholesale transfer of the company to those not involved in the active running of the company. 78% of privatized companies, as of 1996, were under the control of internal owners who held 60% of equity, and, when worker ownership in the companies is included, a total of 85% of all companies were controlled by insiders at the end of the first privatization period (Mencinger, 1996, p. 423). Such a combination of method of privatization and general economic structure left few, if any, individuals who were opposed to the accession of the EU.

However, the lack of lustration did leave some areas which were less open to change than others. One industry of note was the existence of duty-free shops on Slovenia's land border which were to be closed as per the Europe Agreement (European Commission, 2000, p. 51). On this count, there was limited lobbying on behalf of this industry to prolong their existence, despite the necessity of closing them in line with Slovenia's EU commitments (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). While this lobbying bore some fruit, and the duty-free shops remained open longer than they were supposed to, the shops were, in the end, closed and did not prove to be an issue for Slovenian accession (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, p. 44). Public administration reform was also slow as in the years after independence the focus was on economic rather than administrative reform. However, by 2003, legislation was in line with the *acquis* and Slovenia was able to accede without issue (Prijon, 2012, p.

20). Overall, there was an understanding that while such things as the duty-free shops had *some* value, the offer of EU membership would lead to significant benefits for all involved, both for individual MPs and for the country as a whole (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020).

In terms of the *structure* of the informal networks themselves EIM/I 1 and 2 were also borne out as there was limited opposition to the necessity of EU accession among the parties. The dominance of LDS under the leadership of, Janez Drnovšek, was a driving force throughout the entire process. Drnovšek, a former President of the SFRJ, acted as a personal force to drive through the necessary changes in Slovenia. As a former President of the SFRJ, member of the DEMOS coalition, and general liberal reformer, Drnovšek was considered a man of character and one who possessed *credibility* even through until his unfortunate death in 2008 (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021; Slovenia Interview 4, 2021). Such credibility was "very important" for political performance both in wider society and within the networks in the *Državni zbor* (Slovenia Interview 4, 2021). This was due to the highly personalized nature of Slovenian politics. In a country of less than 2 million people, and with relatively new parties, often politics was focused on individuals rather than party programs more widely (Slovenia Interview 5, 2021). As such, under the leadership of Drnovšek, LDS acted as a central hub in the mixed structured networks of the *Državni zbor* throughout the period. This prevented some more intractable debates and issues involved in the accession process, i.e., over the concept of sovereignty, from halting the accession process entirely as individuals could still work together on certain issues despite deep disagreement on others (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020; Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). This means that EIM/I 2 has been borne out as well as the *credible* rewards in the informal network were aligned with the *credible* rewards on offer from the EU, helping to ensure that Slovenia was able to accede to the EU in line with the 2004 timetable.

Comparative Analysis: Europeanization as Policy Learning

Moving from the EIM to Europeanization as Policy Learning, it is important to clearly re-state the conditions for successful policy learning and Europeanization as derived from the policy literature. While many types of learning do exist in the literature, as discussed in Chapter 2, the structure of the accession process precludes

the other typologies and reduces the possibilities to Learning in Hierarchy (LIH) and Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC). These conditions are specifically:

- (LIH) Under conditions of high problem tractability learning takes place in hierarchy
- (LEC) Under conditions of low problem tractability learning takes place in an epistemic context

As explained in Chapter 2, these two conditions are further conditioned upon:

- (LIH 1) Under conditions where these rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor then learning is fostered
- (LIH 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered

And:

- (LEC 1) Under conditions where the actors doing the "teaching" are experts learning is fostered
- (LEC 2) Under conditions where the "experts" are inserted into the relevant decision-making bodies learning is fostered

When the impact of informal networks is included, the conditions are modified to:

- (LIH/I 1) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments outweigh contradictory rewards/punishments emanating from within the network.
- (LIH/I 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishment for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments are MORE credible than those emanating from the veto players in the network.

And:

- (LEC/I 1) Under conditions where the "expert" actors are considered experts by members of the informal networks learning is fostered.

- (LEC/I 2) Under conditions where the inserted "experts" are positioned not just in the correct formal position but also at the correct *informal* position to transmit knowledge learning is fostered.

How have these conditions played out during the process of Slovenian accession?

As the above conditions imply, LIH is roughly analogous to the process of accession as posited in the EIM. LIH functions on a top-down logic whereby goals are stated, plans are drawn up, boundaries are set, and incremental progress towards the goals is achieved which, in the end, helps to diffuse knowledge and practice down the hierarchy to those being led. As Slovenia did, in fact, accede to the EU it can be assumed that this was successful. Specifically, as mentioned above, the rewards for compliance on offer from the EU were *greater* than the costs of adjustment and they were also considered as *more* credible than any possible rewards for non-compliance, both for Slovenia as a whole and for individual MPs in the informal networks.

Like LIH, LEC clearly also took place as judged by the accession of Slovenia to the EU. On a more granular level, though, it is clear that the conditions of LEC were not just met but that the informal networks were *strongly* allayed towards the successful accession of Slovenia into the EU and, thus, that the sub-conditions were also met. Both LEC/I 1 and LEC/I 2 were fulfilled in the Slovenian case to a high degree, helping to advance the accession agenda across the board.

LEC/I 1 requires that the "experts" on offer from the EU are considered as such within the Slovenian context. This was true on several levels. Of primary importance was the high quality of Slovenian MPs throughout the accession process. Due to the conditions of independence, the lack of lustration, and the longer-term impacts of the DEMOS coalition, Slovenian MPs were of a very high quality and focused on their parliamentary work (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). While debates and conflict within the *Državni zbor* could be quite lively, with MPs almost coming to blows at least once, the generally high quality of MPs ensured that the debate and conflict resulted in high levels of oversight (Slovenia Interview 1, 2020; Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). This extended beyond the plenary sessions of the *Državni zbor* to the committees where members were appointed based on expertise and knowledge of the subject area (Slovenia Interview 1, 2020; Slovenia Interview 3, 2021; Slovenia Interview 5, 2021).

While this is something that seems as if it should be obvious, a brief survey of parliamentary or other committee membership in a variety of countries, both within the region and around the world, will highlight that the political advantages of appointing unqualified supporters to key positions often outweighs the desire to appoint qualified experts. That such expertise was present allowed Slovenian MPs to recognise expert advice and *engage* with representatives from the EU in an epistemic context.

And engage they did. All the accession countries examined here possessed some form of EU relations committee and all send some individuals to international organisations such as the EU or to other bodies like the OSCE as delegates. However, in the Slovenian case the proportion of individuals seconded to other bodies, or sent as delegates to such international groups, was higher than in other countries in this study. Whether this is simply because the *Državni zbor* is the smallest of the parliaments to be studied here or because of increased engagement, either way the high levels of participation helped diffuse norms and ideas. Individuals would go to these foreign meetings and return with new ideas about how to help either the work of the *Državni zbor* or of how to better advance the EU accession process (Slovenia Interview 4, 2021). These included not just EU training conferences, delegations to the European Parliament or the like, but also to other bodies such as the World Bank which organised administrative reform conferences to help individuals in the whole CEE region learn best practice (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). While not all contact with the EU was of equal value, with one respondent referring to their only experience with twinning being that there was some "old German guy" seconded to the Ministry of Justice of whom everyone spoke fondly, but it was unclear what he actually did (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021), the volume of contacts helped make up for some of these one-off shortcomings. Events such as those hosted by the World Bank or the EU, when combined with the abovementioned high technical level and expertise of MPs, strongly contributed to the success of LEC through condition LEC/I 1.

Having confirmed that EU representatives, when present or when interacting with Slovenian MPs, were considered as experts it is then necessary to move to LEC/I 2 as, regardless of their expert status, if the individuals are not positioned in the correct place, then this will prevent the diffusion of knowledge to Slovenia. As can be seen

from the network maps above, with MPs distributed almost evenly across the space such individuals returning from expert delegations had the ability to affect many sub-groups. The low modularity, in this case, is due to the distributed nature of MPs across the space and helped to facilitate the flow of information from the EU to Slovenia. Such delegations were even linked with the responsible committees, such that for an individual to attend an international conference on judicial reform they would have to be a member of the judicial committee, which further acted to bring expertise directly into the positions where it was needed most (Slovenia Interview 5, 2021). This was further buttressed by the high number of MPs who were, in fact, educated abroad or who had ties to other international organisations prior to their becoming an MP, with several high ranking MPs attending university in the West or even being professors abroad before returning to Slovenia to take up office (Slovenia Interview 5, 2021). Repeated visits by EU representatives, such as European Commissioner for External Relations and Enlargement Hans van der Broek's visit in the lead up to the "Spanish Compromise" (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020), helped to ensure that when possible problems were encountered there were sufficient channels of communication open to diffuse the information required to come up with solutions which is the essence of LEC (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5).

This was further supported by the connections within the *Državni zbor* which went above and beyond the standard procedure for accession processes. Ministers in the government would spend a not inconsiderate amount of their time in discussions with *Državni zbor*, helping to gain support for policies and positions in advance of their coming up for votes (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). Slovenian ministers were often either summoned to committees or had meetings with MPs to attempt to pass along information to MPs on a variety of issues and aid in the diffusion of understanding of the accession process (Slovenia Interview 4, 2021). The committees would often work closely together as well, with the Committee on European Union Affairs (*Odbor za zadeve Evropske unije*) and the Committee on Foreign Affairs (*Odbor za vanjsku politiku*) working particularly closely together throughout the accession process (Slovenia Interview 1, 2020). The Committee on European Union Affairs was, as the name implies, a crucial hub for the diffusion of information throughout the *Državni zbor* and also acted as a clearing house for legislation in the accession process,

ensuring that legislation was in line with the *acquis* and even being able to override the governments legislative program if necessary (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020). Such a strong, committee-focused approach to integration again supported the epistemic learning process within the *Državni zbor* under LEC/I 2.

Finally, there seems to have been a significant amount of informal connection and collaboration within and *surrounding* the *Državni zbor* in support of the work of the government and, therefore, of EU accession. These meetings extended beyond the formal settings of committees to informal communications outside the chamber, such as social events like drinks or dinners after the normal work hours, both with parliamentarians and with visiting individuals from EU institutions (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020; Slovenia Interview 4, 2021, p. 4). Of particular interest, insofar as it appears only to exist in Slovenia of the cases discussed here, is that there was a very vibrant social scene within the *Državni zbor* itself with various informal groups dedicated to activities such as skiing, sports, tennis, and, even, forming an official *Državni zbor* Dixie jazz band which put out several albums (Slovenia Interview 5, 2021)[48]. Collectively these measures aided in the diffusion of ideas and ways of being throughout the *Državni zbor* which, in turn, acted to help in the process of learning during accession.

Conclusion

As the poster child for success in the EU accession process, both in this study and more widely, it is not surprising that, as tested here, the conditions for Europeanization either in the EIM, LIH, or LEC, have been borne out. This, then, makes parsing the impact of informal political networks on the EU accession process of Slovenia difficult but, as presented here, not impossible.

The EIM conditions, as stated above, were both strongly supported by the facts of the Slovenian case. As the main trading partner of a country whose economy is dominated by exports, the EU had significant leverage, at a country level, to induce Slovenia to make whatever changes were necessary to ensure access to the large EU market. This was supported by the EU's financial transfers to Slovenia through the

[48] A televised performance of the band can be found online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pZRdG2X4Ok.

PHARE program, along with other regional or issue specific transfers, which further helped to ensure that the incentives, i.e., cash, provided by the external actor, i.e. the EU, were higher than the costs of transformation which would be borne by Slovenia. This continued to be true as the possible individual rewards or threats emerging from within the informal network were used to *support* EU accession and not to block it. Although there were some contentious issues, such as the with the "Spanish Compromise" and other debates over sovereignty, the benefits from the EU were sufficiently large, and sufficiently supported by well positioned pro-EU actors within the network, that any issues were overcome, which supports the EIM in the Slovenian case. This applies as well when considering the LIH/I conditions.

Turning to the LEC conditions, and under what conditions they were affected by the informal networks, in the Slovenian case it is clear that the structure and characteristics of the informal networks acted to *support* the LEC/I conditions, helping to push forward accession. A prevalence of highly qualified MPs in the *Državni zbor* helped to ensure that the "epistemic context" in the phrase "Learning in Epistemic Contexts" held true. Expert advice being received by, generally speaking, expert individuals ensured that such learning could take place in the first instance. Thus, LEC/I 1 held true in the Slovenian case.

LEC/I 2, highlighting the positioning of the experts in relation to the *Državni zbor*, was also true in the Slovenian case. The practice of appointing qualified individuals to committees and then linking membership of said committee to international delegations ensured that expert advice and best practice would be diffused into the network both where it could be understood and where it would have the best chance of impacting policy. The close working relationship between committees and high membership levels, collectively represented by the low modularity score across the parliaments, ensured that there were no dead ends in diffusion with all individuals able to have first- or second-hand access to EU expertise. Such positioning ensured that LEC/I 2 was met in the Slovenian case as the informal networks within the *Državni zbor* not only affected but, significantly, *supported* the diffusion of Europeanizing information and knowhow throughout the accession process.

Chapter 5: Europeanization and Informal Networks in Croatia

As with Slovenia, Croatia has completed the process of acceding to the European Union (EU), joining in 2013 though rather than in 2004. This section will follow the same structure as Chapter 4: proceeding through the Croatian case starting with some background information, geography, and recent history before continuing to a discussion of the pace of EU accession and a chronological presentation of the electoral history of Croatia during the 2000-2013 period of study. This is followed by the largest section where the conditions for successful Europeanization under the External Incentives Model (EIM), Learning in Hierarchy (LIH), and Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC) are tested. These tests find that, while the Croatian accession process was longer than the Slovene one, and the evidence of Europeanization more mixed, the fundamental conditions were met in 2000-2013 and, as such, Croatia did manage to join the EU.

Historical Background

As with all the cases in this study, Croatia was one of the constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*, SFRJ) and was also drawn into the civil war which marked the dissolution of the SFRJ. Croatia was one of the secessionist republics, agitating for independence with Slovenia in the lead-up to the war. However, unlike Slovenia, the Croatian War of Independence, or Homeland War (*Domovinski rat*) as it is known in the country, was significantly more protracted and violent than the Slovenian Ten-Day War (*Desetdnevna vojna*). The war pitted the Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslovenska narodna armija*, JNA) against the emerging Croatian Army (*Hrvatska vojska*, HV) in the first phase. This was superseded by the longer campaign against several Serb dominated breakaway regions which was, in the end, successful and led to the re-integration of the breakaway regions into Croatia and the intervention of the HV to support the Croatian and Bosnian forces engaged in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, by the end of 1995, the war had come to a close in Croatia and the country was independent and territorially secure, except for United Nations administrations in Eastern Slavonia and Prevlaka (The United Nations Transitional

Authority for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) respectively).

Throughout this tumultuous period Croatia was led by Franjo Tuđman, first elected as President of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (*Socijalistička republika Hrvatska*, SRH) while still a part of the SFRJ. Tuđman led the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, HDZ) to power in the first multi-party elections in Croatia and remained as President (*Predsjednik*) of Croatia[49] until his death on 10th December 1999. Throughout this time the HDZ also remained the dominant party in Croatia, winning both the initial 1990 election and the 1992 and 1995 parliamentary elections.

However, soon after the death of Tuđman in 1999 the country went to the polls once more for the 2000 election. The parliamentary election was won, for the first time, by the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (*Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske*, SDP), the reformed successor party to the League of Communists of Croatia (*Savez komunista Hrvatske*, SKH), and the presidential election was won by Stjepan Mesić of the Croatian People's Party (*Hrvatska narodna stranka*, HNS) in the same year. Collectively, then, the parliament and the office of the president were controlled by non-HDZ parties for the first time since independence. 2000 also marked the transition from the semi-presidential constitutional system in place since independence, with a bi-cameral legislature, to a unicameral parliamentary system with changes to the constitution on the 11th of December 2000. This, then, marks the beginning for the study of Croatia. By the end of 2000 Croatia was a territorially unified country, the constitution had been revised into its present form, and, as per the recommendations of the Feira European Council, the path to EU membership was open for Croatia ('PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS: Feira European Council - Excerpt', 2000).

Population and Geography

To provide some general context for the beginnings of this journey, Croatia is a country on the Adriatic Sea bordered on most sides by the former states of the SFRJ. To the north is Slovenia and Hungary, which both joined the EU in 2004. To the east

[49] Officially the President of the Republic of Croatia (*Predsjednik Republike Hrvatske*).

is Serbia, which until 2006 was part of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and in the south-east is Montenegro, which was part of the eponymous State Union until 2006. In the centre of the country, surrounded on two sides by Croatia itself, is Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country which shares a distinct Croatian minority and was the location of some of the fiercest fighting in the wars of the 1990s. Croatia was, then, increasingly surrounded by the EU throughout the accession process with the glaring exception of its long southern and eastern borders.

As Map 5.1 shows Croatia lies in the centre of the Adriatic. The capital, Zagreb, is in the north of the country with the other largest cities, Split and Rijeka, being on the coast. The Istrian peninsula is on the north-western coast, including the cities of Pula and Opatija. Istria, along with most of the rest of the coast, was controlled by Venice in the medieval and renaissance periods, and large parts of it were controlled by Italy in the period between World War I and World War II, which has given the coast a distinct character and ethnic composition from the rest of the country.

Map 5.1: Geography of Croatia

Source: (*Croatia | Facts, Geography, Maps, & History*, 2020)

Croatia emerged from the War of Independence in 1995 with significant economic, social, and demographic scars. The city of Vukovar, in the northeast of the country, was almost completely destroyed in the early phase of the war by Serbian forces and much of the rest of the country was devastated. The Croatian War of Independence had cost the country an estimated 15,000 lives and $19 billion in direct economic damage, in addition to the complexities of housing the hundreds of thousands of refugees, either internal to Croatia or from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the loss of further productive factors given the exodus of thousands of Serbs from the country during the final Croatian offensives at the end of the war (Fisher, 2005). This meant that Croatia represented one of the poorest countries to be granted official candidate status, with a GDP per capita of only €5,800 in 2001 (European Commission, 2012b, p. 51), less than half of Slovenia's at the time (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). Croatia was also undergoing a period of demographic decline as the war and economic crises led the population to decrease from 4.78 million in 1990 to 4.47 million by 2000 and then to decrease steadily to 4.26 million by 2013 (*Population, total - Croatia | Data*, 2020).

As mentioned above, following the reforms of 2000, Croatia is a unicameral parliamentary republic governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (*Ustav Republike Hrvatske*). Croatia is declared as a unitary and indivisible democratic and social state and, since 1997, is explicitly banned from joining in any union which may lead to a renewal of a South-Slavic state union (Article 1, 135)[50]. Power in Croatia is balanced between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches (Article 4). The executive takes the form of the directly elected President of the Republic of Croatia (*Predsjednik Republike Hrvatske,* President) who is elected on a five yearly basis with a maximum of two terms (Article 95). Since the reforms of 2000, which changed the constitutional structure away from a French style semi-presidential system, the office of the President today is largely ceremonial in the day to day functioning of Croatia but remains the head of the armed forces (Article 100). The actual government of Croatia, then, is headed by the President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia

[50] That it is a member of the European Union with Slovenia, a South-Slavic state, and, possibly, with the rest of the states of former Yugoslavia, at some point in the future, has not been challenged constitutionally and is a rarely remarked on irony (Croatia – Interview 6).

(*Predsjednik Vlade Republike Hrvatske*, Prime Minister (PM)). As Croatia is a parliamentary democracy, the Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski Sabor*, *Sabor*) is the representative body and is vested with legislative power (Article 71). Deputies are usually elected for four yearly terms, but the *Sabor* can dissolve itself by majority vote or can be dissolved under certain conditions by the President (Article 73, 78). The Constitution sets the number of deputies in the *Sabor* at between 100 and 160 (Article 72), with the current number of deputies set at 151.

Of these 151 Members of Parliament (MP) in the *Sabor*, 140 are elected as part of ten multi-seat constituencies with an 11th constituency, District XI, representing Croatians living abroad. Constituency borders are not fixed but shift between elections to allow for an equal distribution of voters in each constituency, within a tolerance of 5%. District XI, until 2010, elected a variable number of delegates depending on the turnout in the other ten constituencies. From the 2011 election this number was fixed at three and the highest number of delegates from District XI before this was five in 2007. The d'Hondt formula is applied to the vote for these multi-member constituencies with a 5% threshold (*Political Organisation: Electoral System*, 2021).

The remaining eight seats, after the 140 from the ten constituencies and the three from the Croatian expatriate community, are reserved for national minorities. Of these seats, three have been reserved for any minority group which makes up more than 1.5% of the total population of the country since revisions to the minority law in 2003 (Josipović, 2010). In practice, this has only applied to Serbs which means that there are three seats of the 151 which are reserved for the Serbian minority. The other five seats in District XII, as it is called, are reserved for the Hungarians (1), Italians (1), the Czech and Slovak minorities (1 combined), with the remaining recognized minority groups sharing the final two (Petričušić, 2002). The minority representatives are elected as part of one nation-wide constituency and Croatian citizens, who have declared themselves as members of national minorities, can vote either for a minority candidate or for one of the candidates in their multi-seat constituency (*Izbori za zastupnike u Hrvatski sabor*, 2021).

Croatia and the EU

While Slovenia was busy acceding to the EU in the 1990s, Croatia was not even accepted as a potential candidate country until 1 June 2000 when the Feira European Council stated that all Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) countries, i.e., South-East European countries, were potential candidates for EU membership ('PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS: Feira European Council - Excerpt', 2000). Croatia signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), the defining document of the SAP, on 29 October 2001 and became a full candidate country on 1 June 2004. The journey to member, from there, was relatively smooth once full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was established (*Croatia*, 2016). A full summary of the important dates is given in Table 5.1.

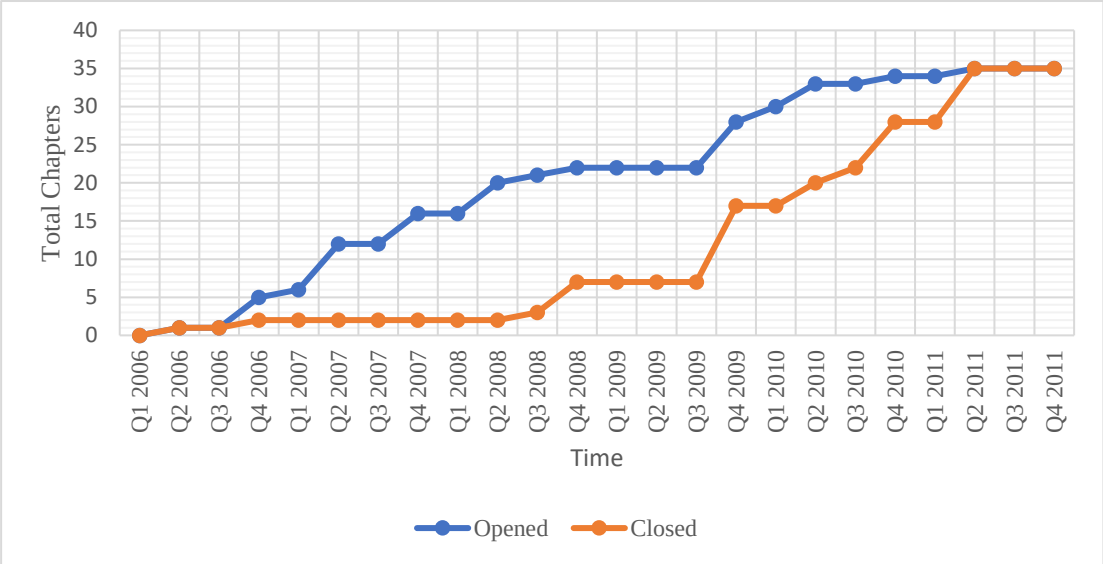
Table 5.1: Croatian EU Accession Milestones

1.6.2000	Feira European Council states all SAP countries are "potential candidates" for EU membership
29.10.2001	Stabilisation and Association Agreement signed
21.2.2003	Croatia applies for EU membership
20.6.2003	The European Council adopts the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans
1.4.2004	Commission approves Croatia's application for EU membership
1.6.2004	Council confirms Croatia as candidate country
1.12.2004	Council sets 17 March 2005 as start date for negotiations conditional upon full cooperation with the ICTY
1.2.2005	Stabilisation and Association Agreement enters into force
16.3.2005	EU postpones start of accession negotiations but adopts negotiation framework
20.10.2005	Screening stage of accession negotiations begins
12.6.2006	1st chapter of accession negotiations – Science and Research – formally opened and provisionally closed at ministerial-level conference
30.6.2011	Last of the 35 negotiating chapters is closed
12.10.2011	Commission issues favourable opinion on Croatia's accession to EU and adopts last progress report
6.12.2011	Council adopts decision on admission of Croatia
9.12.2011	EU and Croatia sign accession treaty
22.1.2012	66% of voters in referendum wish to join the EU
1.7.2013	Croatia joins the EU

Source: (*Croatia*, 2016)

Graph 5.1 provides a timeline for the opening and closing of the chapters of the *acquis communautaire* throughout Croatia's accession process. A full table detailing the opening and closing of the chapters can be found in Appendix 1 (Table A1.2).

Graph 5.1: Croatian Adoption of the *Acquis Communautaire*



As can be seen in Table and Graph 5.1 Croatia's accession process took 12 years, from the signing of the SAA, and nine years from Croatia's EU application to accession. This process has been, then, slower compared to Slovenia and yet faster still than Serbia which signed the SAA in 2008, applied in 2009, and has yet to accede as of 2021. Once again, this confirms Croatia's "mid-case" status in the Slovenia-Croatia-Serbia comparison.

Croatian Elections

Throughout the accession process, and including the one in 2000, Croatia had four elections from 2000-2013. Table 5.2 provides an overview of the results of these elections and the composition of their governing coalitions, as well as the PMs in power during the period.

Table 5.2: Croatian Governments and Elections 2000-13

Year	Election	Prime Minister	Party	Coalition Members
2000	3.1	Ivica Račan	*Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske* (SDP)	SDP-HSLS Coalition: SDP, HSLS, PGS, SBHS Support: HSS, IDS, HNS, Liberal
2001				
2002				
2003	23.11	Ivo Sanader	*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (HDZ)	HDZ, DC, HSLS Support: SDSS
2004				
2005				
2006				
2007	25.11			HDZ, HSS, HSLS, SDSS
2008				
2009		Jadranka Kosor		
2010				
2011	4.12	Zoran Milanović	*Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske* (SDP)	*Kukuriku koalicija* (SDP, HNS-LD, IDS, HSU), SDSS
2012				
2013				

Key: HSLS: *Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka*, PGS: *Primorsko goranski savez*, SBHS: *Slavonsko-baranjska hrvatska stranka*, HSS: *Hrvatska seljačka stranka*, IDS: *Istarska demokratska stranka*, HNS: *Hrvatska narodna stranka*, Liberal: *Liberalna stranka*, DC: *Demokratski centar*, SDSS: *Samostalno demokratska Srpska stranka*, HNS-LD: *Hrvatska narodna stranka – Liberalni demokrati*, HSU: *Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika*

As may be seen from Table 5.2, in Croatia there was the basics of a two party system, with the HDZ and the SDP acting as the backbone of every government. Around these two parties were a host of smaller parties from the entire political spectrum, from the right-wing Croatian Party of Rights (*Hrvatska stranka prava*, HSP) to small regionalist parties such as the Istrian Democratic Assembly (*Istarski demokratski Sabor*, IDS). There also existed a variety of ethnic parties which competed for the ethnically reserved seats. A full list and description the parties in the *Sabor* during the period is given in Appendix 3 (Table A3.2) specifically, but a short history of the majorities and members of the ruling coalitions is given in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Croatian Governing Coalitions and Party Fragmentation

Election	Post-Election Ruling Coalition	Seats	Parties in *Sabor*
3.1.2000	SDP, LIBRA[51], PGS, SBHS Partners: HSS, IDS, LS, Support: SNS, NM	Total seats: 84 (out of 151) SDP: 44 LIBRA: 10 PGS: 2 SBHS: 1 HSS: 16 IDS: 4 LS: 4 HNS: 2 SNS: 1	17
23.11.2003	HDZ Partners: HSLS, DC, Support: HSS, HSU, SDSS,	Total: 81 (out of 150[52]) HDZ: 62 HSLS: 3 DC: 1 HSS: 9 HSU: 3 SDSS: 3	14
25.11.2007	HDZ Partners: HSS, HSLS[53], HSU Support: SDSS	Total: 77 (out of 153) HDZ: 65 HSS: 6 HSLS/IND: 2 SDSS: 3 HSU: 1	12
4.11.2011	Kukuriku Coalition (SDP, HNS-LD, IDS, HSU) Support: SDSS	Total: 76 (out of 151) SDP: 56 HNS-LD: 11 HSU: 4 IDS: 2 SDSS: 3	18

In Table 5.3 the post-election ruling coalition is given by its main party or parties, clustered at the top, who ran together on an electoral list. Next is given any coalition partner or partners and then, finally, any supporting parties which, although not officially part of the coalition, did back the formation of the government. The seat

[51] HSLS, which ran as part of the SDP coalition in 2000, split in 2002 and the faction which remained in the government became LIBRA.
[52] Sample taken from the end of the parliament after Ivica Račan, the former PM, had passed away from cancer and one MP had been elevated to the cabinet and not replaced before the end of the parliamentary period.
[53] By the end of the 2007-11 parliamentary period the HSLS had dissolved in the *Sabor* and the two HSLS MPs, Ivan Čehok and Đurđa Adelšić, were sitting as independents.

distribution is given as per the information gathered from *Sabor* website showing the distribution of the seats towards the end of each parliamentary period. As has been stated previously, this was chosen to include any changes in the seat distributions which occurred during the parliamentary period as well as to include changes in the membership of committees. For the 2011-13 period, the sample was taken at the point of accession despite the fact that an election was not held until 2015.

SNA: *Sabor* Networks and the EU Accession Process

Moving from the broad to the granular this section presents the data collected on each parliamentary session from 2000 to 2013. Each sub-section includes a discussion of the accession process made in each period. The section is followed by the comparative analysis of the progress made and network values for each of the parliamentary periods and presents this in light of the conditions for successful Europeanization stated in Chapters 2 and 3.

However, before presenting the granular data for each parliamentary period, the weighting of the ties within the parliaments are as follows:

- Croatia:
    - *Stranka Pripadnost* (Party): 1
    - *Klub* (Parliamentary Club, determines seating): 0.5
    - *Odbore* (Committee): 0.25
    - SPK (Connection from the President of the *Sabor* to individual MPs): 0.2
    - Com (Non-*Odbor* Delegation/Committee): 0.15
    - PP (Connection from the Deputy Speaker[54] to individual MPs): 0.1
    - PGP (Country Specific Friendship Committee): 0.01

As mentioned, these were derived first from an estimation of their importance and corroborated by interviews with individuals in Croatia. A full discussion of how the weighting was determined is given in the comparative section later in this chapter but, first, the chronological network data.

[54] Technically "Vice President" (*Potpredsjednik*) of the *Sabor*.

Sabor 2000-3

The 2000 elections came, as stated previously, after the passing of independence leader Franjo Tuđman and were the last elections to take place under the semi-presidential constitutional model of the 1990s. These elections resulted in the first defeat for the HDZ since multi-party elections were re-introduced in the dying days of the SFRJ. Table 5.4, on the following page, shows the seat distribution of parties towards the end of the 2000-2003 period. Parties and the seats are coloured by electoral coalition, i.e., parties which ran on the same electoral list (International Republican Institute, 2000), and ranked by their seat share within the coalition. All non-coloured parties either ran by themselves or split off from one of the other parties after the election. Map 5.2, on the following page, shows the network map generated from this distribution.

Table 5.4: Seat distribution in the *Sabor* 2000-3

Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
SDP (*Socijaldemokratska partija Hiratsuka)*	44	HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*)	33
LIBRA (*LIBRA - Stranka liberalnih demokrata*)	10	HSLS (*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka)*	14
SBHS (*Slavonsko-baranjska hrvatska stranka*)	1	HB (*Hrvatski blok*)	5
PGS (*Primorsko goranski savez*)	2	HSP (*Hrvatska stranka prava*)	4
HSS (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*)	16[55]	HKDU (*Hrvatska kršćansko-demokratska unija*)	1
LS (*Liberalna stranka*)	4[56]	DC (*Demokratski centar*)	3
HNS (*Hrvatska narodna stranka*)	2	HIP (*Hrvatski istinski preporod*)	3
IDS (*Istarski demokratski Sabor*)	4	HND (*Hrvatski nezavisni demokrati*)	1
SNS (*Srpska narodna stranka*)	1	Nezavisni (unaffiliated)	2
		Nezavisni (unaffiliated)	1
Totals	84		67

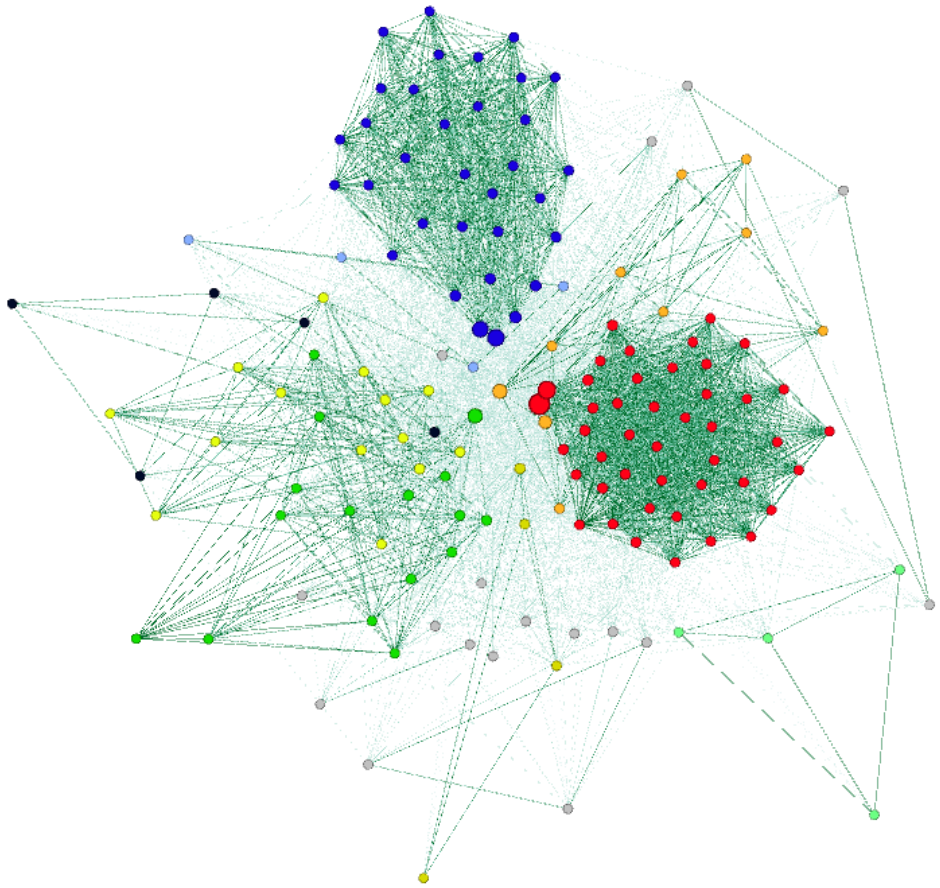
Key: SDP-HSLS-SBHS-PGS Coalition, HSS-LS-HNS-IDS Coalition, HSP-HKDU Coalition, Minority
Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

What Map 5.2 shows is the relative fragmentation of the *Sabor* at this time, with power dispersed among the four main parties across the map. The SDP, LIBRA,

[55] Includes one minority MP, Zdenka Čunhil, from the Czech and Slovak minority community.
[56] Includes two minority MPs, Tibor Santo and Borislav Graljuk, of the Hungarian and other combined minority communities respectively.

and IDS are grouped together on the right had side of the map and the other members of the coalition are distributed across the rest. The HDZ, which sits together as a unified group, is isolated in the upper section with only few members drifting towards the centre. Some smaller parties, such as HB, are isolated from the core of the map due to their general exclusion from important offices within the *Sabor*. One non-coloured MP in Map 5.2, the grey node near the centre, is Vesna Pusić, of the HNS, who would be Croatia's candidate for United Nations Secretary General in the 2016 election.

Map 5.2: Network ties in the *Sabor* 2000-3[57]



Key: SDP, HDZ, HSS, HSLS, LIBRA, HB, HSP, LS, IDS

Before that, though, Croatia would have to undergo the process of becoming an EU member state, one which was just beginning in 2000. This period saw some crucial progress towards accession beginning with the declaration of the Feira

[57] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20, Step ratio: 0.95.

European Council which opened the door for Croatian membership and Croatia's subsequent application for EU membership in February 2003 ('PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS: Feira European Council - Excerpt', 2000; Fisher, 2005, p. 88). While this application would eventually be successful this early period was dominated by the ongoing economic reform program and, crucially, by political struggles related to ICTY indictments for Croatian individuals involved in the War of Independence. As part of these struggles PM Ivica Račan refused to hand over former Croatian Army General Janko Bobetko to the ICTY in 2002 and, although General Bobetko passed away from ill health in 2003, the British and Dutch parliaments still suspended ratification for Croatia's SAA (Fisher, 2005, pp. 87–8). This delay, along with other issues of Croatian non-compliance with the ICTY, resulted in the implementation of the SAA being pushed back until 2005. In the interim, an appropriately named Interim Agreement was in force from 1 March 2002 under which regular meetings were held until the SAA came into force (European Commission, 2005, p. 4).

Sabor 2003-7

Despite winning the 2000 election the anti-HDZ coalition in the *Sabor* was, perhaps unsurprisingly, unstable and the parliament did not survive the standard four year term. Following the passage of a vote of no confidence in Ivica Račan's government elections were held on 23 November 2003. Due to fluctuations in the number of votes cast in the Croatian diaspora, i.e., in District XI, the total numbers of MPs in the *Sabor* in this period was 153. Table 5.5 contains the seat distribution for parties at the end of the 2003-7 period with parties once again shaded as per the 2003 electoral coalitions (*CROATIA: parliamentary elections Hrvatski Sabor, 2003*, 2003).

Table 5.5: Seat distribution in the *Sabor* 2003-7

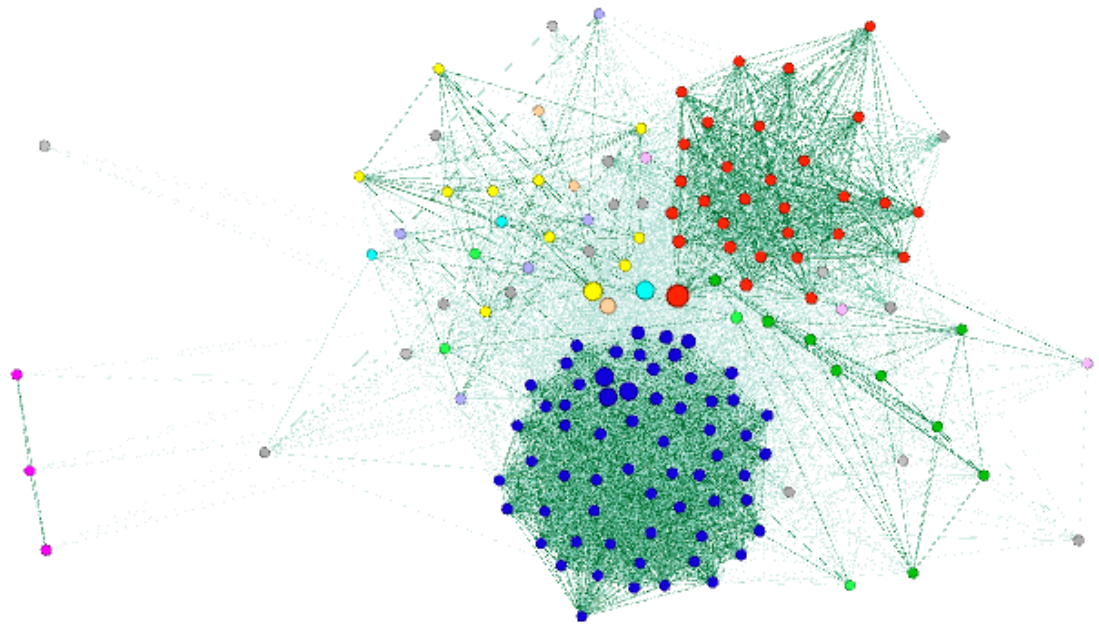
Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*)	62	SDP (*Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske)*	30
HSLS (*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka)*[58]	3	IDS (*Istarski demokratski Sabor*)	4
DC (*Demokratski centar*)	1	HNS-LD (*Hrvatska narodna stranka - liberalni demokratni*)[59]	11
HSS (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*)	9	SBHS (*Slavonsko-baranjska hrvatska stranka*)	1
HSU (*Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika*)	3	PGS (*Primorsko goranski savez*)	1
SDSS (*Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka*)	3	HSP (*Hrvatska stranka prava*)	5
		HDSSB (*Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije i Baranje*)[60]	3
		Nezavisni (unaffiliated)	13
		SDAH (*Stranka demokratske akcije Hrvatske*)	1
		Minorities	3
Totals	81		72

Key: HSLS-DC Coalition, SDP-IDS-SLD-LS Coalition, HNS-SBHS-PGS Coalition Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

The opposition coalition, which successfully unseated the HDZ in 2000, fractured in advance of the 2003 election and ran as several smaller electoral lists which resulted in their defeat. This is represented in Map 5.3 by the scattering of other parties around the map, with only the SDP and the HSS managing to maintain any coherence. This is to be expected of opposition parties as they are, generally, denied the choicest positions on committees and are excluded from some, but not all, decision-making bodies. As such, their MPs are pushed to the edges of the map while those of the ruling party, the HDZ, take a relatively central position.

[58] Absorbed the LS in 2006.
[59] Formed through the merger of the HNS and LIBRA parties.
[60] Formed when 3 HDZ members formed a new regional party in 2006.

Map 5.3: Network ties in the *Sabor* 2003-7[61]



Key: HDZ, SDP, HNS-LD, HSS, HSP, IDS, SDSS, HSU, HSLS, HDSSB

This parliamentary cycle also sets several trends which will be important for the remaining periods under study. The HDSSB has emerged here as a break-away group of regionalist MPs from the HDZ, hence their exclusion from almost every position in this parliamentary cycle, but they will return with increasing numbers of MPs in the future. The SDSS, a Serbian minority ethnic party, also entered the *Sabor* in this period, displacing the SNS as the main Serbian minority ethnic party. Under the leadership of Milorad Pupovac the SDSS would remain in either support of the government or as an active member of a governing coalition until after Croatia's EU accession. Alternatively, the HSS continued its decline at the parliamentary level with only a few MPs being central in this period. Other parties, such as the IDS, remain in the legislature and are scattered throughout Map 5.3 representing their links to other MPs through membership in various committees and commissions.

With this mixed, yet HDZ dominant *Sabor* Croatia managed to make some substantial progress towards EU accession. The Commission approved Croatia's

[61] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20, Step ratio: 0.95.

application for membership soon after the election in April 2004 and the Council confirmed Croatia's status as a candidate country in June (European Commission, 2004b; *Croatia*, 2016). However, the actual accession negotiations were delayed until after the positive assessment on 3 October 2005 that Croatia was fully cooperating with the ICTY (European Commission, 2005, p. 3). As such, the screening stage of the negotiations did not begin until 20 October 2005. However, this does not imply that there was no substantial progress towards EU accession in advance of the official 20 October start date of negotiations as the SAA was brought into force in February 2005 and the first EU-Croatia Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting was held in Zagreb in March (European Commission, 2005, p. 4).

On a more granular level, Croatia's institutions were judged to work well, generally, over the period and an increasing amount of EU-related legislation was passed (European Commission, 2005, p. 11, 2006, p. 5, 2007, p. 7). Claims for the restitution of property seized during the war, or for compensation for said property, continued to be an issue during the period and represented a significant work-load for the judicial systems (European Commission, 2005, p. 28, 2006, p. 17, 2007, p. 12). Legal protections for minorities were considered as generally adequate but with many important challenges especially in terms of implementation (European Commission, 2007, p. 14). This is in line with the Commission's assessment that, in 2007, public administration reform continued to represent "a major challenge" (European Commission, 2007, p. 8). Overall, though, Croatia did make some progress in this period with two chapters being provisionally closed, 25 (Science and Research) and 26 (Education and Culture), and two further chapters, 17 (Economic and Monetary Policy) and 29 (Customs Union), being reported as "well advanced" and "well aligned" respectively (European Commission, 2007, pp. 42, 62). In many other chapters the groundwork was set for negotiations to proceed more rapidly in the 2007-11 parliamentary period.

Sabor 2007-11

Unlike in 2003, the 2007 elections were held on time as the constitutionally stipulated four years had passed. The HDZ was led into the election again by PM Ivo Sanader and the SDP was led into the election by Zoran Milanović. Like in 2003, other

parties did not choose to run with either the HDZ or SDP in combined lists but instead ran separate campaigns with one alternative coalition forming to try and break the hegemony of the main two parties, the "Green-Yellow Coalition" (*Zeleno-žuta koalicija*). However, this coalition failed to break the duopoly and only the HSS and HSLS, the two main constituent members, received any seats. Overall, the 2007 election was significantly closer than the 2003 election and led to a brief crisis afterwards as both Sanader and Milanović tried to form governments (*Mesić čestitao Sanaderu, primio i Milanovića*, 2007). However, in the end Sanader was able to form a government and he continued to lead the country until his resignation in 2009 when he was replaced by Jadranka Kosor, also of the HDZ, who held the position of PM until the 2011 election. Table 5.6 provides the seat distributions towards the end of the 2011 parliamentary period with the parties once again grouped and coloured by electoral list (*IPU PARLINE database: CROATIA (Hrvatski Sabor) ELECTIONS IN 2007*, 2011).

Table 5.6: Seat distribution in the *Sabor* 2007-11

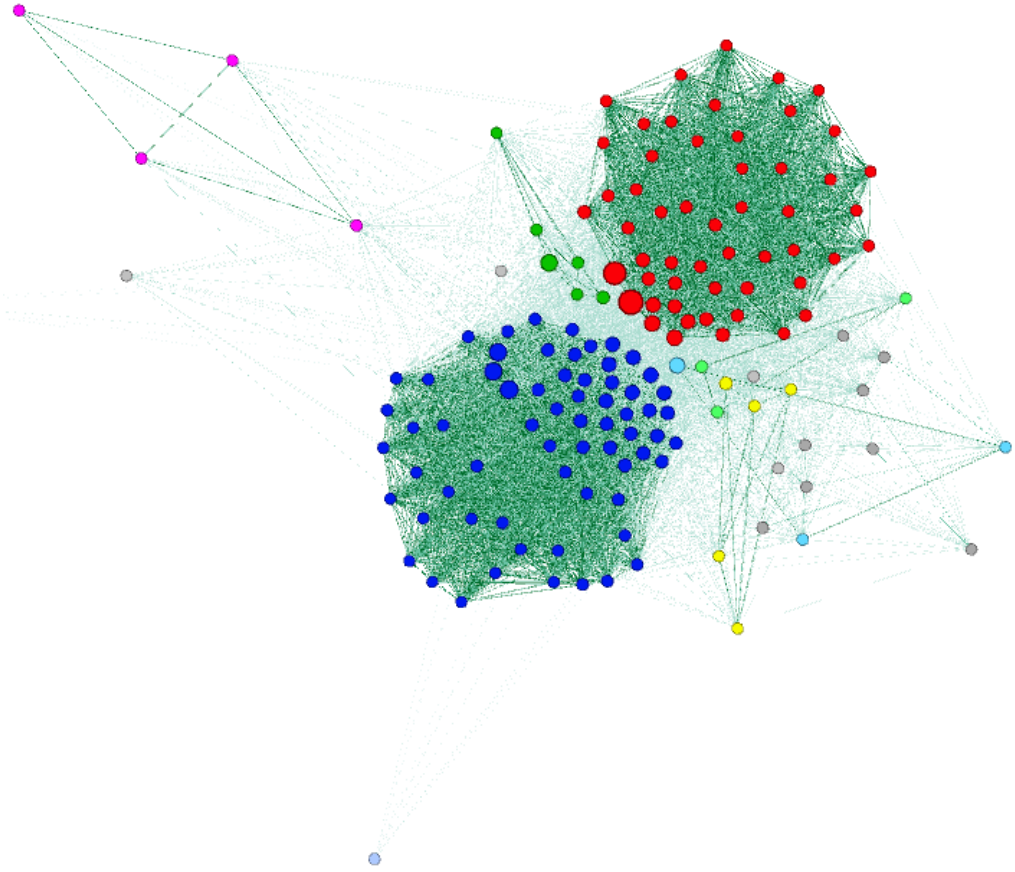
Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*)	65	SDP (*Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske*)	53
HSS (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*)	6	HNS-LD (*Hrvatska narodna stranka - Liberalni demokrati*)	5
HSLS/IND (*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka/Nezavisni*):	2	HDSSB (*Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije i Baranje*)	4
SDSS (Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka)	3	IDS (*Istarski demokratski Sabor*):	3
HSU (*Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika*)	1	HSP (*Hrvatska stranka prava*)	1
		HLSR (*Hrvatski laburisti - Stranka rada*)	1
		HSD (*Hrvatski socijaldemokrati*)	1
		Nezavisni (unaffiliated)	3
		SDAH (*Stranka demokratske akcije Hrvatske*)	1
		Minorities	4
Totals	77		76

Key: HSS-HSLS Coalition, Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

Map 5.4, on the following page, displays the network map generated for this parliamentary period. In it the impact of the Croatian two-party system on the *Sabor*

is still strongly visible with most MPs either in or clustered around the two main parties. What is distinct about this map, though, is the relatively high clustering as there is a main body of MPs in the centre who are all linked. HDSSB, as a break-away party from the HDZ with distinct populist elements, has been relegated largely to the edge of the map with few key positions. The HNS-LD continues to have several centrally placed MPs, including Vesna Pusić, while Milorad Pupovac, the leader of the SDSS, is also highly centrally located.

Map 5.4: Network ties in the *Sabor* 2007-11[62]



Key: HDZ, SDP, HSS, HNS-LD, HDSSB, SDSS, IDS, HSP

With this extremely finely balanced parliament Croatia managed to complete the negotiation process for EU accession. Negotiations on the final chapter were closed on 30 June 2011 and the Commission issued a favourable opinion soon after (European Commission, 2011a). Thus, by end of the 2007-11 parliamentary period, Croatia had

[62] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20, Step ratio: 0.95.

managed to adopt almost all EU related legislation required excepting, of course, the selected transitional arrangements provided to allow Croatia further time to implement certain directives (European Commission, 2012b, p. 4). While, technically, the Accession Treaty was signed after the election, on 9 December 2011, by the end of the 2007-11 parliamentary period the main work of accession was complete.

In terms of policy areas this period saw an increase in the number of chapters opened and then, unsurprisingly, closed. At the start of the period negotiations had been opened on fourteen chapters and provisionally closed in only two chapters, 25 (Science and Research) and 26 (Education and Culture) (European Commission, 2007, p. 6). As might be surmised by the previous paragraph, by the end of 2011 negotiations were completed and all chapters were closed by the end of the 2007-11 period (European Commission, 2011b, p. 3). Legislating at this speed involved the extensive use of special procedures to pass accession related legislation. While this was not considered to have prevented the *Sabor* from functioning in accordance with its constitutional role, concerns were repeatedly raised regarding the limiting effect this had on the ability of the *Sabor* and of MPs to scrutinize legislation (European Commission, 2009a, p. 7, 2010, p. 6, 2011b, p. 5).

This is not, however, intended to give the impression that this period was without issues in Croatia. Relations with the ICTY were, overall, good but some issues did arise such as difficulties in identifying and handing over documents to the court and even the violation of provisional release conditions by an individual indicted for war-crimes who went on a hunting trip with the, then, Minister of the Interior (European Commission, 2008a, p. 15). Delays and difficulties in prosecuting individuals for crimes committed against minorities during the war persisted throughout the period and were emblematic of wider problems in the judicial system (European Commission, 2009a, pp. 8–9, 2010, p. 10, 2011b, pp. 6–7).

Other issues related to the collapse of the SFRJ continued to obstruct Croatia's accession but were also resolved in this period. Slovenia had, until this point, attempted to make an ongoing border dispute over the Bay of Piran an EU-wide issue (European Commission, 2007, p. 16). This resulted in the intensive negotiation efforts by the Commission to resolve the issue, with Slovenia preventing the opening and closing of

chapters, which was, mostly, resolved in September 2009 (European Commission, 2009a, p. 18, 2009b, p. 5; Geddes and Taylor, 2016). Issues relating to the collapse of Bank of Ljubljana (*Ljubljanska Banka*), as a part of the collapse of the SFRJ, continued but were also addressed actively throughout this parliamentary period (European Commission, 2009a, p. 18, 2010, p. 17). Overall, then, this was a period of significant progress in EU accession with both the completion of negotiations and progress internationally in dealing with some of the legacy issues surrounding the collapse of the SFRJ.

Sabor 2011-13

With the successful completion of the regular four year term in 2011 elections were once again held which pitted the ruling HDZ, under the leadership of PM Jadranka Kosor, against the SDP, still led by Zoran Milanović. Unlike in 2007, however, the SDP did not run alone but instead led what was called the *Kukuriku koalicija*, or the "cock-a-doodle-doo" coalition, so named for the restaurant where the leaders first met to discuss the electoral pact (Mencinger, 2016). This coalition proved successful and Zoran Milanović became PM in 2011. Table 5.7 gives the distribution of seats at the moment of EU accession on 1 July 2013 with the parties shaded according to electoral list (*IPU PARLINE database: CROATIA (Hrvatski Sabor), ELECTIONS IN 2011*, 2011).

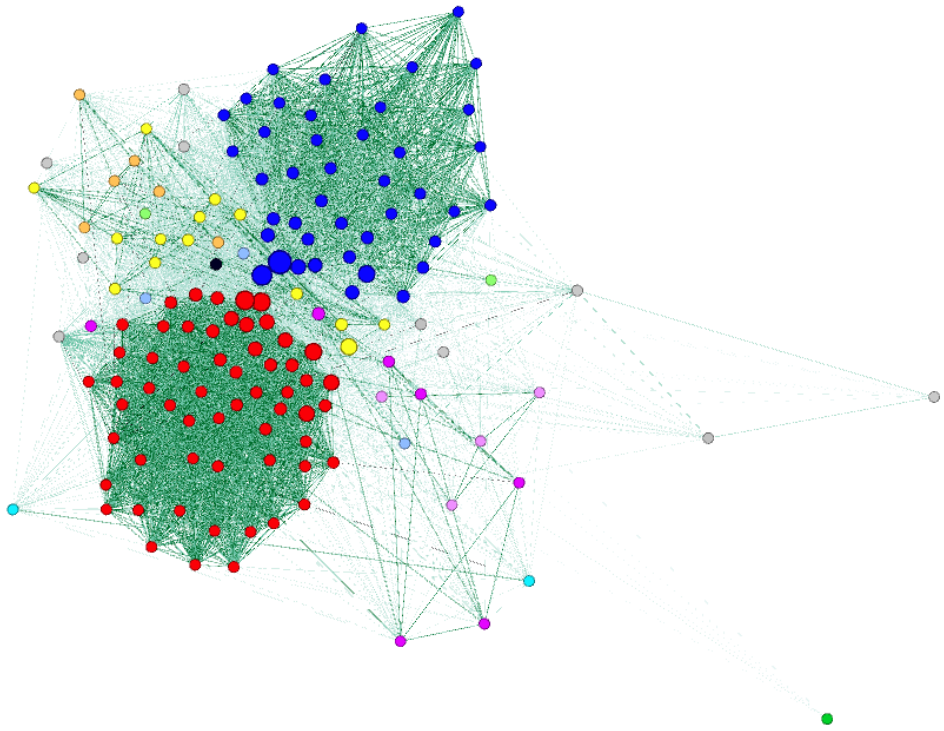
Table 5.7: Seat distribution in the *Sabor* 2011-13

Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
SDP (Socijaldemokratska partija Hrvatske)	58	HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*)	43
HNS-LD (*Hrvatska narodna stranka - liberalni demokrati*)	14	HGS (*Hrvatska građanska stranka*)	2
HSU (*Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika*)	4	HLSR (*Hrvatski laburisti - Stranka rada*)	6
IDS (*Istarski demokratski Sabor*)	2	HDSSB (*Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije i Baranje*)	7
SDSS (*Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka*)	3	HSS (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*)	1
		HSP-AS (*Hrvatska stranka prava dr. Ante Starčević*)	1
		ID (*Istarski demokrati*)	1
		Nezavisni (unaffiliated)	5
		Bošnjačka demokratska stranka Hrvatske	1
		Minorities	3
Totals	81		70

Key: *Kukuriku koalicija*, HDZ-HGS Coalition, Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

As Map 5.5, on the following page, shows, this parliament was again relatively unified and split around the two main parliamentary parties: the SDP and the HDZ. Once again, there are a mixture of other smaller parties clustered around the centre of the map with only a few MPs excluded. The HSS has collapsed almost entirely with their one MP, Branko Hrg, not even joining any committees until 2015. As such, he is positioned well to the outside of Map 5.5. Alternatively, the new party HSP-AS gained one seat in the form of former HSP MP Ruža Tomašić, who performed well enough to remain in the *Sabor* but switched parties from the HSP to the HSP-AS. Tomašić continued to serve on a number of committees, despite the relatively weak position of the HSP-AS as a whole. Vesna Pusić, the central HNS-LD MP mentioned above, was, by 2012, raised to the position of Deputy Prime Minister and, as such, does not appear in Map 5.5. However, the HNS-LD remain generally quite well positioned during this period.

Map 5.5: Network ties in the *Sabor* 2011-13[63]



Key: SPD, HDZ, HNS-LD, HDSSB, HLSR, HSU, SDSS, IDS, HGS, HSP-AS, HSS

With the negotiations completed before the start of this parliament the main EU accession related work in this period was to complete the final required changes and to continue to implement the transitional agreements. These transitional measures were not inconsiderable, requiring the continued transposition of EU regulations to Croatia and the updating of national law and procedures to fit with EU law. As such, Article 36 of the Act of Accession required the Commission to continue to monitor the progress of Croatia in advance of accession on 1 July 2013 (European Commission, 2012b, p. 4).

Of the chapters which would be monitored by the Commission two chapters, 13 (Fisheries) and 27 (Environment), stand out. Given Croatia's long coastline it is unsurprising that fishing was one sector in which Croatia was particularly interested. As such, several transitional periods were negotiated with the EU in order to give further time for Croatian fisheries to adapt. This allowed for the continuation, even, of

[63] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20, Step ratio: 0.95.

non-commercial or “subsistence” fishing to continue for artisanal or personal use but only until the end of 2014 (Hayrinen, 2011, p. 13). There were also significant transitional arrangements put in place for Croatia under Chapter 27 (Environment), concerning air and water quality as well as waste management, to allow Croatian industry and municipalities further time to adapt to EU standards (Hayrinen, 2011, p. 21).

There were, though, some areas in which the Commission continued to have concerns even up to the date of accession. While Croatia completed all of the “priority actions” listed in the final monitoring report from the Commission, except for one which was expected to be completed imminently, there remained some concerns (European Commission, 2013b, p. 14). Refugee return, from the war, continued slowly with limited success (European Commission, 2013b, p. 9). The legal framework regarding the fight against corruption was further updated as was the legal code governing the conduct of judges. However, the track record in actually prosecuting individuals involved in organised crime or corruption remained poor and further efforts were deemed necessary to ensure that the overall backlog of cases in the courts continued to decrease (European Commission, 2013b, pp. 5–7). Overall, though, and despite one notable hiccup involving a last minute Croatian legal change to prevent the extradition of an indicted ex-Croatian intelligence officer to Germany which caused Angela Merkel to not attend, the accession ceremony went off without a hitch (Šabić, 2019, pp. 177–8).

Comparative Analysis

As can be seen above, the formal process of Croatia joining the EU was a success with accession occurring successfully on 1 July 2013 notwithstanding some smaller issues. What was the impact, then, of the informal networks within the *Sabor* on this process? Specifically, under what conditions did the networks impact accession? To start Table 5.8 shows the network values for the parliamentary periods as computed by GEPHI.

Table 5.8: Comparative Croatian Network Values

Value	2000-3	2003-7	2007-11	2011-13
Av. Degree	106.609	165.493	328.471	291.669
Av. Weighted Degree	41.896	60.144	85.064	69.254
Diameter	2	2	2	2
Graph Density	0.711	1.111	2.161	1.944
Modularity	0.522	0.341	0.41	0.408
Av. Clustering Coefficient	0.684	0.727	0.803	0.8
Av. Path Length	1.607	1.469	1.353	1.339

From here this section proceeds through each of the assumptions as identified in Chapter 3 and tests them in the Croatian case, beginning with the EIM and then proceeding to Europeanization as Policy Learning.

Comparative Analysis: the EIM

In the context of the Croatian case, stretching from the first moves towards the EU in 2000 to full accession in 2013, have the conditions of the EIM held true? As stated in the Chapter 3, the conditions under which the EIM predicts that change will occur are as follows:

- (EIM 1): The size of the reward on offer from the EU is larger than the cost of making the societal changes OR
- (EIM 2): The size of the punishment for non-compliance is greater than the potential rewards of non-compliance AND
- (EIM 3): The EU's rewards and threats are considered credible by the candidate state

With the two following informal conditions attached, as derived from the literature on informality:

- (EIM/I 1) That the structure of the informal networks in which actors are embedded are not aligned against the changes (or conversely that they are aligned with the changes) AND

- (EIM/I 2) That the credibility of the rewards and threats emanating from the EU outweighs the credibility of any rewards and threats emanating from the informal networks

Which of these assumptions, if any, held in the Croatian case?

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, as Croatia did accede to the EU, these conditions largely held in the Croatian case. EIM 1 and EIM 2 were certainly present as the EU, as it does for all candidate states, had put at Croatia's disposal a sizeable sum to support the accession process. Specifically, Croatia was eligible for funding under the PHARE program, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), under strands I, II, III, and IV; the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (Sapard), and the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS) program. Taken together these various programmes had a collective budget of €860m through to March 2011 (da Silva Caldeira, 2011, p. 18). This is in addition to €408m which was allocated to Croatia from 2011-2013 (European Commission, 2012a, p. 5). This is a not inconsiderable sum given that GDP per capita only reached €10,181 in 2011 (European Commission, 2012b, p. 51). Taken together it is clear that, while the changes required to join the EU were expensive, Croatia did make the changes and join. Thus, on the aggregate level, EIM 1 and 2 were present.

However, these headline figures do not do justice to the complexities involved in accession. While the funding available to Croatia was significant this does not mean that it was all spent in a useful way, or even that it was spent at all. Of the €860m available through March 2011 only 55% was actually disbursed on projects, excluding advance payments of 30% in some specific areas, with the rest being withdrawn as delays in applications or projects required the EU to withdraw, or "decommit", the funds (da Silva Caldeira, 2011, pp. 17–18). In line with this, there was a shift from implementation assistance to institution-building from 2011 onwards to prepare Croatia for membership (European Commission, 2012b, p. 5). This latter day shift towards institution-building was based on an assessment of the needs of Croatia but did not radically challenge the actual operating procedures of said institutions. Indeed, the siloed approach to the disbursement of funds failed to consider the absorption

capacity of Croatian institutions and led in some cases to backsliding in the longer term despite initial benchmarks being met (ADE s.a, 2019, pp. ii–iii).

What of the issue of credibility, as stipulated in EIM 3? Given the repeated delays in Croatia's accession process it is clear that the EU could, and often did, follow through on any threats made to punish Croatia for non-compliance. The Ante Gotovina case is illustrative here. Despite demands for Gotovina, who was indicted by the ICTY for his actions in the 1990s war, the Croatian government refused to hand him over. As the hero of Operation Storm, the final push which liberated Croatian territory and brought the war to a close, it was politically difficult for the government to arrest him (Pavlaković, 2010). While it failed to do so he escaped to Spain where he was finally arrested by Spanish authorities and, following this arrest, Croatian EU accession could resume from 3 October 2005, (European Commission, 2005, p. 3; Pavlaković, 2010). Croatia's accession process suffered a further setback when Slovenia blocked the negotiations over disputed border territories until 2009 (European Commission, 2009a, p. 18, 2009b, p. 5). As such it is clear that any punishments were credible as Croatia was indeed punished twice during the accession process, confirming that EIM 3 was true in the Croatian case.

However, how does the issue of credibility square with the discrepancy between the financial rewards for rapid transformation on offer and the limited results? While a share of the blame is certainly due to the inflexible arrangements on the EU side regarding disbursement timetables and to the overall complexity of the process (da Silva Caldeira, 2011, p. 19), EIM/I 1 and EIM/I 2 provide other alternative explanations for the failure of a wider transformation of Croatian politics and governance to take place. The structure of the informal networks in Croatia was such that Europeanization was supported but there was no support for further changes which went beyond the base requirements for accession. As such, the conditions were in place for a *limited* Europeanization, limited to the strict parameters of the formal process.

EIM/I 1 certainly held true as almost the entirety of the political class was in favour of EU accession. All political parties present in Croatia, or at least present within the networks of the *Sabor*, had an avowedly pro-EU position (Pogrmilović, 2010). This was true throughout the period as in 2002 all parties signed the "Resolution

on the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union" (*Rezolucija o pristupanju Republike Hrvatske Europskoj uniji*) which declared that EU membership was a "strategic national goal" (*strateški nacionalni cilj*) (Tomčić, 2002). All parties in the *Sabor* at the time, from the SDP and the HDZ to smaller parties such as the DC and HSP, signed this document. As such, all parties were publicly committed towards EU membership which created a very strong pro-EU consensus in the *Sabor* and, along with the specially created "E" code to signify EU related legislation and ease its passage, enabled the *Sabor* to pass the necessary reforms at pace (Croatia Interview 5, 2021; Croatia Interview 6, 2021). While the EU did criticise the existence and widespread use of such an urgent procedure, as it reduced the scope for scrutiny and debate over important legislation (European Commission, 2010, p. 6, 2011b, p. 5), it was undeniably effective at passing legislation quickly. That this procedure was not challenged within the *Sabor*, despite its extensive use, shows that the informal networks were aligned with the changes and, thus, helped rather than hampered the process.

EIM/I 2 also held true as the formal and informal rewards were aligned towards EU accession. Croatian parties are quite strong with party leaders having an incredible amount of power in setting electoral lists and little to no internal democracy in any parties between 2000-13 (Croatia Interview 3, 2020; Croatia Interview 5, 2021). Such concentration of power in the executive, similar to old style "communist parties" (Croatia Interview 1, 2020), ensured the loyalty of MPs as their possibility for advancement was dependent on toeing the party line rather than on constituency work in their electoral district (Croatia Interview 5, 2021). While there were some opportunities for informal dissent, such as by simply leaving the *Sabor* during a vote to "go for a coffee" (Croatia Interview 6, 2021) or to "to smoke a cigarette" (Croatia Interview 5, 2021), this did not allow for significant dissent or the formation of alternative power bases within either individual parties or the *Sabor*. These little informal procedures allowed MPs to avoid being forced to choose between their conscience and the party line, but they also reveal the extent to which dissent was only tolerated in absence rather than in participation.

This is represented graphically in the previous section through the concentration of power in the hands of the two main parties: the HDZ and SDP. While

there were, initially, some smaller parties who had an influence in the *Sabor* they were slowly ground down from 2000-2011, with a reduction in the number of parties in the *Sabor* from 17 to 12, before increasing again in 2011 with the rise of the *Kukuriku koalicija*. In a period where the number of parties is decreasing this only further increases the power of the party bosses, as is demonstrated by the rise in average weighted degree from 41.896 to 85.064, as intra-party linkages become stronger and more prevalent as a percentage of total linkages within the *Sabor*. The average clustering coefficient also increases from 0.684 to 0.803 over the same period as the dominant parties increase their power both over their members and into the *Sabor* as a whole. Thus, EIM/I 1 and 2 were both present in Croatia with the informal rewards aligning with the formal reward and punishment matrix on offer from the EU and with parties, and in particular party leaders, exercising extensive levels of control over MPs. Such a party structure allowed for the transmission of accession requirements from leader to MP in an efficient manner. However, when combined with the issues of financial disbursement, this did not lead to a wider transformation as there was a lack of credible commitment to wider reform from both the EU and from actors on the Croatian side.

Comparative Analysis: Europeanization as Policy Learning

Moving from EIM to the varieties of Europeanization as Policy Learning the overarching evidence remains of successful policy learning, as Croatia did indeed join the EU, but the evidence of deeper and more fundamental learning is less clear cut. As a start, and as identified in Chapter 3, the conditions for successful policy learning are as follows:

- (LIH) Under conditions of high problem tractability learning takes place in hierarchy
- (LEC) Under conditions of low problem tractability learning takes place in an epistemic context

Within this there are further sub-conditions:

- (LIH 1) Under conditions where these rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor then learning is fostered

- (LIH 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered

And:

- (LEC 1) Under conditions where the actors doing the "teaching" are experts learning is fostered
- (LEC 2) Under conditions where the "experts" are inserted into the relevant decision-making bodies learning is fostered

When informal networks are factored in these conditions are modified to:

- (LIH/I 1) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments outweigh contradictory rewards/punishments emanating from within the network.
- (LIH/I 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishment for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments are MORE credible than those emanating from the veto players in the network

And:

- (LEC/I 1) Under conditions where the "expert" actors are considered experts by members of the informal networks learning is fostered
- (LEC/I 2) Under conditions where the inserted "experts" are positioned not just in the correct formal position but also at the correct *informal* position to transmit knowledge learning is fostered

As discussed in Chapter 2, the structure of the accession process has reduced the scope for learning paradigms to LIH and LEC out of the four possible learning typologies (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018). With this and the above in mind, how have the conditions for successful LIH and LEC been borne out in the Croatian case?

LIH occurs if there is an effective hierarchy in place for learning with a reward/punishment matrix which rewards compliance (LIH 1) with credible rewards (LIH 2). As discussed above, just as the matrix was crucial for the EIM, it was then also in place for LIH conditions due to the significant rewards and support on offer

from the EU to support compliance. The sums of money on offer from the EU provided a significant incentive to comply whereas alternative sources of rewards were minimal. The cost of change, again as discussed above, was not insubstantial but given that only 55% of the funds were disbursed and the changes engendered were considered sufficient to qualify Croatia for EU entry it is clear that the money on offer was greater than what was absolutely necessary. Thus, LIH 1, as with EIM 1 and 2, was true in the Croatian case.

The same holds true for LIH 2, the credibility of the rewards and punishments on offer. Overall, as Croatia did manage to accede to the EU it is clear that the reward of accession was considered credible. As Croatia was also delayed repeatedly in its accession process, first due to ICTY non-cooperation and later due to the Slovenian border dispute, it was clear that the EU was willing to use sticks as well as carrots in the accession process. Thus, LIH 2 was true in the Croatian case.

In terms of the impact of informal networks on the LIH conditions it is clear that, overall, they were aligned with the accession process. However, with parties being as strong as they were, or indeed are, in Croatia the impact of informal networks on the policy process was notable. Rather than opening a space for policy discussions and learning to take place there was, instead, domination of policy-making by the government which superseded the *Sabor* in "real life politics" (Croatia Interview 6, 2021). While this did make for effective policy-making, in terms of speed, it placed a lot of power and influence in the hands of a few people at the top of the party (Croatia Interview 5, 2021). As such, LIH/I 1 and 2 were borne out in that party leaders were constricted in their ability to act by the EU's rewards and punishments and they then, in turn, restricted the ability of their MPs to act thus playing into the hierarchy in learning in hierarchy.

However, there were some instances which reveal the contrast between the observed compliance and learning in the Croatian case. PM Ivo Sanader was a highly successful pro-EU negotiator and leader, beginning the negotiation process and leading the HDZ to two election victories on a pro-EU conservative platform. However, his arrest in 2010 in Salzburg on corruption charges raises questions regarding *how* he managed to centralize power to such an extent in the HDZ and, in

turn, in Croatia. Throughout his time as leader of the HDZ, Sanader used a private marketing firm to siphon off money from state institutions and companies both to himself and into a secret HDZ slush fund (Ljubas, 2020). While this was clearly a winning political strategy, by doing so Sanader and the HDZ also perpetuated informal mechanisms, or in this case out and out corruption. Although he resigned in 2009, and several key individuals were removed from their posts by his successor, Jadranka Kosor, it is unclear if this represented true learning or simply the necessary shuffling of certain individuals out of power in order to maintain the pro-EU momentum (Konitzer, 2011). Given the fact that the last chapters to be closed were 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) and 33 (Financial and Budgetary Provisions) (da Silva Caldeira, 2011, p. 35), and that a transition facility was agreed for the first year following accession to allow for more time to strengthen judicial and administrative capacity (European Commission, 2012b, p. 5), it is clear that grappling with the informal networks which pervaded Croatian politics was difficult up until the final moments of the accession process. Indeed, the final report on Croatia's preparedness for EU membership states that the mandated Conflict of Interest Commission was yet to be established (European Commission, 2012b, p. 36). This intimates that in some key areas learning did not truly take place and that, in some sectors, the power of the informal networks was such that only compliance was observed.

Alternatively, in areas with lower issue tractability, was there evidence of learning in the Croatian case and did the informal networks have an impact? LEC, as highlighted above, takes place in different conditions than LIH with an increased emphasis on learning a transfer of knowledge from "experts" to individuals seeking knowledge. As stated above this requires both that the "experts" be recognized as experts, LEC 1, and that the "experts" are successfully inserted into the decision-making bodies, LEC 2.

Due to the high level of political unity in Croatia, and the structure of the EU accession process, there was a predisposition to assume the expert nature of EU representatives which confirmed that LEC 1. Unlike in the EU, where sometimes individuals of the EU's External Action Service can be side-lined, in Croatia representatives of the EU were treated very seriously as they, ultimately, were representing the organisation that Croatia was trying to join (Croatia Interview 2,

2020). EU officials were, unsurprisingly, integral to the process and frequently met with high level individuals from the Croatian government (Croatia Interview 3, 2020). Beyond contact with EU officials there was also significant bilateral contact between Croatia and national governments of EU member states, in particular Slovenia, which also helped drive forward the need for learning as such representatives could speak to the necessity of changes from their country's perspective as enlargement fatigue set in across the EU (Croatia Interview 3, 2020). Repeated "Accession Conferences" provided formalized settings for individuals to engage in dialogue and knowledge sharing and to communicate the needs of the accession process (Council of the European Union, 2010c, 2010d, 2010a, 2010f).

Beyond contacts at the national level, EU "experts" were also inserted into the Croatian state through the process of "twinning". Such "experts" had the distinct advantage of *not* being local and could help provide insights into the changes necessary to achieve the EU's benchmarks (Croatia Interview 3, 2020). These projects were noted for their support among Croatian beneficiaries, especially during the early years (MWH Consortium, 2008, p. II). This implies support for the expertise on offer and, thus, that what interaction there was, at least formally, was good which confirms LEC 1.

Within the wider context, though, were the "experts" correctly inserted into decision-making bodies to foster learning? Given that Croatia did accede to the EU the over-arching answer to this question is yes, they were inserted into the correct places to foster learning. As mentioned above there were repeated high level contacts between EU representatives and the Croatian government (Croatia Interview 2, 2020; Croatia Interview 3, 2020). These high level meetings allowed for the transfer of knowledge directly to individuals who were, due to the highly top-down nature of the Croatian party system (Croatia Interview 5, 2021), able to enforce change below and complete the reform process successfully, implying that LEC 2 did hold true in the Croatian case.

However, does this qualify as learning? LEC/I 1 and 2 require that the "experts" were treated as such by individuals in the informal networks and that they were inserted not solely into the correct *formal* decision-making bodies but also into

the deeper *informal* ones. As already mentioned, there was significant support for EU integration among the political elites and this led to generally widespread support and trust in the actors themselves. When they attended high-level meetings, or even local ones, EU actors were treated as experts as they were the ones who knew what was necessary and communicated that to the individuals involved (Croatia Interview 2, 2020).

Yet, on the Croatian side, there was little diffusion of information beyond those key individuals into the wider system. There was a general lack of expertise within the *Sabor* on issues related to the EU and this was reflected in the policy-making process. Many individuals could not speak any language besides Croatian and, thus, had difficulty interacting with or understanding some information available to them (Croatia Interview 6, 2021). Indeed, in the *Sabor* for many years the only source of information available to MPs on what the EU is or does was simply a stack of pamphlets positioned near the entrance of the building (Croatia Interview 5, 2021). This does not mean that every Croatian individual involved with the accession process was so uninformed, and most individuals on the key committees such as the Committee for European Integration (*Odbor za eurposke integracije*) were highly specialized (Croatia Interview 3, 2020; Croatia Interview 6, 2021), but there was a general lack of diffusion of information throughout the wider body politic. Often it was up to the individual MP to conduct research on EU affairs if they wanted to know anything beyond what they had been briefed by the government (Croatia Interview 6, 2021). This was made particularly difficult, though, as MPs were treated "like abandoned children" with no staff, no office, no desk, and, at least initially in the period, no office computer so they were forced to crouch in the hallway to conduct any independent research on their personal computer (Croatia Interview 5, 2021). All of this does not mean that it was impossible to do research and to evaluate the information coming from the EU "experts", and indeed as time went on there was an increase in the availability of information as the *Sabor* did eventually get a subscription to various EU journals and newspapers (Croatia Interview 6, 2021), but it does mean that, in terms of the informal networks, there was little to no diffusion of such expertise beyond the key individuals in the centre who acted as natural bottlenecks to the learning process.

Thus, while LEC/I 1 was present *to an extent* it is difficult to evaluate the true extent to which such individuals were treated as experts by those in wider Croatian politics.

Moving to LEC/I 2, on the positioning of actors within the informal networks, it is clear that they were positioned well to foster learning to an extent, again, but not necessarily to foster wider learning. The strength of the parties within the *Sabor* produced a very divided parliament, with even the seating at lunch being informally divided in the main dining hall with one large table for the HDZ and another for the SDP (Croatia Interview 5, 2021). While there were some individuals who would cross-over, or who had reputations which allowed for socializing across the political spectrum (Croatia Interview 1, 2020), the generally rigorously maintained divisions and tight party structure prevented a diffusion of ideas. It did not matter what the issues were or whether or not a proposed reform may have benefited the entire country as a rigorous party line was kept in all formal functions on the debating floor or in committees (Croatia Interview 1, 2020; Croatia Interview 5, 2021), with a few notable exceptions.

The Committee for European Integration was one such committee which, due to its nature as an essential component of the accession process, had the power and authority to question the government. This Committee frequently summoned key individuals to give evidence and could even vote down legislation in the committee and prevent it from reaching the plenary session (Croatia Interview 6, 2021). As such, in this committee if not always in others, there were attempts made to engage in the discussion and formulation of ideas which created the conditions for epistemic learning. This was complemented by the work of the National Committee (*Nacionalni odbor*) which acted as a further monitoring resource for Croatian accession. Under the founding regulations for the National Committee the chairperson was always to be a member of the opposition, and was often a very high ranking one, and it included several non-MPs who were there to act as experts in scrutinizing legislation (Šeks, 2005). This Committee, thus, acted to create an epistemic context within which EU legislation could be discussed.

However, did these two committees lead to widespread diffusion of Europeanization via learning in epistemic contexts as per LEC/I 1 and 2? To some

extent yes and to some extent no. Within the closing days of Croatian accession there were concerns raised that Croatia was not ready for accession and that the 2013 timetable was too ambitious but, in the end, these concerns were overruled (Croatia Interview 2, 2020; Croatia Interview 6, 2021). This was repeated more widely throughout Croatia with support, and thus interaction, being "geared to preparing Croatia to meet the *acquis* requirements, but [it] did not sufficiently follow a whole-of-government perspective to prepare Croatia for effectively assuming its future membership obligations" (ADE s.a, 2019, p. ii). Such a reform process, which enabled Croatia to meet key benchmarks but did not tackle the wider issues, is not necessarily indicative of learning but, again, of compliance. The high level of use of the expedited procedure to pass both EU legislation and some, at best, tangentially related legislation points to flaws in the system of oversight and scrutiny within the *Sabor* (Croatia Interview 6, 2021). Corruption cases, which did pick up in the latter part of the accession process with the arrest of Sanader and other HDZ MPs, also points to corruption being a widespread practice amongst Croatian elites. While such efforts are being addressed (Melčić, 2017), the pervasiveness of informal and semi-formal practices which act to undercut the formal procedures continues in society as a whole (Skokic, Lynch and Morrison, 2019). As such, LEC/I 1 and 2 were both partially present as there was evidence of learning sufficient to achieve the benchmarks for accession but not sufficiently present to achieve wider learning and Europeanization.

Conclusion

Croatia, then, largely represents a successful case of Europeanization with all the formal benchmarks being met in the accession process which resulted in accession in 2013. As previously mentioned, though, there remain concerns around the extent to which the accession process in Croatia led to more fundamental reforms. Such a mixed record, of largely secure informal networks paired with a successful formal process, highlights some of the complexities of the impacts of informal political networks.

The conditions for Europeanization under the EIM were, as discussed above, largely met with the rewards for accession being sufficient to encourage Croatia to undertake the difficult process of reform. Croatia managed to pass the required reforms on time and, in the end, did not even make use of the full range of funding on offer to

do so. Throughout the process, the repeated setbacks in the Croatian accession process also ensured that any threats from the EU were viewed as credible. Croatia's two setbacks in accession, over non-compliance with the ICTY and then because of the Bay of Piran dispute, supported the impression that the EU was both able and willing to use the ultimate threat of blocking Croatian accession if it was necessary. Thus, the conditions were in place for Europeanization to occur as stated in the EIM.

In aggregate the conditions were also in place for LIH and LEC as, again, Croatia did accede to the EU and there was evidence of learning in Croatia throughout the 2000-2013 period. It is impossible to deny that significant change took place. Public administration and the judiciary were reformed, and high-ranking individuals were prosecuted for corruption. Such changes point to some success and should not be minimized.

However, whether these changes constituted true learning or simply compliance is more debatable as the informal networks promoted certain forms of compliance and constrained others. Even though Sanader resigned, the gap between his resignation in 2009 and Croatia's accession to the EU in 2013 leaves only four years in which to uproot the clientelist practices with which he managed to gain and maintain power. Although there were notable exceptions, and his own prosecution is one, there is relatively less evidence that such successes have ensured a "sustained track record of substantial results" regarding corruption (European Commission, 2012b, p. 35). Such a mixed record reveals resistance on the part of informal networks to change with key bottlenecks preventing the diffusion of knowledge, the key to learning, to the wider body politic.

Chapter 6: Europeanization and Informal Networks in Serbia

Unlike the previous two cases Serbia has yet to join the European Union (EU) and thus represents the "failure" case, as compared with the two previous "success" cases of states which have acceded. This section will proceed through the Serbian case starting with a brief general overview of the background of Serbia and some notes on the geography and legal structure, as with the previous two chapters. Following this brief overview is a discussion of the EU accession process to date, and a chronological discussion of Serbia's electoral history. The largest section is, again, the comparative and analytical section wherein, as with the previous chapters, the conditions for successful Europeanization under the External Incentives Model (EIM), Learning in Hierarchy (LIH), and Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC) are tested. These tests find that, due to the influence of the informal political networks in Serbia, the conditions for successful EIM, LIH, and LEC were not present hence Serbia's failure during the period to join the EU.

Historical Background

As with the previous two cases, Serbia was one of the constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*, SFRJ) which collapsed into civil war in 1991. However, unlike Slovenia and Croatia, Serbia was not one of the secessionist states but instead formed one half of the rump state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna Republika Jugoslavija*, FRY) along with Montenegro. As such, while Slovenia achieved independence in 1991 as mentioned in Chapter 4, Serbia became engaged in the protracted wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the conclusion of the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Dayton Accords in 1995, to which Serbia was a signatory, Serbia was still not yet a fully independent state.

Following the Dayton Accords was the campaign by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) against the FRY over the issue of Kosovo in 1999. The war in Kosovo, a majority Albanian province where ethnic Albanians outnumbered ethnic Serbs in that year by almost ten to one (Mandelbaum, 1999, p. 3), did not begin in that year but certainly reached its climax. While there had been an ongoing insurgency in

the province since the early 1990s, and unrest in the province going back at least to the 1981 protests, a full blown insurgency began in earnest in 1995. This was met with a campaign of ethnic cleansing on the part of FRY troops under the guise of counter-terrorism. In 1999, the US and NATO intervened to stop the violence and protect the interests and lives of the ethnic Albanians after the failure of the Rambouliet proposals. These accords were a proposed attempt to allow NATO peacekeepers into Kosovo and provide a legal basis for such a mission ('Rambouillet Accords', 1999). However, the FRY did not concede to the wishes of NATO:

> "[US Secretary of State Madeline Albright] and her colleagues were said to consider Milošević a Balkan "schoolyard bully" who would back down when challenged. Apparently, the customs in Serbian schoolyards differ from those in the institutions where the senior officials of the Clinton administration were educated, for he did not back down" (Mandelbaum, 1999, pp. 4–5)

The 78 day bombing campaign in FRY by NATO forces resulted in the withdrawal of Serbian and FRY forces from the disputed province and the passage of UN Resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999 (United Nations Security Council, 1999; Judah *et al.*, 2001). This resolution provided for an end to the large scale violence in Kosovo but did not resolve its long-term status.

Following on from the disaster of the NATO intervention were elections in the FRY on 24 September 2000 which, instead of cementing the rule of President Slobodan Milošević, resulted instead in further political crises when the electoral commission declared that the opposition candidate, Vojislav Koštunica, had not won a majority in the first round and that there would be a runoff between Koštunica and Milošević. This was widely viewed as an illegitimate attempt by Milošević to cling on to power rather than admit defeat and, in turn, led to widespread protests beginning on 5 October. The 5 October Revolution (*Petooktobarska revolucija*) or the Bulldozer Revolution (*Bager revolucija*), so named for the moment when a protester took control of a wheel loader[64] and drove it at the offices of Radio-Television of Serbia (*Radio-televizija Srbije*, RTS), resulted in the storming of the Serbian National Assembly

[64] Termed a "bulldozer" by the press as "The Wheel Loader Revolution" was considered insufficiently punchy.

(*Narodna Skupština*, *Skupština*) and overthrow of Milošević. This resulted in a definitive turn in Serbia and the FRY away from the previous policies of isolation and resulted in the ending of the sanctions imposed on the country in response to the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

The FRY officially became the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro on 4 March 2003 after passing constitutional amendments which devolved the majority of power to the constituent republics. While the assassination on 12 March 2003 of Serbian Prime Minister, i.e. the Prime Minister of the Serbian Republic within the State Union, Zoran Đinđić produced a further political crisis and removed one of the more pro-European political actors within the system it did not alter the overall pro-European direction of the country. Serbia continued this trajectory after the dissolution of the State Union on 3 June 2006, following the independence referendum in Montenegro. From 2006, then, Serbia emerged as an independent state and began to chart its own independent course.

Population and Geography

Serbia is a landlocked country at heart of south-eastern Europe. To the west it is bordered by Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. The south-eastern border of Serbia is either Albania or Kosovo depending on the position of the individual regarding the independence of Kosovo. The southern border of Serbia is North Macedonia, formerly the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. To the north is Hungary and to the east are Romania and Bulgaria. Thus, Serbia is bounded on two sides by the EU with four member states as neighbours. As Montenegro is also a leading candidate country for accession (*Montenegro*, 2016), it will soon be almost entirely surrounded by EU member states.

As Map 6.1 on the following page, shows Serbia is bisected by the Danube River which comes down from Hungary along the Croatian border and cuts over to Belgrade, the capital, before meeting the Romanian border where it continues on to the sea along the Romanian and Bulgarian border. The main cities are Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Niš in order of population. Novi Sad is also the capital of the autonomous region of Vojvodina in the north, demarcated by the grey line separating Vojvodina from the rest of Serbia. Priština is the capital of Kosovo which historically has been an

autonomous region but, since 2008, is *de facto* an independent country. However, the central Serbian authorities still lay claim to the province, and several EU countries still refuse to recognize the declaration of independence. As such, the government in Serbia acts as if Kosovo were still part of the country including it on all maps of the country and ensuring that there are representatives of the region in the parliament.

Map 6.1: Geography of Serbia

Source: (*Serbia | History, Geography, & People*, 2020)

Although Serbia was historically one of the wealthier regions of South-Eastern Europe, following the economic decline of the 1980s and the wars in the 1990s Serbia

has become instead one of the poorest regions. GDP has been increasing steadily in recent years, with dips only following the 2008 Financial Crisis, but by 2018 it had only reached €6,140, per capita excluding Kosovo (European Commission, 2020, p. 123). Despite, or perhaps because of, this modest growth Serbia, like other countries in the region, has continued to experience significant demographic decline with its population falling from 7.9 to 6.7 million, excluding Kosovo, from 1990 to 2020 (Judah, 2019).

Serbia's domestic political arrangements are governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (*Ustav Republike Srbije*), adopted by a special session of the parliament following a referendum on 20 October 2006 (Marković, 2006). The 2006 Constitution was promulgated to replace the previous socialist era constitution which still governed the country until then. Like most other countries, the Constitution stipulates the creation of three branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches (Article 4). Between these three branches exists a balance of power with the National Assembly (*Narodna Skupština*, *Skupština*), i.e. the legislative branch, which has the power to pass laws and amend the Constitution (Article 99). The President (*Predsednik*) represents the executive branch and has the power to appoint the Prime Minister (*Premijer Srbije*, PM)[65], who must be confirmed by the *Skupština* (Article 127). While voting on the Prime Minister the *Skupština* simultaneously votes on the programme of and on other members of the Government of Serbia (*Vlada Republike Srbije*) (Article 127), which includes both the PM and a number of Vice Presidents of the Government (*Potpredsednik*) and Ministers (*Ministar*) (Article 125). Votes of "No Confidence" in either the entire Government or in particular members may be either proposed by the Government or by 60 or more Deputies in the *Skupština* (Articles 131, 130). Serbia also has the largest assembly of the three cases examined, with the *Skupština*'s membership fixed at 250 Deputies (Article 100).

Elections to the *Skupština* function according to the proportional representation system with the entire country treated as one electoral district. Parties run as part of electoral lists, which can be made up of candidates from one party or several parties.

[65] Officially the President of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (*Predsednik Vlade Republike Srbije*).

Since 2012 any seats won must be accorded to individuals in the order that they are listed on the electoral list, as opposed to previously when they could be given to any individual on the list (European Commission, 2012c, p. 7). The minimum threshold to win seats from 2008-2020 was 5% after which the seats were divided up using the d'Hondt method. While there are no reserved seats for members of minority lists there is, instead, no minimum threshold for parties representing ethnic minorities (*IPU PARLINE database: SERBIA (Narodna skupstina)*, 2018). As such, there are always some minority representatives in the *Skupština*, varying between eight and 12 representatives in the periods under study here.

Serbia and the EU

As mentioned previously, following the overthrow of Milošević, Serbia began to move haltingly towards EU membership. Internal divisions about the level of cooperation with the EU and international community, and internal disagreements within the State Union, prevented much being accomplished in the initial period. However, the European Council did open the process for a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2004 and negotiations began with the whole State Union in 2005. SAA negotiations did not begin in earnest, though, until the 13th of June 2007 due to non-cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (*Milestones in EU - Serbia relations*, 2020). As with Croatia, the EU integration process for Serbia was conditioned upon full cooperation with the ICTY and, as with Croatia, SAA negotiations were blocked for a period, only resuming in 2007 once cooperation with the ICTY was confirmed. The SAA was initialled on 7 November of that year.

From 2008 onwards, then, Serbia was on a clear pro-accession track. The re-election of Boris Tadić as President in 2008, combined with the creation of a pro-EU coalition in the *Skupština* and an end to the blockages due to non-cooperation with the ICTY, created promising conditions for accession. Further, the decision of many members of the Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska radikalna stranka*, SRS) to split off and form the Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska napredna stranka*, SNS) severely weakened the Eurosceptic block. The decision of the former radicals and even the Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*, SPS), the former party of

Milošević, to either support or at the very least assent to EU accession marks a dramatic change from their previous policies of Euroscepticism (Subotić, 2017). While the sincerity of this transformation is debatable, as will be addressed later in the chapter, the political conditions were right for Serbia to begin to engage in the accession process.

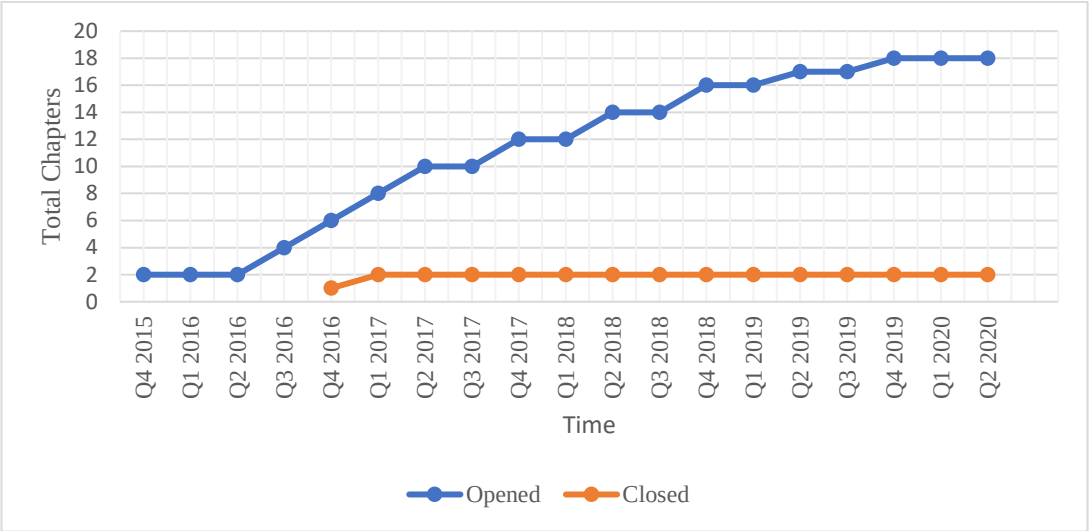
The timeline of important milestones is presented in Table 6.1 while the accession progress made from 2008-2020, as measured in chapters of the *acquis* which have been opened and closed is presented in Graph 6.1. A full list of the relevant dates, including the opening and closing of chapters can be found in Appendix 1 (Table A1.3). As can be seen from Table 6.1 and Graph 6.1, Serbia has made some progress towards EU membership, completing many of the early milestones just like the previous cases. While such progress has been, obviously, less than that of Slovenia and Croatia who are already full members of the EU and have been for some years it is not insubstantial and firmly places Serbia in the group of regional leaders alongside Montenegro in terms of progress towards EU membership.

Table 6.1: Serbian EU Accession Milestones

01.1.2008	Agreement on visa facilitation enters into force
18.02.2008	Council adopts revised European Partnership for Serbia
29.04.2008	Stabilisation and Association Agreement signed
19.12.2009	Visa requirements lifted
22.12.2009	Serbia applies for EU membership
15.06.2010	EU members decide to start SAA ratification process
31.01.2011	Serbia replies to Commission questionnaire
14.10.2011	Commission delivers opinion on granting candidate status
01.03.2012	Council confirms Serbia as a Candidate country
28.06.2013	Council endorses Commission recommendation to open negotiations
01.09.2013	SAA comes into force
17.12.2013	Council adopts negotiating framework
21.01.2014	1st EU-SR (Serbia) intergovernmental conference held

Source: (*Serbia*, 2016)

Graph 6.1: Serbian Adoption of the *Acquis Communautaire*



Kosovo and EU Accession

It is worth mentioning again here the complexities of the Kosovo issue and its impact on the Serbian accession process. While UN resolution 1244 (1999) did provide for an end to the NATO bombardment of the FRY and the withdrawal of Serbian and FRY forces from Kosovo it did not resolve the political situation of Kosovo. The creation of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the cooperative peacekeeping mission, and the signing of the Kumanovo Agreement, between KFOR and the FRY government and the Republic of Serbia, led to the creation of a UN administration in Kosovo within the boundaries of the FRY (Deimel, 2015, p. 121). This agreement stabilised the situation without necessarily prejudicing the status of Kosovo as a constituent piece of the FRY and subsequently Serbia. Unsurprisingly this situation was not to last as internal pressures within Kosovo pressed for full legal independence to match their *de facto* independence from Serbia. These built up to the 17 February 2008 unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, which in turn was partially or largely responsible for triggering the 2008 elections in Serbia so soon after the 2007 elections.

While the independence of Kosovo has been recognized by the majority of EU member states it has not been recognized by all, with Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania, and Greece refusing to recognize Kosovo as an independent state. As such, the EU's position regarding Kosovo and the Kosovo – Serbia issue is complex. While there has been pressure from some actors to ensure that Serbia recognizes the

independence of Kosovo before becoming a member of the EU (*Reuters*, 2018), this issue has obviously not prevented Serbia from progressing through chapters of the *acquis*. Indeed, while this issue is included as Chapter 35 of the negotiations the pressure is specifically on the "normalization of relations" with Kosovo. This pressure has resulted in the Belgrade-Priština dialogue which led to the 2013 Brussels Agreement on first principles to govern the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia (Bieber, 2015).

Unsurprisingly once again, the 2013 Brussels Agreement did not provide for a full peaceful resolution of the conflict to satisfaction of both sides and the issue continues to simmer. Both sides continue to accuse the other of obstruction, with Serbia repeatedly attempting to block Kosovar membership of international organisations (Isufi, 2017). Kosovo has, on its part, attracted international ire by imposing 100% tariffs on Serbia in response to Serbian efforts (*BBC News*, 2018).

Despite further negotiating efforts, such as the "historic deal" signed at the behest of US President Donald Trump ('Kosovo and Serbia Sign "Historic" Deal Under Trump's Auspices', 2020), there has not been a final settlement and, as such, the issue continues to fester. The idea of independence for Kosovo, which is claimed as the "heart" of Serbia[66], remains a touchy electoral issue in Serbia. However, while this may be an issue for the overall accession prospects of Serbia it has not, to date, derailed Serbia's EU accession process. Even if Serbia is eventually required to recognize the independence of Kosovo before joining the EU it has not impacted Serbia's ability to harmonize its legislation with the EU through the period under question in this study. Thus, as mentioned previously, although the issue of Kosovo represents a divergent factor it is fundamentally excluded from study here.

Serbian Elections

In addition to passing through the stages of EU accession Serbia has undergone several changes of government from 2008-2020. This section presents a general overview of the Serbian elections and a discussion of Serbian political parties. Further detail on the exact composition of the *Skupština* will be presented with the maps in the

[66] Graffiti stating that Kosovo is Serbia (*Kosovo je Srbija*) or Kosovo is the heart of Serbia (*Kosovo je srce Srbije*) can be found across Serbia, and sometimes internationally.

following section. Table 6.2 presents the changes in Government in Serbia from 2008-20.

Table 6.2: Serbian Governments and Elections 2008-20

Year	Election	Prime Minister	Party	Coalition Members
2008	11.5	Mirko Cetković	Independent	DS, SDPS, SPO, DSVH, G17+, Together for Kragujevac, SPS-PUPS-JS, SDAS
2009				
2010				
2011				
2012	6.5	Ivica Dačić	*Socijalistička partija Srbije* (SPS)	SNS, SPS, SDPS, PUPS, NS, SDAS, PS, URS
2013				
2014	16.3	Aleksandar Vučić	*Srpska napredna stranka* (SNS)	SNS, SPS, SDPS, PS, NS
2015				
2016	24.4			SNS, SPS, SDPS, PS, PUPS
2017		Ana Brnabić	Independent	SNS, SPS, SDPS, PS, PUPS, SNP
2018				
2019			SNS (from October)	
2020				

Key: DS: *Demokratska Stranka*, SDPS: *Socijaldemokratska Partija Srbije*, SPO: *Srpski Pokret Obnove*, DSVH: *Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini*, SPS-PUPS-JS: *Socijalistička Partija Srbije-Partija ujednijenih penzionera Srbije-Jedinstvena Srbija*, SDAS: *Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka*, SNS: *Srpska napredna stranka*, NS: *Nova Srbija*, PS: *Pokret socijalista*, URS: *Ujedinjeni regioni Srbije*, SNP: *Srpska narodna partija*.

Like other countries in Eastern Europe, Serbia has seen the rise and fall of parties across time as parties in general have not necessarily had the popular roots and history of Western European political parties (Bértoa, 2013). With the consolidation of power in Serbia under the SNS the governments achieved a measure of stability, in terms of governing parties, but the list of non-government parties remains extensive. This is because parties often run as members of electoral lists with other parties with the distribution of seats, assuming the list wins any, determined by a pre-election list of MPs. These smaller parties, then, are rewarded with seats on committees or delegations. A full list showing the variety of parties in the *Skupština*, and their political orientations is given in Appendix 3 (Table A3.3). Table 6.3 shows in more detail the changes of government and changes in seat distribution from 2008-20. The seats are out of a possible 250, the size of the *Skupština*.

Table 6.3: Serbian Governing Coalitions and Party Fragmentation

Election	Post-Election Ruling Coalition	Seats	Parties in *Skupština*
11.5.2008	DS, SDPS, SPO, DSVH, G17+, Together for Kragujevac, SPS-PUPS-JS, SDAS	129 ZES-DS: 78 ZES-G17+: 23 SPS-PUPS-JS: 20 National Minorities (NM): 4 (SVM), 1 (PZDD), 1 (BDSS), 1 (DLR), 1 (SLPS)	19
6.5.2012	SNS, SPS, SDPS, PUPS, NS, SDAS, PS, URS	149 SNS Coalition: 73 SPS-PUPS-JS: 44 SDPS: 9 URS: 16 PS: 1 NM: 2 (SDAS)	38
16.3.2014	SNS, SPS, SDPS, PS, NS	211 SNS Coalition: 158 SPS-PUPS-JS: 44 NM: 3 (PDA), 6 (SVM)	23
24.4.2016	SNS, SPS, SDPS, PS, PUPS	167 SNS Coalition: 131 SPS-JS-ZS: 29 NM: 1 (PDA), 4 (SVM), 2 (SPP),	33

As can be seen from Tables 6.2 and 6.3, this period in Serbia is marked by the rise and dominance of the SNS. Since it split off from the SRS in the 2008-12 parliamentary period, the SNS has steadily increased its dominance over the Serbian political landscape. Acting as a catch-all populist party it has provided the core to all governments since 2012. This has also involved the rise of Serbian President, as of 2021, Aleksandar Vučić who has undergone a transformation from being Minister for Information under Slobodan Milošević from 1998-2000, to Prime Minister and then President by 2021. As can be seen, though, in all periods the SNS remained in coalition even when it had won an outright majority of seats, such as during the 2014-16 electoral period. This has allowed the SPS, under the leadership of Ivica Dačić, to remain relevant as the perpetual coalition partner throughout the entire 2008-20 electoral period. Although the PUPS, one of the SPS's traditional allies, defected and

joined in with the SNS directly in electoral coalition, the SNS-SPS governing coalitions allowed smaller SPS allied parties such as JS to also remain in the *Skupština*. This was crucial for the survival of the SPS who have become a perennial party of power government, with a highly pragmatic approach to politics despite avowed socialist tendencies (Ajzenhamer and Dajč, 2019). Such an approach is common to many parties in Serbia, something which will be discussed more in the analysis section.

SNA: Skupština Networks and the EU Accession Process

As in Chapters 4 and 5, this section of the chapter presents the data chronologically for each electoral cycle in Serbia. Each sub-section also includes a discussion of the accession progress made during that period. This is followed at the end by a comparative analysis of the periods, in addition to a comparison of their network properties, and a more direct connection to the conditions as presented in the Chapter 3.

First, though, a reminder of the weighting of the Serbian ties. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the weighting of these ties was determined based on initial estimations of the importance of certain types, such as parties, which was corroborated by interviews. In Serbia's case this process resulted in the following values:

- Serbia:
    - *Politička Stranka* (Party): 1
    - *Poslanička Grupa* (Working Group, determines seating): 0.5
    - *Odbore* (Committee): 0.25
    - SPK (Connection from the President of the *Skupština* to individual MPs): 0.2
    - *Radna Tela*/*Delegacija* (Working Group and other Delegations): 0.15
    - PP (Connection from the Deputy Speaker[67] to individual MPs): 0.1
    - *Prijateljstva* (Country Specific Friendship Committee): 0.01

[67] Technically "Vice President" (*Potpredsednici*) of the *Skupština.*

Skupština 2008-12

As mentioned above, following on from the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo the government of Serbia collapsed, and elections were held on 11 May 2008. These elections resulted in the creation of a pro-European government under the leadership of the independent Prime Minister Mirko Cetković. The elections, and the subsequent seat and party swapping, resulted in the distribution given in Table 6.4. Parties are coloured by their participation in pre-election electoral pacts in descending order of seat share.

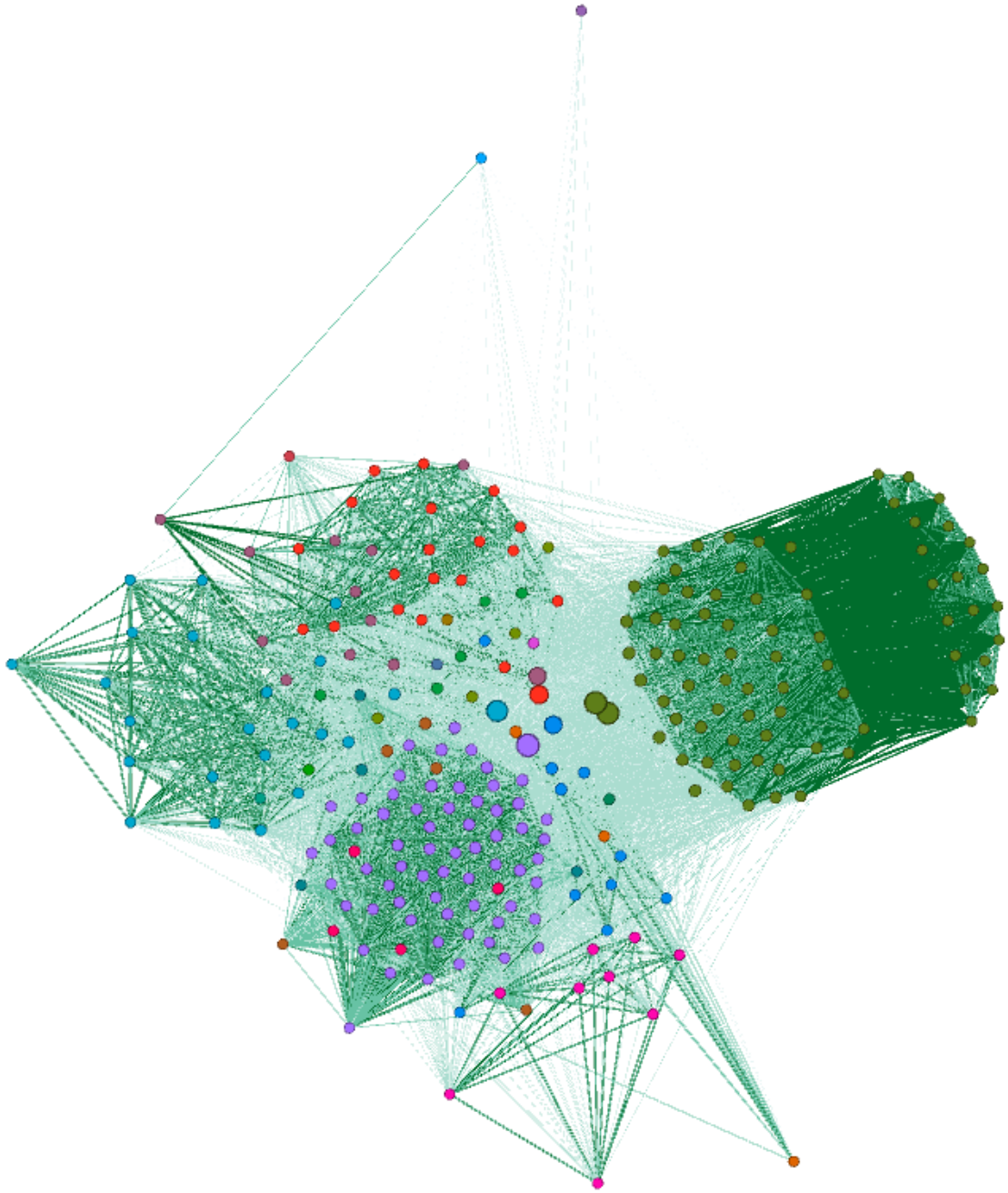
Table 6.4: Seat distribution in the *Skupština* 2008-12

Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
DS (*Demokratska Stranka*)	64	SRS (*Srpska radikalna stranka*)	77
G17+	23	DSS (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*)	20
LSV (*Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine*)	5	NS (*Nova Srbija*)	9
SPO (*Srpski pokret obnove*)	4	LDP (*Liberalno demokratska partija*)	12
SPS (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*)	11	DHSS (*Demohrišćanska Stranka Srbije*)	1
PUPS (*Partija ujedinjenih penzionera Srbije*)	5	SDU (*Socijaldemokratska unija*)	1
JS (*Jedinstvena Srbija*)	3	Unaffiliated	1
SDPS (*Socijaldemokratska partija Srbije*)	4		
DSHV (*Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini*)	1		
PVS (*Pokret veterana Srbije*)	1		
SVM (*Savez vojvođanskih Mađara*)	4		
BDSS (*Bošnjačka demokratska stranka Sandžaka*)	1		
PZDD (*Partija za demokratsko delovanje*)	1		
DLR (*Demokratska levica Roma*)	1		
SLPS (*Socijalno liberalna partija Sandžaka*)	1		
Totals	129		121

Key: *Za Evropsku Srbiju* (For a European Serbia), SPS-PUPS-JS, DSS-NS, Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

Map 6.2, on the following page, gives the network map constructed from this seat distribution. What can be seen at first glance is the relative strength of the SRS on the right hand side, especially as compared with the more distributed mixture of liberal and pro-European parties in the centre and on the left. The DS, largest party in the governing coalition, is the closest to the centre with the clusters of other parties orbiting around it. The other, non-SRS, parties are scattered about due to their smaller size as their membership of various committees is able to affect their position more than their party membership. This gives us a cluster of influential individuals from a wide variety of parties clustered around the centre of the map. Influence being measured here by centrality and by the size of the node, as their size is determined by their betweenness centrality scores.

Map 6.2: Network Ties in the *Skupština* 2008-12[68]



Key: SRS, DS, G17, DSS, LDP, SPS, NS, PUPS, LSV, SDP, SVM, SPO, JS, NL, DSHV, PZDD, BDSS, DLR, PVS, SDU, SLPS

Throughout this period Serbia managed to make some significant progress towards EU accession, ending the 2012 parliamentary period as a candidate country.

[68] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 0.95.

The European Commission's yearly progress reports highlight progress in key areas of the Copenhagen Criteria. For example, the evaluation of the Constitution improves from "further reforms are needed" (European Commission, 2008b, p. 7) to "largely in line with European Standards" (European Commission, 2012c, p. 6) by the end of the period. While this is not to say that there was improvement in all sectors, as the financial crisis largely stalled reform by 2012 (European Commission, 2012c), sufficient progress had been made in all sectors that Serbia became an official candidate country on 1 March 2012.

Skupština 2012-14

The 2012 elections were held as scheduled and resulted in the election of the first SNS government. They also resulted in the election of a bewildering array of parties, 36, to the *Skupština*. Many of these parties were elected as members of broader electoral lists or as representatives of minorities. However, this electoral cycle represents the peak of electoral fragmentation in Serbia partially due the stark reversal of fortune suffered by the SRS who failed to cross the electoral threshold after their most popular members broke away to form the SNS. As always, the snapshot of MPs was taken at the end of the parliamentary period and the distribution is given in Table 6.5. Parties are once again coloured by their membership in electoral pacts ('2. izvestaj o ukupnim rezultatima np', 2012).

Table 6.5: Seat distribution in the *Skupština* 2012-14

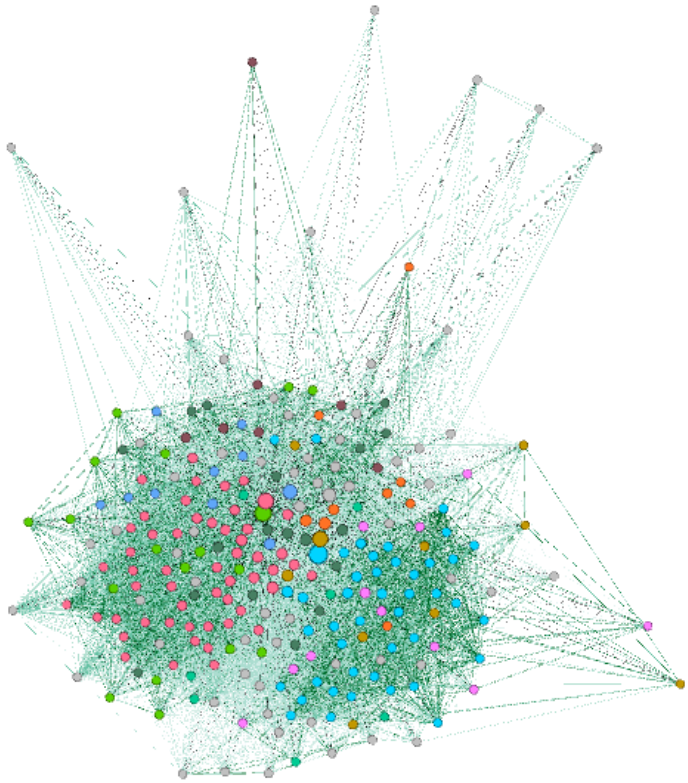
Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
SNS (*Srpska napredna stranka*)	53	DS (*Demokratska Stranka*)	44
NS (*Nova Srbija*)	7	G17+	10
APPS (*Asocijacija malih i srednjih preduzeća i preduzetnika Srbije*)	1	LSV (*Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine*)	3
KUIRS (*Koalicija udruženja izbjeglica u Republici Srbiji*)	1	ZS (*Zeleni Srbije*)	1
PSSBK (*Pokret Snaga Srbije – BK*)	2	DSHV (*Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini*)	1
NSS (*Narodna Seljačka Stranka*)	1	DHSS (*Demohrišćanska Stranka Srbije*)	1
BNS (*Bošnjačka narodna stranka*)	1	LDP (*Liberalno demokratska partija*)	11
DPM (*Demokratscka partija Makedoniaca*)	1	SPO (*Srpski pokret obnove*)	4
PUV (*Pokred Ujedinjenih Vlaha*)	1	SDU (*Socijaldemokratska unija*)	1
RP (*Romani partija*)	1	BS (*Bogata Srbija*)	1
PS (*Pokret socijalista*)	1	DSS (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*)	18
PPPS (*Pokret privredni preporod Srbije*)	1	ZZŠ (*Zajedno za Šumadiju*)	2
SPS (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*)	18	NOPO (*Nijedan od ponuđenih odgovora*)	1
		BI	1
PUPS (*Partija ujedinjenih penzionera Srbije*)	10	UG	1
JS (*Jedinstvena Srbija*)	7	SVM (*Savez vojvođanskih Mađara*)	5
SDPS (*Socijaldemokratska partija Srbije*)	9	BDZ (*Bosanska Demokratska Zajednica*)	1
PŽK (*Pokret Živim za Krajinu*)	2	Unaffiliated	16
PVS (*Pokret veterana Srbije*)	1		
SDA (*Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka*)	2		
Unaffiliated	8		
Totals	128		122

Key: Let's Get Serbia Moving (*Pokrenemo Srbiju*), SPS-PUPS-JS, Choice For a Better Life (*Izbor za Bolji Život*), Overturn (*Preokret*), Minority, Mixed blocks are minority parties which ran as part of an electoral list, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others.

Comparing Map 6.2 to Map 6.3, which presents the distribution graphically as produced by GEPHI, the impact on the explosion of minor parties has on the networks within the *Skupština* is clear. While there was some party cohesion in the 2008 map,

with the SRS in particular being unified in one section of the map, in this case there is more diffusion of individuals across the space with the main ruling parties, the SNS and SPS, clustered in the bottom centre of the map and the other parties arranged around them. Indeed, there are even some non-party members towards the centres of the two party groupings which represent highly connected individuals who, while not part of the party itself, share sufficient overlap with individuals from one side or the other to be clustered with them on the map. One interesting thing to note is the dispersion of the JS party members across the space, maximising the connection of the JS party members to as many other sub-groupings as possible. This fits with the estimation of JS, along with its long time list partner the SPS, as one of a number of ideologically multi-faceted parties whose support has been crucial to the maintenance of political power (Ajzenhamer and Dajč, 2019).

Map 6.3: Network Ties in the *Skupština* 2012-14[69]



Key: SNS, DS, DSS, SPS, LDP, G17, PUPS, SDPS, NS, JS

[69] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 0.95.

How does this graph and parliamentary structure correlate with accession progress made during the period? Again, Serbia made some progress towards the EU in the two years that this parliament was in session before early elections were called. In terms of benchmarks, the SAA officially came into force and the first intergovernmental conference was held. Further, the 2013 Brussels Agreement between Belgrade and Priština, under the auspices of the EU sponsored dialogue, was signed.

Domestically, the constitutional situation did not deteriorate, according to the evaluation of the Commission. However, by 2014, the evaluation changes to emphasize the need for changes "to address issues of importance for the accession negotiations" (European Commission, 2014b, p. 7). Politically the government in the period continued to pursue a pro-EU agenda (European Commission, 2013c, p. 8). There was also a positive evaluation of events in the *Skupština* with increasing public consultations on legislation. However, this was in turn hampered by the continuing use of emergency procedures to pass legislation which undercuts the oversight capacities of groups within the *Skupština* (European Commission, 2013c, p. 6). Intensive legislative work took place to begin the reform of the judiciary in line with the 2013-18 reform strategy. While these first steps were important the Commission also noted that significant challenges remain both in the actual practice of the judiciary but also in the structure, requiring constitutional changes to ensure impartiality (European Commission, 2014b, pp. 11–12).

Skupština 2014-16

In 2014 early elections were called which resulted in a massive win for the government. The extent of their victory reduced the number of parties in the Skupština from 36 to 23 and the largest governing majority in the 2008-20 period. Table 6.6, on the following page gives the seat distribution at the end of the 2016 period since, as always, this includes the changes in parliament which occurred throughout the 2014-16 period. Parties are once again grouped and coloured by their 2014 electoral coalitions ('2. Izvestaj o ukupnim rezultatima np', 2014).

As can be seen by the distribution of seats in Table 14, the previous governing coalition continued into the 2014-2016 period with the two key parties being the SNS

and SPS. These two parties almost have an enough for a majority by themselves, yet they brought in their associated electoral coalition partners into the government as well. There is some shifting of the smaller parties from one side to the other but the main thing to note is the dominance of the governing coalition in a parliament with only 250 seats. This dominance is particularly striking when depicted visually, as it is in Map 6.4.

Table 6.6: Seat distribution in the *Skupština* 2014-16

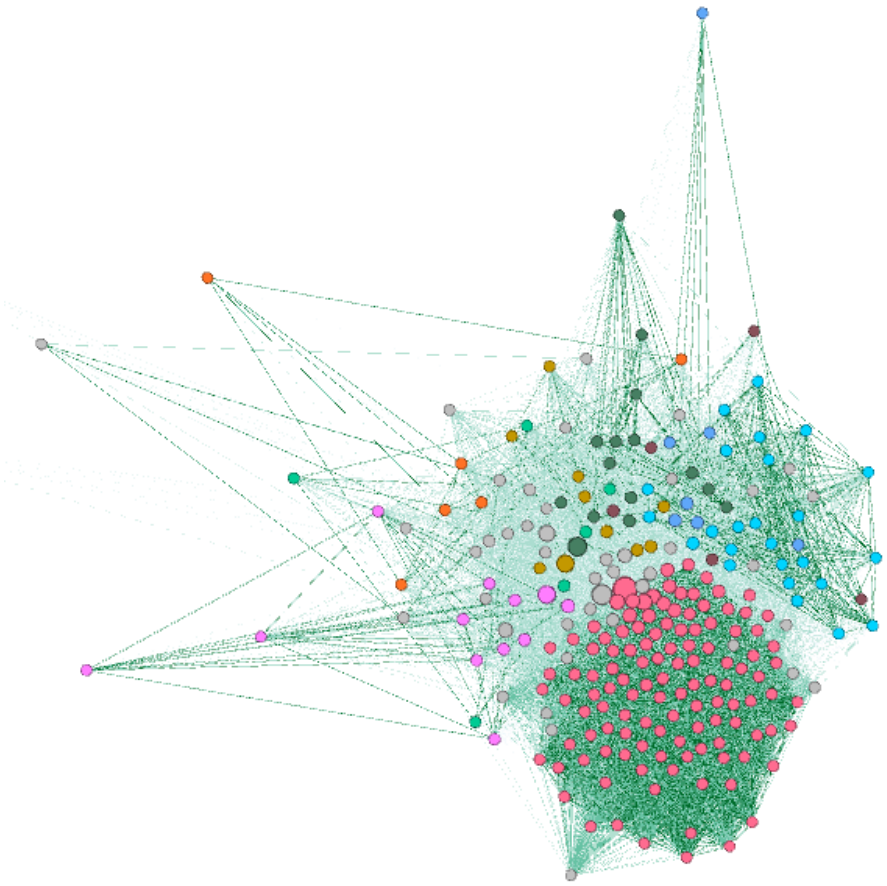
Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
SNS (*Srpska napredna stranka*)	119	DS (*Demokratska stranka*)	15
SDPS (*Socijaldemokratska partija Srbije*)	10	LSV (*Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine*)	5
NS (*Nova Srbija*)	6	SDS (*Socijaldemokratska stranka*)	4
SPO (*Srpski pokret obnove*)	5	Nova	2
PS (*Pokret socijalista*)	3	ZS (*Zeleni Srbije*)	1
SPS (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*)	25	Preokret (*Pokret za preokret*)	1
PUPS (*Partija ujedinjenih penzionera Srbije*)	12	SNP (*Srpska narodna partija*)	1
JS (*Jedinstvena Srbija*)	7	ZZŠ (*Zajedno za Šumadiju*)	1
PSSBK (*Pokret Snaga Srbije – BK*)	2	SDA (*Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka*)	3
DHSS (*Demohrišćanska Stranka Srbije*)	1	Unaffiliated	8
USS (*Ujedinjena seljačka stranka*)	1		
SVM (*Savez vojvođanskih Mađara*)	6		
PZDD (*Partija za demokratsko delovanje*)	2		
BNS (*Bošnjačka Narodna Stranka*)	1		
Unaffiliated	9		
Totals	209		41

Key: For a Future We Can Believe In (*Budučnost u koju verujemo*), SPS-PUPS-JS, New Democratic Party – Green (*Nova demokratska stranka – Zeleni*), Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

From Map 6.4 the extent of the dominance of the SNS and SPS within the parliament becomes clearer. The SNS is grouped as a block in the bottom of the map, existing as one operative unit against which the rest of the parliament is aligned. This is in line with interview responses which highlighted the strength of the SNS party

organization even going so far as to refer to the existence of a "pharaonic" executive reminiscent of "Stalin" (Serbia Interview 1, 2019). Another respondent compared the current situation to being worse than in the Milošević period (Serbia Interview 5, 2019). The SPS, on the other hand, is more dispersed within the network map maintaining a broader distribution of power and influence across the *Skupština*. This is further corroborated by responses which emphasize their role as influence brokers (Serbia Interview 2, 2019).

Map 6.4: Network Ties in the *Skupština* 2014-16[70]



Key: SNS, SPS, DS, PUPS, SDPS, JS, SVM, NS, SPO

Within this period there was some further progress made towards EU accession. The work of the *Skupština* intensified over the period although, once again, the use of urgent procedures to pass legislation remained a point of concern for the

[70] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 0.95.

Commission (European Commission, 2016b, p. 7). Significantly the constitution was not amended to address the recommendations of the Venice Commission regarding judicial appointments (European Commission, 2015c, 2016b). General judicial reform did progress, though, and attained the certification of "some level of preparation" for accession by the end of the 2016 period (European Commission, 2016b, pp. 12–13). In terms of benchmarks met during this period Serbia did open the first of the *acquis*, Chapters 32 (Financial Control) and 35 (Normalization of Relations between Serbia and Kosovo) (*Milestones in EU - Serbia relations*, 2020).

Skupština 2016-20

Early elections were called and the SNS and SPS were, again, returned to power, this time with a slightly reduced majority. The party system continued to fracture and the parties in the *Skupština* increased from 23 to 34. The seat distribution is given in Table 6.7 and represented visually in Map 6.5, on the following page. Once again, the parties are grouped by membership in electoral lists for the 2016 election.

Table 6.7: Seat distribution in the *Skupština* 2016-20

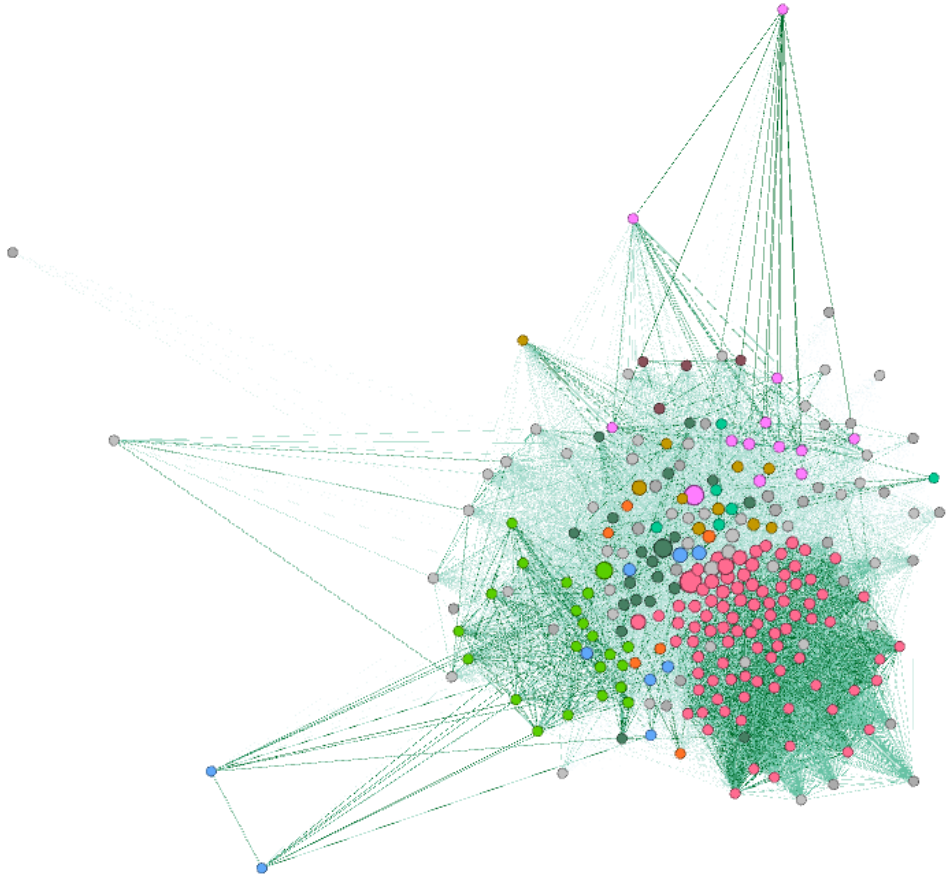
Party (Gov)	Seats	Party (Opposition)	Seats
SNS (*Srpska napredna stranka*)	92	SRS (*Srpska radikalna stranka*)	22
SDPS (*Socijaldemokratska partija Srbije*)	10	DS (*Demokratska stranka*)	13
PUPS (*Partija ujedinjenih penzionera Srbije*)	9	ZZS (*Zajedno za Srbiju*)	2
PS (*Pokret socijalista*)	3	NS (*Nova Srbija*)	1
SNP (*Srpska narodna partija*)	3	LDP (*Liberalno demokratska partija*)	4
PSSBK (*Pokret snaga Srbije – BK*)	2	SDS (*Socijaldemokratska stranka*)	4
SPO (*Srpski pokret obnove*)	2	LSV (*Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine*)	3
BS (*Bolja Srbija*)	1	Dveri (*Srpski pokret Dveri*)	6
NS (*Nova Srbija*)	1	DSS (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*)	2
NSS (*Narodna seljačka stranka*)	1	NARODNA (*Narodna stranka*)	3
POKS (*Pokret obnove Kraljevine Srbije*)	1	DSHV (*Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini*)	1
USS (*Ujedinjena seljačka stranka*)	1	Nova (*Nova Stranka*)	1
SPS (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*)	20	ZES (*Zelena stranka*)	1
JS (*Jedinstvena Srbija*)	6	SDA (*Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka*)	2
KP (*Komunistička partija*)	1	Unaffiliated	20
ZS (*Zeleni Srbije*)	1		
SVM (*Savez vojvođanskih Mađara*)	4		
SPP (*Stranka pravde i pomirenja*)	2		
PZDD (*Partija za demokratsko delovanje*)	1		
Unaffiliated	6		
Totals	128		122

Key: Serbia is Winning (*Srbija pobeđuje*), SPS-JS, For A Just Serbia (*Za pravednu Srbiju*), Alliance for a Better Serbia (*Savez za bolju Srbiju*), Dveri-DSS, Minority, Unaffiliated MPs are not part of any party but group with others

In Map 6.5, once again, the SNS appears as a large block around which the other parties are situated. The SRS, returning to the *Skupština* after failing to win sufficient votes to pass the threshold in both the 2012 and 2014 elections, forms

another block on the left side. The SPS, again, is distributed across the centre of the map remaining a key party of power with distributed influence across the *Skupština*.

Map 6.5: Network Ties in the Skupština 2016-20[71]



Key: SNS, SRS, SPS, DS, SDPS, PUPS, Dveri, JS, SVM

During this period more accession progress was made, in some ways, than in the previous periods, by virtue of the longer tenure. Overall progress, though, was uneven. By the end of the period 18 chapters of the *acquis* had been opened and two had been closed (*Milestones in EU - Serbia relations*, 2020). The Commission's estimate of the functioning of the *Skupština* during the period, though, was mixed. While throughout the period the Commission praised the intense activity of the *Skupština* their evaluation of it as an institution became increasingly alarmed due to the continuing and increasing use of urgent procedures to pass legislation which further

[71] Map generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 0.95.

reduced the space for parliamentary scrutiny and debate (European Commission, 2016b, p. 7, 2018, p. 6, 2019, p. 8). Crucially, the judicial system did not improve from "some level of preparation" (European Commission, 2019, p. 14) throughout the entire four year government. The quality of public administration also plateaued during this period reaching a "moderate level of preparation" (European Commission, 2019, p. 10).

Comparative Analysis

Within and across all these periods the networks within the *Skupština* underwent significant change as becomes a parliament with such dramatic changes. To assess these changes, beyond a description of the party structure, Table 6.8 displays the network values computed using GEPHI.

Table 6.8: Comparative Serbian Network Values

Value	2008-12	2012-14	2014-16	2016-20
Av. Degree	197.552	300.904	645.424	681.864
Av. Weighted Degree	84.413	60.791	126.638	91.641
Diameter	2	2	2	2
Graph Density	0.793	1.208	2.597	2.738
Modularity	0.495	0.439	0.164	0.236
Av. Clustering Coefficient	0.687	0.75	0.886	0.873
Av. Path Length	1.534	1.386	1.209	1.233

This section, then, proceeds through each of the assumptions as identified in Chapter 3 and tests them within the framework of the Serbian case, beginning with the EIM.

Comparative Analysis: the EIM

Taking the EIM conditions in order, and condition of the Serbian accession process by 2020, the question becomes which of the original conditions have been sufficiently interfered with by the informal networks in Serbia to result in the current state of affairs? To reiterate, the conditions for the EIM to successfully promote change are as follows:

- (EIM 1): The size of the reward on offer from the EU is larger than the cost of making the societal changes OR
- (EIM 2): The size of the punishment for non-compliance is greater than the potential rewards of non-compliance AND
- (EIM 3): The EU's rewards and threats are considered credible by the candidate state

With the two following informal conditions attached:

- (EIM/I 1) That the structure of the informal networks in which actors are embedded are not aligned against the changes (or conversely that they are aligned with the changes) AND
- (EIM/I 2) That the credibility of the rewards and threats emanating from the EU outweighs the credibility of any rewards and threats emanating from the informal networks

How have these conditions been impacted by the informal networks in Serbia?

EIM 1 and EIM 2 have been borne out within the Serbian case given the financial package on offer from the EU. Through its various programs, the EU has offered a not inconsiderable sum of money to help Serbia implement the required changes. From 2007-13 the EU, through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Component I and II allocated an average of €176m per year (European Commission, 2014a, p. 49). This compares favourably with €110.6m/y given to Croatia during the same period (ADE s.a, 2019, p. 3). This increased as well in the 2014-20 period under IPA II, which combined and streamlined funding streams to candidate countries, during which Serbia received €200m/y (European Commission, 2020, p. 121), much more than that received by Croatia during the last six years of its accession process.

While this funding has not been able to lift Serbia out of its relatively poor economic level, compared to the EU average, the amount of money is considerable and has been able to drive real change in Serbia. As stated above, Serbia has made significant progress towards EU membership with 18 chapters open and two closed. In other chapters there has been an overall improvement in the EU evaluation of Serbia's preparedness for accession. Increasingly the EU reports classify Serbian

preparedness as “good” or at the very least “moderate” in a variety of chapters (European Commission, 2018, 2019).

And yet, while there has been some change in Serbia and progress has been made towards accession, the rate of the opening of chapters is significantly slower than in other cases. While Serbia has opened 17 chapters and closed two in the first six years since beginning the accession negotiations (*Serbia*, 2016), Croatia opened and closed *all* chapters within six years of the beginning of negotiations (*Croatia*, 2016). Why the delay in passing the required legislation and in adjusting the institutional framework?

As with the previous chapters, this is where informal networks and the issue of credibility need to be considered. While it *may* be in the overall interest of the country to accede to the EU, reform the judiciary, and reform the public procurement infrastructure it *may not* be in the interest of key members of Serbian political parties. In line with the predictions of EIM/I 1 and EIM/I 2, the reward and payoff structures within the networks were allayed against the accession process in key areas.

The two chapters in Serbia which have been closed are Chapter 25 (Science and Research) and Chapter 26 (Education and Culture). These chapters sit at an ideal point in terms of difficulty and reward, with Chapter 25 not requiring the transposition of any specific laws and Chapter 26 focused mostly on a cooperation framework (European Commission, 2015a, 2015b). Completing negotiations on these chapters also unlocks significant lines of EU funding for, sometimes, underserved Serbian institutions. During the 2014-16 period Serbian participation in Horizon 2020, measured by the number of grants submitted and by the participation of researchers, was the highest of the Western Balkan candidate states and was only just behind Croatia, an EU Member State (Directorate General for Research and Innovation, 2018). As such, continued reform of the higher education sector in line with the interests of the EU was both in the interests of the actors involved, who now had access to funding, and was not against the interests of those in informal networks, as a bulk of the effort was taken by actors outside of politics, such as universities, and did not entail the creation of institutions which may hamper the work of informal networks in other sectors (European Commission, 2015a).

It is notable that the chapter which has been open the longest, and has yet to be closed, is Chapter 32 (Financial Control) (*Serbia*, 2016). As the name implies, Chapter 32 focuses on the construction of public financial control institutions, and the introduction of independent auditing practices and methodologies throughout the civil service (European Commission, 2013c, p. 1). While there has been some progress, with key documents having been compiled and the creation of a legal framework in place by 2019 (European Commission, 2019, pp. 93–4), it has been slow with key recommendations only being implemented in 2020 (European Commission, 2020, p. 117). Notably "further efforts are needed to embed managerial accountability in the administrative culture and to strengthen the functioning of internal control and internal audit" (European Commission, 2020, p. 117), which emphasizes the lengths left to go before this chapter can be closed.

This delay is due to the interest structures behind the political parties which continue to profit off the state and system regardless of the wider interests of the country. While the parties, officially, have a pro-EU orientation the influence of clans on politics is more significant with individuals acting in their own interest rather than in the interest of any higher ideal (Serbia Interview 1, 2019). Vertical control, from the clans at the top to the local clans, extends across the party system (Serbia Interview 1, 2019; Serbia Interview 2, 2019). This is represented in the high density of the Serbian graphs throughout the periods in question. Rising from a low of 0.793 to a high of 2.738 in the 2016-20 period, this is what would be expected from an increasing dominance of clan based party structures as individuals in the parliament connected with informal groups amass power through their takeover of formal bodies and positions in the *Skupština*. All together, these clans and groups have managed to stymie not just the reforms required under Chapter 32 but also wider anti-corruption reforms (GRIECO Secretariat and Directorate General I, 2018, p. 16).

These groups and clans have interests that act against the interests of the wider country and, indeed, against the stated objectives of the party. Financial and business interests dominate relations within the parties with some individuals tied to organized crime (Serbia Interview 2, 2019). These links extend beyond the structures of the party and explain the continued and growing influence of the SNS on the political system, with 8.4% of respondents to a survey conducted by INFORM, an EU research project,

reporting being offered money or favours in exchange for political support in elections and an additional 7.1% of respondents reporting that they have turned to party officials for help outside of elections (Bliznakovski, Gjuzelov and Popovikj, 2017). While there exist clans within the SNS, other parties such as SPS and JS have their own clan-party linkages which were brought inside the wider political tent on the condition that they support and do not challenge the political or economic order (Serbia Interview 2, 2019).

EIM/I 2 is also supported as not only are the benefits of non-compliance higher than those of compliance with EU accession requirements the *threats* directed towards individuals who push for compliance are more important to the individuals than the possible rewards or threats on offer from the EU. Unlike threats from the EU, which includes being rejected from IPA funds in the case of non-compliance, the benefits and threats emanating from within the networks are far more substantial and consequential. Political opposition to government policy can result in being excluded from policy-making decisions, informal networking events, and even from media access (Serbia Interview 9, 2020). Alternatively, membership in the ruling coalition and quiet obeisance can result in significant rewards. Within the ruling coalition the working culture is reported as being quite amicable with individuals working well together to achieve common goals (Serbia Interview 8, 2020).

However, for those outside of these linkages, the penalties for non-compliance with policy can be significant even on a personal level. As elections in Serbia are list based, positions on the list are open to party insiders who support advancing the interests of individuals or political clans rather than higher goals. Such "feudal" party systems extend patronage networks from the top of the party, down through the ranks, and out into public services (Serbia Interview 1, 2019). Advancement, then, is based not on accountability or any ability to deliver but simply attachment to the overarching collective (Serbia Interview 4, 2019). Fear for one's safety, though, can also be significant motivator for compliance in addition to the possibility of advancement (Serbia Interview 2, 2019). The assault on opposition politician Borko Stefanović in 2018 is a particularly high profile case of recent and overt attempts to intimidate political opponents (Dragoljović, 2018). Jail time can also be a good deterrent, and the unfortunate treatment of whistle blower Aleksandar Obradović acts as a deterrent to

others. Aleksandar Obradović was arrested for revealing documents related to the favourable purchasing of weapons from the state run Krušik arms factory by a firm run by the Minister of the Interior's father (Đurđević, 2019). Repeated cases such as this have acted to decrease the willingness of individuals to challenge authority and, significantly, has bound individuals together in corrupt networks.

The phenomenon of "preletanje", or "flying over", by which individuals will leave parties to join with larger coalitions and voting blocs often in support of government policy, further weakens resistance to ruling blocks (Serbia Interview 4, 2019). This phenomenon is expressed through the decreasing modularity of the network values across time, from 0.501 to a low of 0.162. Such a decrease represents a decreasing possibility of forming complete sub-networks, and thus sites of possible resistance or independent power, to the increasing dominance of the ruling party. Without the existence of these sub-networks, it is not possible for separate power blocks to form within the parliament, decreasing the chances of overcoming the dominance of the ruling party.

To return to the network maps and values stated above, what, then, does this reveal about the structure in relation to the EIM/I assumptions? While the Serbian networks are concentrated the concentration is, unlike in Croatia, not used for the advancement of general gains but instead only the enrichment of those involved in the system. While there has been some progress through the chapters of the *acquis*, the fact that Serbia has advanced slowly, if at all, through some of the chapters which would challenge the existence and functioning of these networks is unsurprising. Why would an MP threaten their position in the network, their career, or their chance for advancement just to reform the judiciary or public procurement system?

Comparative Analysis: Europeanization as Policy Learning

Again, taking the Europeanization as Policy Learning conditions in order it is clear that the conditions for *successful* learning, and thus Europeanization, have not held true. As with the EIM conditions, the structure of the informal networks has interfered with the learning under both the LIH and LEC conditions. As posited in Chapter 3, the conditions are as follows:

- (LIH) Under conditions of high problem tractability learning takes place in hierarchy
- (LEC) Under conditions of low problem tractability learning takes place in an epistemic context

Within this there are further sub-conditions:

- (LIH 1) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered
- (LIH 2) Under conditions where these rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor then learning is fostered

And:

- (LEC 1) Under conditions where the actors doing the "teaching" are experts learning is fostered
- (LEC 2) Under conditions where the "experts" are inserted into the relevant decision-making bodies learning is fostered

When informal networks are factored in these conditions are modified to:

- (LIH/I 1) Under conditions where the rewards/punishment for compliance/non-compliance are credible learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments are MORE credible than those emanating from the veto players in the network
- (LIH/I 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments outweigh contradictory rewards/punishments emanating from within the network.

And:

- (LEC/I 1) Under conditions where the "expert" actors are considered experts by members of the informal networks learning is fostered
- (LEC/I 2) Under conditions where the inserted "experts" are positioned not just in the correct formal position but also at the correct *informal* position to transmit knowledge learning is fostered

As stated in Chapter 2, the structure of the accession process has reduced the scope for learning paradigms to LIH and LEC. This section proceeds through the conditions as given here and tests them in the Serbian case to identify how and *why* the informal networks impacted them to prevent successful policy learning.

LIH, as previously stated, is roughly analogous to the explicit conditionality involved in passing the *acquis communautaire* as the procedure is one based on a tiered structure with clear rules and success thresholds adjudicated by an outside organization. This a case of relative success in the wider Serbian context as Serbia has closed two chapters and has opened 18 as of 2020. There is also continued interaction between the EU, or its representatives, and members of the Serbian government to continue to emphasize the necessity of reform and the credibility of the EU's position (Serbia Interview 7, 2020). However, as discussed above, the rewards and punishments from the EU did not outweigh the rewards and punishments emanating from within the informal networks. As with the EIM, then, the conditions were not in place for successful LIH in Serbia as the structure and importance of the informal networks interfered with the conditions for LIH.

Moving beyond the specific and highly traceable issues of the accession negotiations, the wider political and governing system would fall under the category of LEC as issue traceability is lower than in the case of the *acquis*. LEC/I 1 has been shown to be, partially, true in the case for Serbia as interview evidence supports the idea that EU actors are treated as specialists in their field (Serbia Interview 7, 2020; Serbia Interview 9, 2020). This has not proven to be wholly true, though, as there were records of disagreements between EU and Serbian representatives. These issues hampered the transfer of knowledge to the relevant actors in Serbia as the actors, although being considered experts in their field, were not considered as actors who should be consulted (Serbia Interview 6, 2020).

LEC/I 2 is, though, even less true in the case of Serbia. As a rule, Serbia is not a transparent society and, thus, access is restricted to those with whom an individual might have an informal connection. Often as part of an individual's informal network. This reduces the likelihood of the "norm entrepreneurs", whose participation is key for successful LEC (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 9), being able to promote change.

Indeed, despite the pro-forma inclusion of a wide variety of experts in Serbia in decision-making processes, and the EU's requirement that NGOs be routinely consulted, the level of consultation is poor and the choice of organisations to consult is often done on a personal rather than professional basis (Serbia Interview 6 2020).

In terms of the networks within the *Skupština*, this is represented through the treatment of individuals, parties, and committees. While, as in all countries, being within the ruling party brings more policy benefits than being in opposition (Serbia Interview 8, 2020), in Serbia being in opposition to the government brings significant drawbacks. First and foremost, being in opposition can result in significantly less media attention (Serbia Interview 9, 2020). While, historically, committees and other bodies within the *Skupština* are supposed to act as checks and debating chambers to balance the power of the ruling party in the plenary chamber this has been less and less the case as time has passed (Serbia Interview 1 2019). This is due to the shifting of the structure, if not necessarily the importance, of the informal networks.

While in the early period the importance of informal networks was not inconsiderable, involving significant horse trading to keep the unwieldy 2008 coalition together (Serbia Interview 2 2019), it did not significantly inhibit the EU accession process. However, throughout the period the types of ties have changed and, with them, the informal culture of the *Skupština* and politics have changed as well. Key figures of the SNS were bonded through their time as members of the SRS, being excluded from the levers of power over a significant number of years and surviving politically as, for a time, the head of the party was indicted by the Hague for war crimes (Serbia Interview 2 2019). This bond has instilled within the members of the SNS a tendency towards closed thinking and hierarchy, the "pyramid" in the phrase "pyramidal system of psychopaths" (Serbia Interview 1 2019).

This is reinforced by the internal culture as individuals are appointed not on merit but by previous experience within the party or connections to those higher up. While this is not the case solely in Serbia, as many parties across the world have local branches or youth wings, in Serbia this is taken to the extreme. Due to a lack of long party history, as other than the SPS all other parties were illegal until the end of the socialist period, there is often a lack of grassroots organizing reinforcing the parties

(Serbia Interview 4 2019). As such, advancement through the party is not due often to ideological position or a long history of slow work at the constituency level but simply due to informal connection to those higher up in the party hierarchy. This is how individuals with little to no political background, such as former teachers of party big-wigs, can end up being appointed to high positions on party electoral lists (Serbia Interview 1 2019).

Such individuals impact the functioning of other bodies in the *Skupština* beyond just their position on party lists. Unsurprisingly, MPs with no experience of either politics or organising and who were only appointed due to political connections have decreased the overall quality of work in the *Skupština* (Serbia Interview 5 2019). These individuals can, at the worst, act to slow down or interfere with the work of committees or, at best, act as deadweight on parliamentary trips abroad as they are disinterested in the work at hand. Both of these factors only get worse when such individuals become leaders of a committee or delegation (Serbia Interview 3 2019). When combined with the proclivities of some individuals to pro-Russian attitudes or actions this can create diplomatic issues for the delegations of the parliament on research trips, significantly hindering both the work of the delegation and the ability of the delegation to act as a secondary source of power within the *Skupština* (Serbia Interview 3 2019).

How has this affected LEC? Through the decrease in the relative positional power of qualified individuals with pro-EU orientations there has been a decrease in their influence over informational flows throughout the period. Most bluntly this has been done through quasi-legal practices on the floor of the *Skupština*. Throughout the period there was a noted use of urgent procedures which reduced the scope for debate and scrutiny on new legislation (European Commission, 2014b, p. 8, 2018, p. 6). In addition to these practices, in the 2016-20 period there was a rise in the practice of swamping the plenary session with amendments on behalf of the ruling party to reduce the time for discussion and debate. Further, this has been combined with the quasi-legal yet politically enforceable practice of "do-over" votes in the case of "misvoting" whereby the speaker will ring a bell to signal that this is the motion to be supported by MPs, in case they accidentally had voted against it (Serbia Interview 2 2019). That this situation arises at all is absurd but highlights the impact that having a host of

unqualified MPs can have on a parliament, reducing the need for thorough debate on legislation or even the unified presentation of a government platform on an issue to the simple ringing of a bell to direct the votes of individuals within the *Skupština*. Collectively these practices have resulted in a situation which prevents any learning from taking place and has helped to stall the Europeanizing process in Serbia.

Conclusion

As with, and yet unlike, the previous cases what can be seen in the Serbian case is that there is more to the accession process than would be expected. While cases of success such as Slovenia or Croatia can hide the impact of informal networks, as when the informal structure aligns with the formal process the impact can be subtle, the Serbian case reveals the deep impact that such informal networks can have on formal processes. In the Serbian case, this impact has manifested in a slower Europeanization process through the interference with both the EIM and the Europeanization as Policy Learning conditions.

As with many of the other countries in the region, the financial inflows and rewards on offer from the EU *should* be sufficient to promote Europeanization as per the conditions of the EIM. Like Croatia, Slovenia, and indeed most other countries in Europe, there is no other country or organization offering similar financial opportunities for Serbia. As would be expected, then, this has led to some progress towards EU accession and some Europeanization. However, those individuals with sufficient network power, who have an interest in preserving their own personal position rather than necessarily the welfare of the country, have been able to stall the process in key areas despite the overall rewards on offer. This situation is replicated when testing for the conditions for LIH.

LEC was also shown to not have taken place in the Serbian context as the structures of the informal networks were allayed against the influence of the Europeanizing norm entrepreneurs or individuals from the EU. Once these actors became locked out of the decision-making infrastructure there was little chance of LEC taking place. Information did not flow from the EU to the required individuals and, instead of leading to a slow and steady transformation of organizational knowledge and overall Europeanization, the *Skupština* instead became blocked. This culminated

in the political ruptures seen in Serbia from the end of 2018 (Božović, 2018). Such a rupture even included the storming of the Skupština by protesters in 2020 following the results of the 2020 parliamentary election (*Protesti u Srbiji: Manji incidenti u Beogradu, mirno u Novom Sadu, Nišu i ostalim gradovima*, 2020).

Chapter 7: Comparative Analysis

As the previous three chapters have demonstrated, the European Union (EU) accession process is long and difficult, involving significant changes in even the most advanced of candidate states. All three of the cases analysed in this thesis overcame certain difficulties and two, Slovenia and Croatia, managed to complete the process and accede to the EU. This section moves from a discussion of the impact of informal networks on the EU accession process on a case-by-case basis to a comparative discussion of the impacts across cases. Each of the theories and conditions is taken in turn beginning with a discussion of Europeanization under the External Incentives Model (EIM) conditions. The EIM conditions are tested for their validity in each case to identify if the inclusion of the informal networks adds value to the EIM conditions. This is then repeated for the Learning in Hierarchy (LIH) and Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC) conditions.

Europeanization as External Incentives: the EIM

This section addresses Europeanization as occurring under the EIM conditions. The EIM is taken first by itself, addressing each of its conditions in turn before the impact of informal networks is introduced. Each condition is examined in relation to each case to provide a full discussion of how it played out in each case and to tease out the causal links. This is followed by a comparative examination of the EIM conditions as affected by informal networks to show the difference in the analytical capacity and the value added by including the informal networks.

The EIM: The Standard Model

To begin, it is important to restate what the conditions are for successful Europeanization under the EIM. These conditions, as identified in Chapter 3, posit that Europeanization occurs assuming that:

- (EIM 1): The size of the reward on offer from the EU is larger than the cost of making the societal changes OR
- (EIM 2): The size of the punishment for non-compliance is greater than the potential rewards of non-compliance AND

- (EIM 3): The EU's rewards and threats are considered credible by the candidate state

As can be seen by these assumptions, the EIM operates on the "logic of consequentialism" wherein states make changes to unlock further rewards from the EU (Schimmelfennig, 2008). Constructing a system of rewards and punishments, such as conditionality, builds positive reinforcement which induces changes in the candidate state (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005). The candidate state or, more precisely, its representatives evaluate the costs required to make the changes and compare that to the rewards on offer from the EU (Bruszt and Langbein, 2017). Such rewards can and do take a variety of forms including cash transfers and targeted aid programs designed to help ease the burden of transformation for the candidate state (Börzel and Schimmelfennig, 2017; Börzel, Dimitrova and Schimmelfennig, 2017).

Within each of the cases the EU constructed a similar, but not identical, reward system to help promote compliance with the *acquis communautaire*. As has been discussed in previous chapters the challenges that each country faced were different and the rewards, thus, had to reflect the differing situations. Table 7.1 provides a comparison of the financial situations and offered incentives in each of the three cases.

As can be seen from Table 7.1, on the following page, all three countries were intimately tied to the EU and were offered significant financial benefits throughout the accession process. Although the amount of cash transfers from the EU, via the various instruments for pre-accession assistance, was different in each case the difference runs in reverse order from what would be expected by the accession pattern actually observed. Slovenia, despite receiving the lowest amount of assistance, acceded earliest while Serbia, despite receiving more than twice as much per capita, has yet to join the EU. Indeed, the information presented here does not even encapsulate the total amount of money being transferred to Croatia and Serbia. Both countries received further funding through a wealth of EU programs which are not included in the calculations. Croatia received further funding from programmes such as the "Seventh Research Framework Programme", "Marco Polo II", and "Customs 2013", in addition to others, of which it is was a participant by virtue of its candidate status (European Commission, 2011b, p. 5). Serbia received funding for similar programmes, such as Horizon 2020,

while also receiving millions of euros per year in funding under the IPA Rural Development programme and one-off infusions of cash to help manage the 2015-16 refugee crisis and its aftermath (European Commission, 2019, pp. 97–8).

Table 7.1: Financial Incentives

Metric	Slovenia	Croatia[72]	Serbia[73]
GDP/capita	5,400 (1993)[74]	€5,800 (2001)	€4,280 (2007)
	€11,700 (2002)[75]	€10,181 (2011)	€6,140 (2018)
GDP/capita (PPP) as percentage of EU average	59% (1997)[76]	51% (2001)	36.1% (2007)
	74% (2002)[77]	61% (2011)	40.2% (2018)
EU Assistance (total, million euros)	€459.2[78][79] (1992-2002)	€1,255 (2002-11)[80]	€2,800 (2007-20)[81]
EU Assistance (per person)	€234.19 (1992-2002)	€294.6 (2002-11)	€417.91 (2007-20)
Share of exports to EU in value of total exports	61.6% (1993)[82]	68.3% (2001)	59.9% (2007)
	59.4% (2002)[83]	62.3% (2011)	67.0% (2018)
Share of imports from EU in value of total imports	62.1% (1993)[84]	71.9% (2001)	56.8% (2007)
	68% (2002)[85]	61.8% (2011)	55.9% (2018)

Serbia received further assistance from non-EU sources to aid its transformation. The true sum of all donor assistance from 2007-10 alone was, for example, €2,176 million of which only €793.11 million was from the EU itself. Germany was the fourth largest contributor in this period giving €217.81 million, more than non-EU related actors such as USAID (€93.10 million), UNICEF (€5.18 million),

[72] Unless otherwise stated the source for Croatian statistics is: European Commission, 2012b, pp. 51–2.
[73] Unless otherwise stated the source for Serbian statistics is: European Commission, 2020, pp. 123–5.
[74] ECU per capita (European Commission, 1998, p. 52).
[75] Source: European Commission, 2003, p. 51.
[76] Source: European Commission, 1997c, p. 19.
[77] Source: European Commission, 2003, p. 51.
[78] Includes PHARE, SAPARD, and ISPA funding.
[79] See Table 33 in Appendix 1 for the calculation.
[80] See Table 34 in Appendix 1 for the calculation.
[81] See Table 35 in Appendix 1 for the calculation.
[82] Source: Directorate General for Research, Directorate A, 2003, p. 20.
[83] Source: Directorate General for Research, Directorate A, 2003, p. 20.
[84] Source: Directorate General for Research, Directorate A, 2003, p. 20.
[85] Source: Directorate General for Research, Directorate A, 2003, p. 20.

or the OSCE or UNDP (€2.6 million and €1.50 million) (Mann and Kacapor, 2011). While not all of these programmes were directly related to accession, most of them were related to helping transform Serbia's economy and infrastructure which is a necessary component of the accession process. As such, judging from the perspective of the national rewards on offer, Serbia should have joined faster than either Croatia or Slovenia given the significant capital inflows to the country.

However, Serbia has instead remained a laggard and has only managed to close two chapters of the *acquis* as of 2020 (European Commission, 2019). These chapters, Chapter 25 (Science and Research) and Chapter 26 (Education and Culture), are the same ones that Slovenia and Croatia also closed at the outset of their respective negotiations (European Commission, 2007; *Timetable for accession negotiations by chapter and by country (1998-2004)*, 2016)[86]. As stated previously, these are often the easiest chapters to close, pertaining as they do to topics such as higher education, which is and was reasonably advanced in all cases and the competency for such matters is, ultimately, reserved to the member states (Croatia Interview 4, 2021). Furthermore, all three countries are part of the Bologna Process[87] which makes the changes required in these chapters less extreme than those in the hardest chapters to close: Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights) and Chapter 24 (Justice, Freedom and Security)[88].

Due to the difficulty which previous candidate states have had in closing these chapters the EU has adopted a new "fundamentals first" approach which places rule of law reform at "the heart of the enlargement process" (European Commission, 2013a, p. 2). As such, the process of negotiations in Serbia has been distinctly different from what it was in Slovenia and Croatia. In Slovenia, the chapter covering judicial reform was opened in 2000 and closed in 2002, the 26th out of 30 in both cases. For Croatia Chapter 23 was opened in 2010, the 32nd out of 35, and closed in 2011, as the 33rd out of 35, while Chapter 24 was opened in 2009, 28th out of 35, and closed in 2010, the 26th out of 35. This is the opposite from in Serbia where Chapters 23 and 24 were opened in 2016, the third and fourth chapters to be opened (*Serbia*, 2016). This has

[86] In the Slovenian case they were Chapter 17 (Science and Research) and Chapter 18 (Education and Training) as the structure of the *acquis* changed after the fifth enlargement.
[87] The Bologna Process is a pan-European reform process for higher education reform which was founded in 1999 (Vukasovic, 2013; Damro and Friedman, 2018).
[88] Referred to as Chapter 24 (Justice and Home Affairs) under the previous form of the *acquis.*

placed an extra emphasis in Serbia on resolving the issues in these chapters first while progress in other chapters has proceeded, albeit slowly. As such, Serbia has been required to reform its judicial system first, unlike in Slovenia and Croatia.

While this change in the order of the chapters represents a difference between the cases, it is emblematic of another thing that is common between the cases. As required by EIM 3, any and all rewards and punishments on offer from the EU must be perceived as *credible*. In all three cases, there were unique issues which marked out the EU as a credible actor. Slovenia's accession was blocked for a period by Italian demands regarding property rights (Geddes and Taylor, 2016); in Croatia, accession negotiations were cancelled due to Croatian non-cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and a dispute with Slovenia over the Bay of Piran (*Croatia*, 2016); and Serbian accession was also conditioned on cooperation with the ICTY (*Milestones in EU - Serbia relations*, 2020). As such, all countries have both received significant aid from the EU and been punished by the EU, adding to the credibility of future rewards and punishments from the EU.

Despite these similarities, Serbia remains outside the EU. Why? It is possible that the cost of reforming Serbia's judiciary is simply too high or that the rewards on offer from the EU simply do not cover the cost of reforms in the country. Serbia did fight in two wars in the 1990s, while Croatia fought in one, or two if the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are counted separately, and Slovenia fought only in the brief Ten-Day War. As such, it might be that Serbia simply has too many associated costs which have slowed down the accession process. However, given that the first war in which Serbia was involved did not take place on Serbian territory, and instead was fought almost entirely in the territories of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is unlikely that the costs from that war, now more than 25 years past, have significantly slowed Serbia's accession process. As the second war was fought entirely on the, then, territory of Serbia[89], including the NATO bombing of infrastructure and industry intended to bring an end to the ground war in Kosovo, this could offer a partial explanation, but again, by the start of the accession process Serbia was only slightly

[89] Technically on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna Republika Jugoslavija*) and, as such, Montenegro was also targeted by NATO.

poorer than Croatia was when it started, and Serbia has made significantly slower progress since.

It is relevant here to once again touch on the issue of Kosovo. Although Serbia's accession process is not conditioned on its recognition of the independence of Kosovo, the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo is a part of the accession negotiations under Chapter 35 (European Commission, 2016b). This has not slowed the process of negotiations on other chapters to date, but it is not impossible that the ultimate offer of EU accession may not be considered as valuable as it was in Slovenia and Croatia if it requires Serbia to surrender its claim to Kosovo. Indeed, this exact point has been discussed by certain policy-makers, outside of Serbia, who have proposed to break the deadlock in the region with a further round of partitions in Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia (Less, 2016). While this has not been accepted by any of the actors involved as even a *conceivable* solution to the problem, given the long-term impacts of the last partition in the region, the fact that such measures have been proposed highlights the importance which the issue of Kosovo, and of other sub-state national questions, pose in the region. Thus, while recognition of Kosovo remains a problem, no potential solutions to the issue have been proposed beyond continuing with the Belgrade-Priština dialogue under the auspices of the EU. Progress in this dialogue is, indeed, one of the chapters of the *acquis*, Chapter 35 specifically, but progress in the other chapters has not been delayed in the meantime over issues related to Kosovo (*Serbia*, 2016).

Notwithstanding the issue of Kosovo, which has not been an issue to date in terms of the opening and closing of chapters, the conditions should be set for all three countries under the EIM. However, the trajectories of the countries vary as would not be expected from a state level analysis. Slovenia managed to accede rapidly, applying for membership in 1996 and acceding in 2004, a timeline of eight years for the actual accession negotiations. Croatia applied for membership in 2003 and acceded in 2013, with the negotiations being interrupted for a period due to non-cooperation with the ICTY (*Croatia*, 2016), resulting in a ten-year process. Serbia, on the other hand, applied for membership in 2009 and has yet to accede (*Serbia*, 2016). Even assuming that Kosovo is an issue in the Serbian case, the pace of the opening and closing of chapters lags behind that of Slovenia and Croatia at the same point in their accession

negotiations which conflicts with what would be expected from a state level analysis alone.

EIM and Informal Networks

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, moving from examining the countries to the individuals involved complicates the base conditions for EIM. While the process of accession is unquestionably a national process, the actual process of *negotiating* is an individual one involving individual calculations of preferences in the negotiations (Checkel, 2001). Reframing the accession process to include individuals, and not just individuals but networks of individuals which permeate the formal structures of any polity, results in the following changes to the EIM conditions:

- (EIM/I 1) That the structure of the informal networks in which actors are embedded are not aligned against the changes (or conversely that they are aligned with the changes) AND
- (EIM/I 2) That the credibility of the rewards and threats emanating from the EU outweighs the credibility of any rewards and threats emanating from the informal networks

The divergence on these two conditions provides a clearer explanation for the divergence in the accession performance seen in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia.

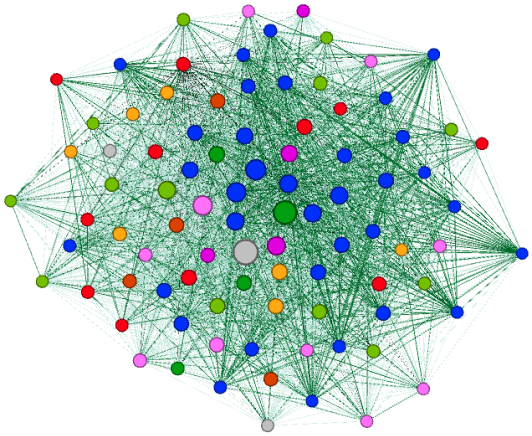
In Slovenia, as stated previously in Chapter 4, EIM/I 1 was strongly fulfilled with the actors cooperating to a high degree in favour of the successful passage of EU reforms. EIM/I 1 was also true in Croatia, although the actual structure of the networks was not as mixed as it was in Slovenia. Serbia, conversely, experienced resistance from within the informal networks to certain changes. For comparison, Map 7.1 on the following page, shows the network maps for the third parliamentary period in each of the cases. As such, it shows the networks as they were in Slovenia 2000-4, Croatia 2008-11, and Serbia 2014-16. Once again, the colours of the nodes represent the political party of the individual whereas the size of the node represents the relative betweenness centrality. As a reminder, betweenness centrality is a measure of the relative importance of a node to the wider network. Thus, the larger size of a given

node the larger the chance that other nodes are connected through that node to others in the map.

As per Map 7.1, Slovenia clearly had the most mixed network out of all the countries examined. MPs from all parties are mixed in the centre of the map; there is no clear delineation between the government and opposition; and there are no MPs which are unusually distant from the centre of the map. Croatia and Serbia, on the other hand, have a much more bifurcated structure which more closely matches the divisions in their respective parliaments. In both cases, the ruling party (the HDZ in Croatia and the SNS in Serbia) is unified in a block, with smaller opposition parties removed from the centre. There are, though, some differences as well as the Croatian map shows the strength of the opposition, led by the SDP, while in Serbia the opposition is fragmented and largely excluded from central decision-making structures. This is not to say that there are not individuals from non-government parties who were well connected in opposition groups; all the countries in questions have both speakers, or "presidents", and deputy speakers in each parliament the latter of which are often opposition individuals. However, it stands to reason that these individuals are particularly well connected while other MPs can remain excluded from many, if not all, decision-making bodies within the parliaments. The Serbian case is illustrative of this as there is one highly connected member of DS in the centre and another individual exiled to the far north of the map.

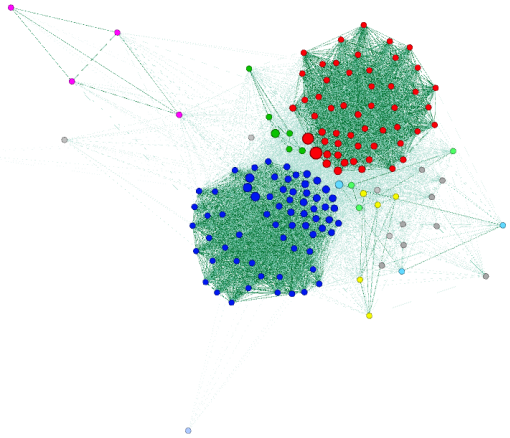
Map 7.1: Comparative Networks[90]

Slovenia 2000-4



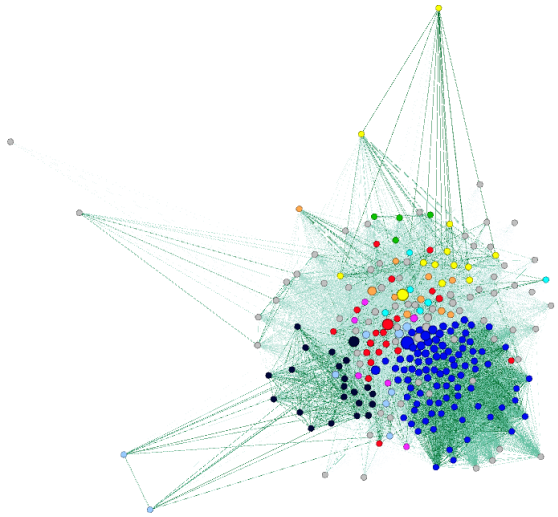
Key: LDS, SDSS, ZLSD, SLS, N.Si, SMS, SNS, DeSUS
Source: Chapter 4, p. 78.

Croatia 2007-11



Key: HDZ, SDP, HSS, HNS-LD, HDSSB, SDSS, IDS, HSP
Source: Chapter 5, p. 107.

Serbia 2014-16



Key: SNS, SRS, SPS, DS, SDPS, PUPS, Dveri, JS, SVM
Source: Chapter 6, p. 146.

What, then, was the impact of this on each case? As would be expected from parties in new countries of Central and Eastern Europe, party leadership was very personalized, revolving around individuals and their credibility rather than wider issues. Slovenian politics was dominated by the leader of the LDS, Janez Drnovšek, who managed to wrangle not only MPs in his party but also MPs in other parties

[90] Maps generated according to Yifan Hu Proportional, Optimal Distance: 100, Relative Strength: 20, Initial Step Size: 20.

through sheer force of personality (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021; Slovenia Interview 4, 2021; Slovenia Interview 5, 2021). Leaders from other parties would meet with him and he was seen as a highly credible individual, i.e., a "man of character", which was "very important" for the management of party politics (Slovenia Interview 4, 2021). In this sense, he performed a role akin to that of the Weberian "charismatic leader", as one who successfully posited a new moral order which ushered Slovenia into the modern era (Joosse, 2018, 2021). While, to an extent, this is almost certainly reflective of the myth-making that occurs after the death of a political leader, in this case one who was either Prime Minister or President of Slovenia during almost the entirety of Slovenia's early existence, it does underscore the importance that such personality traits have on a young political system.

Croatian accession was similarly supported by strong unity among political elites which ensured that there was continued top-down pressure in favour of EU accession. Although they often disagreed on policy matters, each party was held to the task of EU accession through the 2002 "Resolution on the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union" (Tomčić, 2002). This ensured that EU accession remained a cross-party goal (Croatia Interview 5, 2021; Croatia Interview 6, 2021), providing an institutional boundary for the personal and political disagreements which arose during the accession process.

Conversely, the structure of the networks in the Serbian case remained generally aligned against the changes required as part of the EU accession process. Chapter 32 (Financial Control) has been open the longest out of any chapters of Serbia's negotiation, except the one on normalization of relations with Kosovo (*Serbia*, 2016). Clans continue to permeate the Serbian political class wherein access to the levers of political power often bring individual rather than societal benefit (Serbia Interview 2, 2019; Serbia Interview 1, 2019). This is not to say that Serbia is the only country with a history of corruption - the former Croatian PM Ivo Sanader is currently in prison for bribery and political corruption (*Reuters*, 2020) - but simply that the interests of the groups and clans in Serbia do not align with EU accession. The clan dynamics have resulted in the long-term unity of political parties as long as they do not challenge the political or economic order, thus stalling but not stopping the EU accession process (Serbia Interview 2, 2019).

This situation repeats itself in EIM/I 2 where the informal rewards for cooperation were more credible than those for opposition in the Slovenian and Croatian case, and lower in the Serbian case. Slovenia's lack of lustration allowed the previously existing informal networks to continue which did result in some lobbying by industries which were threatened by the EU accession process (Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). However, this was not the case more widely and there was a general acceptance that the changes required in Slovenia were being implemented even if it negatively impacted certain industries (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020). Alternatively, in Croatia, the hierarchical party structures acted to isolate any possible objections to EU accession. Party leaders determined the positioning of MPs on the electoral lists and advancement was determined by loyalty rather than constituency work (Croatia Interview 5, 2021; Croatia Interview 6, 2021). Even when issues were raised which may have been relevant to the discussion, such as over the balancing of traditional fishing practices against the EU's fisheries regulations, these objections were overruled by party leaders in favour of a speedy conclusion to the negotiations (Croatia Interview 1, 2020). Returning to Map 7.1, the smaller parties such as the HNS-LD had an outsize impact on the accession negotiations as their support was required for any party to govern. Given that the HNS-LD, for example, was a pro-EU liberal party this led to increased support for the accession process above other priorities.

In Serbia, while the party structure is similar to that in Croatia, the impact of the clan networks acts against the accession process by ensuring that the informal rewards for opposition are not only higher but also more credible than those for cooperation. Like in Croatia, advancement through the system is based on loyalty to the leader, as they are the ones who set the positioning on the party lists, creating a "feudal" hierarchy within the party (Serbia Interview 1, 2019; Serbia Interview 4, 2019). Opposition can result in being excluded from both decision-making bodies and from the media landscape in general (Serbia Interview 9, 2020). Physical violence against opposition individuals further acts to ensure that the governing line is not questioned (Serbia Interview 2, 2019). As such, parties in Serbia run political institutions as fiefdoms for their own benefit (Subotić, 2017), which may or may not align with the accession criteria.

Collectively, then, the EIM/I conditions do hold some predictive power as the cases line up with what would be predicted. All three countries have similar party structures on some level, with highly individualised parties and informal connections between party leaders. However, while in Slovenia this was paired with high levels of cooperation and connection between the MPs themselves, in Croatia and Serbia the parties are far more distinct. In Croatia this resulted in successful accession simply because it was in the interests of the key individuals at the centre of the networks while in Serbia the clan structures, and generally weak inter-party coordination, has resulted in the dominance of the SNS and a slow accession process.

Europeanization as Policy Learning

As opposed to Europeanization as being driven by rational calculations either of states (EIM) or of individuals (EIM/I), Europeanization as a form of Policy Learning makes different assumptions about the nature of the social order. As stated in Chapter 2, the assumptions of Europeanization as Policy Learning focus not on the actual costs of transformation but instead on the impact of repeated interactions between individuals as the driver of change. Actors, i.e. policy makers and politicians, rely on a mixture of pre-existing knowledge and new information in an attempt to address problems, thus learning in the process (Levy, 1994; Deverell, 2009; Kamkhaji and Radaelli, 2017).

A fundamental part of this learning is identifying the conditions under which it takes place. This is helpfully reduced to just two types based on the conditions inherent in the accession process: Learning in Hierarchy (LIH) and Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC). The former occurs when problem tractability and the certification of actors is high, i.e., when the exact issue to be solved is known and when the actors who are doing the teaching are perceived by policymakers to be experts (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, pp. 8–9). LEC, on the other hand, occurs under situations of lower tractability but when actor certification remains high (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5).

While these conditions have been tested in each of the cases separately in the previous chapters, the following section, as with the EIM section above, tests these conditions across cases to tease out further insights into the impact of informal

networks. Unlike in the discussion of the EIM, though, this section does not present findings without reference to informality. This is because the framework of learning assumes the existence of policymakers and a policy-making body. While the structure of this body is different in every respect it is impossible to separate the organisational learning from the structure itself (Paraskevopoulos, 2001). As such, the cross-case comparison of the sections begins with a discussion of LIH and informality before proceeding to a discussion of LEC and informality.

Europeanization as Learning in Hierarchy and Informality

As with the EIM, LIH assumes a top-down transference of norms to the learning body, in this case politicians in the three cases, through the use of rules. These drive learning under conditions similar to that for successful EIM, specifically:

- (LIH/I 1) Under conditions where the rewards/punishments outweigh the cost of compliance to the actor, learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments outweigh contradictory rewards/punishments emanating from within the network.
- (LIH/I 2) Under conditions where the rewards/punishment for compliance/non-compliance are credible, learning is fostered AS LONG AS these rewards/punishments are MORE credible than those emanating from the veto players in the network.

Like under the EIM/I, the divergence in the accession performance of the three cases matches that which would be expected under the LIH conditions.

Slovenia, as the success case, exhibited the most rapid learning under the LIH conditions. The centrality of Janez Drnovšek is once again relevant here as, due to both his and LDS's dominance throughout the accession period, the rewards for compliance with EU rules outweighed any possible rewards for non-compliance. Drnovšek worked with individuals from all parties to ensure that the work of the parliament continued apace (Slovenia Interview 5, 2021). This ensured a top down command structure which allowed for the clear communication of requirements to individuals and to the parliament as a whole (Slovenia Interview 4, 2021). There was, of course, some lateral communication as well in the incredibly mixed parliament, both formally and

informally, which helped ensure that the requirements of accession were communicated both top-down and laterally within the *Državni zbor*. Collectively, this supported LIH/I 1 as there were few contradictory rewards emanating from within the network and, as such, the group's forward momentum ensured collective compliance with the EU's rules.

Again, as with the EIM, Croatia represents a moderate success case of LIH where the requirements of accession were communicated in a top-down manner from party leaders to individuals which ensured compliance. Although there were debates in the *Sabor* the "real life" of politics was hierarchical, with party leaders dominating the policy agendas of their parties (Croatia Interview 6, 2021). This hierarchy, along with the separate "E" code for EU related legislation, ensured the rapid passage of the necessary reforms (Croatia Interview 5, 2021; Croatia Interview 6, 2021). Leaders had frequent meetings with EU officials who told them of the accession requirements which were then passed on to lower level MPs (Croatia Interview 2, 2020). In Croatia, LIH/I 1 was present as the informal structures, and any rewards or punishments within them were designed to continue to support the party leaders who were, in turn, the ones doing the learning by interacting with the rule-makers, i.e., the EU. This created a transmission belt running from the EU to Croatian party leaders and then to Croatian MPs which aided the transfer of knowledge under LIH/I 1.

Turning to Serbia, the situation is similar to that in Croatia in terms of the strength of the party system, but with a radically different outcome. While in Croatia the vertical party system was a source of strength, in Serbia, it is instead a weakness. As the SNS arose from a wing of the SRS, the members of the party exhibit a unity built through shared struggle and, now, domination (Serbia Interview 2, 2019). When buttressed by the clan system, either due to clan penetration of parties or through the active participation of politicians in illicit dealings, the entirety of the party structure begins to resemble a "pyramidal system of psychopaths" (Serbia Interview 1, 2019). This is not to say that it does not allow the system to function, as this domination does allow for the rapid passage of legislation (Serbia Interview 8, 2020), but it does prevent learning from taking place by providing alternative sources of rewards which counteract the rewards on offer from the EU. As would be predicted by LIH/I1 this situation has produced the unintended outcome where whatever learning *has* taken

place has not been the "right" kind of learning (Huber, 1991). If anything has been learned, it is how to ensure that the accession process continues slowly without making fundamental changes which may challenge the entrenched power of the informal networks in Serbia (Radeljić and Đorđević, 2020).

Moving to LIH/I 2, the situation is repeated through all three cases. In Slovenia and Croatia there were few, if any, credible alternatives to the accession process being communicated through the informal networks. Lobbying on behalf of the duty-free shop owners in Slovenia could not stop the overall forward momentum and they were closed in due course (Commission of the European Communities, 2002; Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). As such, although the rewards for non-compliance were credible, they were simply insufficient. Croatia's road to accession was not pain-free, and the country experienced some strong upsurges in anti-EU sentiment around the arrest of individuals indicted by the ICTY (Pavlaković, 2010), but overall, the momentum was there. The arrest and trial of former PM Sanader stands as a testament to the successful reform process, or at the very least to the successful ejection of a problematic individual, in order to maintain said accession momentum (Konitzer, 2011). Finally, while EU representatives in the region continually emphasize the necessity of reform and the credibility of the EU's rewards on offer to representatives of the Serbian government (Serbia Interview 7, 2020), the possible threats emanating from within the informal network inducing individuals to resist compliance remain strong. The murder of moderate Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanović, allegedly on the orders of the leader of the main Belgrade-backed Kosovo Serb political party (Berisha and Bami, 2021; Dragojlo and Isufi, 2021), attests to the strength and deadliness of the informal networks in Serbia. Such networks, clearly allayed against the changes required as part of EU accession, have prevented the LIH process from taking place by providing an alternative set of rules with more extreme rewards and punishments on an individual level than those being offered by the EU.

Europeanization as Learning in Epistemic Contexts and Informality

As stated in Chapters 2 and 3, LEC occurs under conditions of lower problem tractability but equally high certification of actors. It is fostered when actors need to learn and there is an available body of experts who are willing to interact with policy-

makers to provide information and to take part in decision-making if necessary (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5). As presented in Chapter 3, combining the standard conditions for LEC with insights from informality produces the following conditions:

- (LEC/I 1) Under conditions where the "expert" actors are considered experts by members of the informal networks learning is fostered.
- (LEC/I 2) Under conditions where the inserted "experts" are positioned not just in the correct formal position but also at the correct *informal* position to transmit knowledge learning is fostered.

While in Slovenia and Croatia the above conditions were *broadly* met, and they were not met in Serbia, the experience in each country of LEC was distinct.

LEC/I 1 held true in Slovenia as the individuals doing the teaching, i.e. the EU representatives, were considered experts by members of the informal networks. MPs in the *Državni zbor* attended repeated meetings with EU officials and further training sessions with organisations such as the World Bank (Slovenia Interview 4, 2021; Slovenia Interview 3, 2021). This was coupled with a high level of education among Slovenian MPs: in the 1996-2000 session of the *Državni zbor* 54.4% of MPs had a university education compared with 53.3% in the 2000-2004 session (*Poročilo o delu Državnega zbora v mandatnem obdobju 1996-2000*, 2000; Benko, Krašovec and Zobavnik, 2004). The *Državni zbor* also experienced a low staff turnover during the accession process which ensured that previously learned lessons would not be forgotten (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020). This allowed expertise to accrue throughout the system. Such a level of education allowed Slovenian MPs, who were already relative experts in the political process due to the lack of lustration in Slovenia, to mobilise their expertise to support Slovenia's accession bid. The members of LDS, as former members of the Communist Party, were well equipped to continue work in the parliament (Slovenia Interview 5, 2021). Collectively, this allowed Slovenian MPs to engage fully with the information provided and to incorporate the necessary lessons into their work as they had the experience and training required to do so.

In Croatia, the conditions were similar but not identical due to the hierarchical nature of the party system. Croatian MPs had a higher level of education than Slovenian MPs, with 74% and 77% having university levels of education or higher

from 2003-7 and 2007-11 respectively (*Statistički pokazatelji o zastupnicima 5. saziva*, 2021; *Statistički pokazatelji o zastupnicima 6. saziva*, 2021). This is higher than in Slovenia and represents an overall higher educational attainment of policymakers. However, in terms of day-to-day working of the *Sabor*, the Croatian experience was significantly worse than that of the *Državni zbor*. MPs in Croatia had very few bodies which provided them with information. Parties would have research committees, but individual MPs would be left to decipher the incoming information themselves (Croatia Interview 3, 2020; Croatia Interview 5, 2021; Croatia Interview 6, 2021). This had the effect of hampering wider learning although it did not stop the overall diffusion of information through the well informed individuals at the centre of the networks and top of the party hierarchies. The deeper impacts of this will be addressed in more detail during the discussion of LEC/I 2.

LEC/I 1 was, partially, present in Serbia as well with a relatively high number of educated individuals and an overall trust in the expert nature of EU officials. Although the Serbian government does not keep records on the educational attainment of MPs, from the employment history of MPs, in 2012 a *minimum* of 27.2% of MPs had attended some form of higher education. It is not known if the further list of "economists", doctors, lawyers, teachers, or university professors all attended higher education, but if so, this brings the total to 59.2%, higher than in Slovenia but lower than in Croatia. However, what is known is that the MPs, when interacting with EU officials, did treat them as experts in their given fields (Serbia Interview 7, 2020; Serbia Interview 9, 2020), despite some personal disagreements (Serbia Interview 6, 2020).

However, LEC/I 2 diverges across the three cases as the organisational structure of the various parliaments was more or less receptive to learning the required lessons through the accession process. All three countries created formal committees to oversee the accession process, from the Commission on European Affairs (*Komisija za evropske zadeve*) in Slovenia to the Committee on European Integration (*Odbor za evropske integracije*) in Serbia. However, these committees had varying levels of power in each case. The Slovenian and Croatian committees had both the formal power to, and did in practice, summon higher ranking individuals from parties and the government to give evidence to the MPs, as well as to question government policy

(Slovenia Interview 1, 2020; Slovenia Interview 3, 2021; Slovenia Interview 4, 2021; Croatia Interview 4, 2021; Croatia Interview 6, 2021). Such power allowed these committees to form an alternative power base which, in turn, allowed them to act independently to search for information in their own right. Such a search for information is the core of LEC wherein policy-makers consult with epistemic knowledge producers to solve problems.

However, in Serbia, due to the even stronger party hierarchies than existed in Croatia, the committees were hobbled. They were frequently unwilling to act as a check on the power of the ruling party and instead simply rubber-stamped legislation allowing it to pass to the plenary session (Serbia Interview 1, 2019). Such a situation resulted in a lack of oversight despite the formal responsibilities of the committees (European Commission, 2014b, p. 8, 2018, p. 6). This, combined with the other informal practices which plagued the work of the parliament, prevented the diffusion of information to MPs. Such informal practices included "do-over" votes, i.e., where the chair will allow a bill to be voted on again in case too many of their own MPs had defected or simply failed to turn up to vote or attaching and then voting down amendments by ruling party MPs to prevent debate in the plenary session (Serbia Interview 2, 2019). Collectively, practices such as these hobbled debate and scrutiny and prevented policy-makers from seeking or receiving information, and thus prevented learning.

Turning now more closely to the data, these differences are reflected in the network values of the three parliaments and, in particular, of the relative betweenness centrality (BC) of certain individuals. Table 7.2 displays the average BC for MPs in each parliamentary period broken down by the previous periods spent in the parliament since the start of the accession process. As such, the first period in parliament, at the start of the accession process, is entirely staffed by MPs who are unfamiliar with the process and, thus, all are marked as "0". For each subsequent parliamentary period the number both of MPs with prior experience and the length of said experience increases with those MPs who continued into the second period marked as "1" in the following line and "2" in the line after that if they remained in parliament once again. Table 7.2, then, tracks the relative ascendance of individuals with prior legislative experience

through the ranks of committees and other bodies as they progress towards the centre, or as they are forced out despite long experience.

Table 7.2: Comparative Betweenness Centrality Values by Time Spent in Parliament

Slovenia

Periods in *zbor* / Year	0	1	2	Average BC
1992-6	0.003901373	X	X	0.003901373
1996-2000	0.003816731	0.003453174	X	0.003719782
2000-4	0.001907189	0.001468254	0.001942936	0.001781864

Croatia

Periods in *Sabor* / Year	0	1	2	3	Average BC
2000-3	0.004093447	X	X	X	0.004093447
2003-7	0.0027978	0.00493181	X	X	0.0031677
2007-11	0.0022843	0.00218608	0.0028048	X	0.0023362
2011-13	0.0021405	0.00210281	0.0027823	0.00312568	0.0022804

Serbia

Periods in *NS*[91] / Year	0	1	2	3	Average BC
2008-12	0.00216182	X	X	X	0.00216182
2012-14	0.00154305	0.00158231	X	X	0.00155719
2014-16	0.00078266	0.00069291	0.00140690	X	0.00083225
2016-20	0.00071945	0.00100824	0.00105475	0.00159263	0.00093937

As can be seen from Table 7.2, the BC values decreased in all cases across time. This general decrease is indicative of the increasing number of connections in the parliaments, as the membership in organisational bodies increased in all cases. Particularly the membership in the various iterations of the parliamentary friendship

[91] *Narodna Skupština*

committees increased dramatically throughout the period in all cases. For instance, the Russian Parliamentary Friendship Group (*Poslanička grupa prijateljstva*) in Serbia from 2016-20 had 153 MPs, more MPs than are in the entire parliaments of either Slovenia or Croatia. In most cases the older groups of MPs had higher average BCs than the average for the parliament. Slovenia, from 1996-2000, is an outlier here wherein the older MPs have a lower BC score than the newer MPs just as in the 2000-4 period the MPs who had been in the *Državni* zbor for only one previous period also have a lower BC.

What was the impact of this changing of the guard on the accession process? Fundamentally, it is important that individuals have experience of working in the position they are in to ensure that they can fully dedicate themselves to their work. Committees with repeat members were often more productive as the members had established good working relationships and understood procedures (Croatia Interview 5, 2021). However, this is not to say that all MPs are created equal and the stacking of committees with unqualified or disinterested individuals can slow down the process immeasurably (Serbia Interview 1, 2019). Conversely the removal of all opposition MPs can accelerate the work of the committees (Serbia Interview 8, 2020), although with a deleterious effect overall on the ability of the parliament to scrutinize legislation effectively (European Commission, 2019, p. 5). As such, the increasing connectivity of experienced MPs is indicative as in Slovenia and Croatia these individuals helped to foster accession while in Serbia, they used their increasing connectivity to stall the accession process.

Returning to LEC/I 2, the key to this condition is that the individuals doing the teaching are interacting with the correct individuals in the overall parliament. Table 7.3 presents the average BC of individuals in the EU accession committees in each country, for each parliamentary period, as compared with the average BC of MPs in the parliament as a whole.

Table 7.3: EU Accession Committee Betweenness Centrality

Slovenia

Year	Committee BC	Average BC
1992-6	0.004343407	0.003901373
1996-2000	0.004166107	0.003719782
2000-4	0.002494934	0.001781864

Croatia

Year	Committee BC	Average BC
2000-3	0.002572333	0.004093447
2003-7	0.002760669	0.0031677
2007-11	0.004379077	0.0023362
2011-13	0.003881082	0.0022804

Serbia

Year	Committee BC	Average BC
2008-12	0.003144444	0.00216182
2012-14	0.0020871	0.00155719
2014-16	0.001182061	0.000832252
2016-20	0.001336167	0.00093937

Across the cases, the evidence from the data reflects the previously identified patterns in the pace of accession. The Slovenian EU accession committee was clearly composed of more central individuals throughout the entirety of its life with a higher BC score for each period. As such, more central and politically important individuals were included in the committee than would be expected just from a random sample of MPs in all cases. The Slovenian committee, then, would have been made up of individuals who had the power to summon other politically important individuals. This strength helped enable LEC by creating a central position in the networks for EU actors to be summoned to, helping ensure that LEC/I 2 was met in Slovenia.

However, Croatia and Serbia's relative BC scores conflict with what would be expected from the overall accession process. As the data shows, the Croatian committee was on average less well connected than the average MP, at least in the early period. However, the pattern switches dramatically in the latter period of accession, i.e., from 2007-13, when the negotiations intensified, as Croatian accession was blocked until 2005 (*Croatia,* 2016), where the MPs of the Croatian committee

become almost twice as well connected as the average MP. Thus, we see the accession progress accelerate as better connected individuals become more involved in the policy-making process.

Certain individuals also had a great impact on the Croatian accession process through their political importance and lead membership of the committee. The Croatian committee was led from 2003-8 by Neven Mimica, an MP from the SDP. Before taking over as chair of the committee Mimica was the Minister for European Integration from 2000-3 and he remained the chair through 2011 while also being one of the vice-presidents of the *Sabor* from 2008-11 (*Zastupnik data 887*, 2021). He also became Croatia's first EU commissioner in 2013 (Lucas, 2013), representing a stellar career for such a highly connected individual. This is in addition to other high ranking members of the committee such as Andrej Plenković, a future PM from the HDZ, and Vesna Pusić, of the HNS-LD. Pusić was in the *Sabor* from 2000 and later went on to run for the position of UN Secretary General in 2016. These highly connected individuals helped ensure that the committee had the independent power base it needed in order to engage in the policy-making exercise and make use of the information being provided it (Croatia Interview 6, 2021).

In Serbia, on the other hand, the committee remained significantly better connected. However, the 2016-20 committee does include six MPs who boycotted the work of the parliament, as did most of the rest of the opposition, from 2018-20. Overall, though, the individuals within the Serbian accession committee remained better connected than the average MP within the wider parliament throughout the period in question. As such, there was some accession progress made in the period with the only two chapters closed in Serbia closing on 13 December 2016 and 27 July 2017 respectively.

Why did the average strength of the Serbian committees not lead to a more rapid accession process in Serbia as it did in Slovenia and Croatia? The answer to this is simply that while the individuals within the committee are better connected within the parliament this does not mean that they had the necessary informal power to hold the higher ups within the party to account for sub-optimal accession progress. By stacking the *Skupština* with individuals who are party loyalists, rather than strong

political actors in and of themselves (Serbia Interview 3, 2019), the ruling party, the SNS, ensured that the committees were in no place to act as separate sources of power. This prevented learning from taking place by ensuring that, although EU actors and representatives are treated as experts in their fields, they are not interacting with the necessary individuals to ensure that the information diffuses across the political networks.

On a more individual level, the MPs of the Serbian EU accession committee were also not as highly connected as the individuals of the Croatian one. The best connected MP of the committee from 2014-20, except when she was boycotting the parliament along with the rest of the opposition MPs, was Gordana Čomić of the DS. However, the *chair* of the committee from 2014-16 was Aleksandar Senić, who was a member of the SDS which was itself a breakaway faction of the DS. From 2016-20 the chair was Nenad Čanak of the small LSV. While these individuals may have tried to ensure that the committee functioned as well as it should have, they simply did not possess the same political power as that wielded by the Croatian committee during its tenure. As such, LEC/I 2 was not present in the Serbian case.

Conclusion

In all three cases it is clear that informal networks had an impact on the accession process, altering the outcomes from what would be predicted by a state level analysis. The Slovenian case, as the success case, was one where the overall structures of the informal political networks aligned with the changes required by accession, making the effect of the informal networks on the process more subtle than in the Serbian case. The conditions for successful Europeanization were met in Slovenia under all tested theories. Through pre-accession assistance the EU ensured that the overall benefit of accession outweighed the costs of the changes (EIM 1, 2) and the reward mechanisms within the informal networks were equally aligned to support EU accession (EIM/I 1, 2; LIH/I 1, 2). EIM 3 was also present due to both the previous experience of having accession blocked and due to the impact of visits by EU officials to help keep the process moving (Slovenia Interview 2, 2020). The LEC conditions were met in Slovenia as individuals had an understanding and appreciation of the

policy-making process as well as through the relative power of the Slovenian EU accession committee.

While Croatia's end result was the same – accession – the impact of the informal political networks was slightly different. Under the EIM/I conditions, Croatia acceded due to the fact that the networks were aligned towards accession, although the top-down structure was different than in Slovenia. This hierarchical party structure mattered as the participation of such high-ranking individuals on the EU integration committee was crucial to the accession process, allowing the individuals to muster their political power in favour accession. Thus, the power of the party elites- was used to corral lower ranking MPs in favour of accession (EIM/I 1, 2; LIH/I 1, 2). These MPs also had the power to help determine policy which ensured that when EU actors were interacting with them, they were, thus, interacting with the correct part of the informal structure (LEC/I 1,2).

However, in Serbia, the informal networks were aligned against the accession process despite the rewards accession offers to Serbia. Although EIM 1 and 2 were true in the Serbian case EIM/I 1 and 2 were not, as the informal structure was designed to ensure the reproduction of existing power structures rather than reform. This was true as well with LIH/I 1 and 2. While LEC/I 1 held true in the Serbian case, LEC/I 2 did not due to the relative weakness of the individuals involved in the accession process. Although the structure of the Serbian political system is similar to the Croatian one, the hierarchical structure acted to delay the accession process so as not to challenge the existing informal networks which permeate the entire party political system. As such, the individuals who were supposed to ensure Serbia's timely accession to the EU did not have the power to do so, thereby preventing the diffusion of knowledge into the wider structure. Cumulatively, this slowed the overall accession process to the extent that after twelve years of negotiation and preparation only two chapters of the *acquis* have been closed.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

There is no doubt that the countries of former Yugoslavia have experienced a dramatic change in the last thirty years. Through the collapse of an economic system, an ideology, a state, and the ensuring wars, embargoes, dislocations, ethnic cleansing, and, eventually, reformation and the accession of some into the European Union (EU), the region has experienced more in three decades than others do in centuries. However, certain aspects of society are harder to change and, as this thesis has highlighted, these features can have enduring effects even when the conditions of their creation have waned. Specifically, the informal political networks in the countries of former Yugoslavia impacted the EU accession processes of these states as they shaped the realm of what was possible during the sweeping changes experienced in the region.

As has been demonstrated through analysis of both the individual country cases and their comparisons, informal networks pervaded the political classes of the newly independent states of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia and acted to support, or interfere with, the EU accession process. That the informal networks had such an impact on the accession process was both expected and unexpected, depending on the theoretical approach to EU accession. This chapter builds on the previous discussions to highlight the gaps more explicitly in the theories and further explain both how and *why* the inclusion of informal networks in studies of formal political processes, such as accession, is valuable and what this, in turn, reveals about the nature of political processes.

Theories and Results

Of the theories analysed here, the External Incentives Model (EIM) was found to be a relatively poor explanator of the failure of Serbia to join the EU due to the impact of the informal political networks on the politics of Serbia. While the rewards on offer from the EU, i.e., money from pre-accession grants and accession itself, served to motivate Slovenia and Croatia these rewards did not engender accession in Serbia. The process is ongoing, but the pace has been the slowest out of the three cases examined. This is despite the fact that Serbia is the poorest country examined and the rewards have been the highest. Conditions 1 and 2 of the EIM, regarding the size of

the rewards, *were* present in the Serbian case to the same extent as or even more so than in the other cases.

Why has this, then, not resulted in accession? As was discussed in Chapter 7, Comparative Analysis, it is not impossible that the rewards for Serbia in the accession process are simply outweighed by the rewards for non-compliance. Kosovo *could*, certainly, be considered a bridge too far for the Serbian government and the "normalization of relations" between Belgrade and Priština *could* represent a price so high that there is nothing the EU can offer which would make Serbia accept. This possibility was raised by those proposing a further round of partitions to break the deadlock not only in Serbia but also in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia (Less, 2016). Regardless of one's opinion of the idea of yet another round of partitions in the region, this thesis has shown there are further factors which have acted to slow Serbia's EU accession beyond the state level calculations of territorial control. It is not just the *countries* involved in the accession process that matter but also the *people*.

This extends further beyond the previously recognized concept of favourable party coalitions in candidate states (Schimmelfennig, 2005). All countries in this study had favourable party coalitions as every single country had an avowedly pro-accession government. The Slovenian and Croatian case studies, Chapters 4 and 5, demonstrated, though, that even in countries with favourable coalitions there was divergence as the structure of the informal networks was different in Slovenia as opposed to in Croatia and yet the outcome was similar. Informal networks can act to help drive formal processes, within the cost-benefit logic of the EIM, by providing further rewards for continued compliance with the accession process. This does not imply, though, that *all* individuals were equally in favour of accession or that the process proceeded smoothly. Certain individuals in both Slovenia and Croatia had reservations about accession and, in Croatia, certain individuals attempted to corruptly profit from the transition. The arrest of Croatian PM Ivo Sanader[92], and others in his party, attests to

[92] Both for the graft and illegal slush fund mentioned in Chapter 5 and for a separate case for receiving a €10 million bribe from the chairman of Hungarian energy company MOL in exchange for allowing MOL to obtain a controlling stake in the former Croatian national oil and gas company INA (Mallene, 2019).

the fact that the process of accession is not painless for all individuals involved and that some paid a high price for their involvement in the informal networks (Cvitić, 2010). However, the *overall* structure of the networks continued to support accession in the two success cases.

As mentioned in Chapter 7, similar patterns were found in the impact of the informal networks on Europeanization as Policy Learning, in particular Learning in Hierarchy (LIH). This is not surprising as LIH, as mentioned previously, operates on a similar logic to the EIM, which means that informal networks would have a similar impact as under the EIM. In Slovenia and Croatia, the informal networks were arranged in support of such learning as the informal rewards supported accession. The individuals involved were motivated and the requirements for accession were clearly communicated to individuals correctly positioned in both the formal and informal structures. While this was true, to an extent, in the Serbian case the presence of alternative rewards, either from legal veto players or illegal criminal networks, conflicted with those coming from the EU and acted to forestall Serbian accession. This is not a new problem for Serbia as corruption investigations and accusations plagued the country during the entirety of the period (BIRN and Tanjug, 2015; Dragoljo, 2016; Rudić, 2018), and the recent appointment of an SNS potentate to head the anti-corruption agency does not augur well for future progress (Kostić and Veljković, 2018).

Overall, the results under the Learning in Epistemic Contexts (LEC) conditions matched what had been expected from the literature as Slovenia was a clear leader and Serbia a relative laggard, with the hierarchical structure in Serbia forestalling the necessary diffusion of information from the experts to the relevant policymakers (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018, p. 5). Croatia, though, presented a divergent case where the hierarchical structure of political parties *helped* accession as high-powered individuals were present in the decision-making bodies, thus ensuring that the correct people learned and were able to ensure compliance. Whether or not this truly represents learning or is simply evidence of compliance is a question for another study, but it was an effective structure during the accession process.

Considerations and Further Reflexivity

First and foremost, in terms of limitations, the research is geographically and temporally limited in scope. The three cases were chosen *explicitly* to control for a variety of variables, some of which are unique to the cases. Thus, it is unknown if the findings are generalizable beyond the former Yugoslav region, or to non-parliamentary systems, or if there is something specific to countries of a given population, geographical size, economic development, or history. It is not knowable from the results here if informal networks will even exist or have such an impact in countries which did not experience socialism, as all the countries in this study did in the relatively recent past. This sites the research firmly in the geographical and temporal space of transition countries of former Yugoslavia, in particular the three cases studied here. It is highly likely, for example, that the informal networks and practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina differ greatly from the impacts identified within this study given the radically different institutional architecture and societal makeup. Although other examples of informal practices have been identified in many countries beyond the region[93], the actual practices here and their impacts are locally determined.

More fundamentally, while the research conducted here has provided a rich description of the impact of informal political networks on the Europeanization of former Yugoslav states said description relies on the reporting of individuals themselves. The number of interviews conducted in each case was lower than would have been ideal and not all parties were represented. This problem is not unique to this study, though, and it would have been impractical to interview individuals from every party in the three countries under study. Serbia, in particular, represented a challenge in this regard due to the extremely high number of parties in the country during the period in question.

This was further complicated by the fact that many of the key players in the countries in question were simply unavailable. Many Slovenian MPs who were in parliament from 1992-2004 have now reached an advanced age and were unavailable for an interview and some have even passed away, such as the former Prime Minister Janez Drnovšek. Certain Croatian individuals, who would have been fascinating

[93] For a global compilation of practices see Ledeneva, 2017, 2018.

interview subjects, are now in prison. While it may have been interesting to interview them, it was not considered practicable given the ethical and procedural difficulties involved in arranging either an in-person visit to a Croatian prison or some form of safe and secure virtual communication with the individuals. This might have resulted in some bias in the results, as it is possible that those who were excluded from the informal networks were more available to be interviewed and more willing to criticize their functioning. This did not appear to be the case though as the interview subjects were from a variety of ruling and opposition parties and, from the responses, appeared to have access to the centres of power but it is not impossible that they still represented peripheral actors in some fashion while the "real" politics was happening behind the scenes. As mentioned in the reflexivity section in Chapter 3, playing on my attributes as one who is "of" the region but not "from" the region helped open certain avenues within the interviews but almost certainly closed off other routes as well. The COVID-19 pandemic also prevented me from conducting field work in Slovenia and Croatia which hampered my attempts to access the informal networks to the extent I did in Serbia. Further, as stated in Chapter 3, the interview data is a mixture of in-person and virtual interviews as well as some written responses which does introduce another source of possible bias.

However, it is hoped that combining this qualitative research with the quantitative data gathering and analysis through SNA helped to control for possible bias which emerged through the interview process. This was the intent behind the multi-method approach as adopted here to attempt to combine the insights from a variety of approaches in the interest of compensating for the methodological weaknesses of any one of the approaches by controlling for possible biases (Vidicki and Stojšin, 2021). As the network maps were built from publicly available data this aspect of the research is easily replicable and verifiable. Individuals may ascribe different meaning to positions in the network, but it is undeniable that the network structure is as portrayed in the preceding chapters. This does *not* imply that the results provided here are untainted by bias, but the combination of subjective qualitative and objective quantitative work does provide a modicum of rigour to insulate the research (Ragin, 2013; Beach, 2020).

A further source of bias may lie in the types of ties included in the networks themselves as this can over-determine the network values of some individuals. Specifically, the inclusion of party ties could result in an over-determination of the connectedness of individuals in large parties. This did occur in some instance. In 2014-16 in Serbia, for example, SNS MPs had a higher weighted degree than all other MPs in the parliament. This was due to their membership in the largest political party in the *Skupština* which *did* give them a preponderance of power but also was overrepresented in the degree values as each SNS MP had, at a minimum, a connection to all other SNS MPs. However, the betweenness centrality rankings were much more mixed with only four out of the top ten being members of SNS while the rest were from other parties or unaffiliated. As such, betweenness centrality was the measure most discussed, as seen previously to avoid possibly misleading conclusions being drawn by examining other measures.

Expanding the Scope and Adding Value

Despite these limitations the findings do present an alternative explanation for the observed trends which inspired this research in the first place. Although other explanations, such as the EIM, identify broad trends, re-siting the locus of research away from the state level of analysis and closer to the individual allows for the identification of previously hidden factors. This is not to attempt to dethrone the EIM from its position as one of the grand theories of EU accession and integration but simply to highlight that the granular level has a clarity of focus which adds value to broader studies. The results here do not invalidate either the logic of the EIM, i.e. that of a rational choice approach to accession, or the overall structural logic, which emphasizes the role of conditionality, but the inclusion of the study of informal networks does provide an alternative lens with which to view both the successes and failures of accession. Such a second lens can provide, in some cases, a more detailed explanation than would be otherwise available.

In this study, explicitly including the culture of informality was shown to provide concrete value when examining the accession process from the lens of policy learning. This is not a surprise, as the importance of informal practices to learning has already been recognized in the policy learning literature on Europeanization

(Nohrstedt, 2010; Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018; Dunlop, James and Radaelli, 2020), but this has not been applied to accession so far. While the findings in this area did not overturn pre-existing theory, the use of SNA did identify ways in which informality could be *quantified* and how that quantification can be used to tease out further insights into the exact conditions under which informality can affect formal processes by helping to identify the ways in which the culture of informality shapes the structure of the informal networks.

On a more fundamental level, these networks were found, as expected, to enable and constrain political processes in the countries analysed. As discussed previously, the relative cultures of informality in all countries impacted the ability of the parliaments to function which, in turn, impacted the accession processes. Certain practices such as non-work related socializing activities helped build a collaborative atmosphere which enabled the accession process. Being "wined and dined" by EU actors in Brussels helped build a sense of camaraderie which acted to enable both further learning, through providing an atmosphere conducive to creative thinking and the establishing of informal connections, and rational choice Europeanization by providing a place for the reinforcement of the positive benefits of compliance. The dichotomy between the success of the *Kukuriku koalicija* in Croatia and the weakness of the divided opposition in Serbia, which was unable to rally around any platform until 2018, highlights the importance of informal practices as important drivers of formal processes. This aligns with results from other countries in the region which emphasize the importance of practices such as "leaders' meetings" as drivers of political change (Bliznakovski, Gjuzelov and Popovikj, 2017).

Specifically, this thesis has shown that the inclusion of such factors adds further explanatory capacity which is missing from broader studies of the EU accession process. First and foremost, it is hoped that this thesis can contribute to the scholarly literature on Europeanization, under the EIM or Policy Learning conditions as explicitly addressed, and to the wider literature on Policy Learning. Further, as has been shown here, the use of SNA in combination with interviews and document analysis can produce a richer explanation for variations in state behaviour than could be accomplished by any one of those methods alone. As such, it is hoped that the unique and original evidence-based conclusions here can contribute both positively to

the literature on Europeanization but also to the development of further methodological techniques regarding the study of informality, EU accession, parliaments, and party politics. Fundamentally, though, this research opens up new possibilities for future research to contribute more directly to the theoretical literature and some possibly ways that this research can even have a positive impact beyond academia.

Recommendations and Future Research

Since this research has addressed some ways in which informal networks and the culture of informality matter the results, then, point to some possible practical implications for policy-makers attempting to engage both with the region and more widely. Fundamentally, this research makes a claim for the importance of local knowledge in any attempt to engage with a particular region. Attempting to foster change without such knowledge can result in significant short-cuts being taken to reduce the complexity of an issue which will, in turn, result in sub-optimal outcomes as the "real" politics can take place outside of the formal structures. Understanding this is crucial to identifying the difference between change and compliance. The EU, through its recent renewed focus on the rule of law (Hoxhaj, 2021), is beginning to become aware of this distinction and this research, in addition to others (Kera and Hysa, 2020; Radeljić and Đorđević, 2020), supports this endeavour.

However, the redoubling of such efforts does raise the possibility of further co-option of such reforms by informal networks seeking to perpetuate themselves. Each previous round of reforms has failed to address the root of the problem and instead been co-opted by the networks to perpetuate their existence or, even, to strengthen it. This is not solely of academic interest, although it certainly is worthy of such interest (Mendelski, 2009, 2016), but also of practical interest for both the EU and any other organisation or body which is attempting to engender change in a given society. Ensuring that any reforms being implemented are successful requires that they not only be properly *designed* but also that they be properly *implemented* to avoid being co-opted, in both formal and informal contexts (Schnell, 2015).

Alternatively, it is also a fact that informality does exist and will continue to exist as a simple fact of human nature, while the extent to which it impedes formal

processes varies from country to country and from case to case. It is impossible – and not desirable – to stop people from befriending or connecting with others and, as was shown in the case of Slovenia, such contacts can have a positive impact on formal processes. This research does not identify any particular type of connection as being superior, but it does highlight the importance of more involved or "deeper" types of interaction in shaping political change by providing more robust learning opportunities and helping to increase the credibility of any rewards on offer from an organisation through face-to-face interaction. Further research into the relative impacts of certain types of ties on specific formal processes could be conducted.

This insight is not limited to the area under study in this thesis, although further research would be needed to confirm whether the insights are truly generalizable. However, it is hoped, that this research speaks to something ineffable which is both intrinsically known and yet unspoken. Phenomena such as the "old boy network" in the United Kingdom (Ledeneva, 2017, p. 262), "*pantouflage*" in France (Ledeneva, 2018, p. 240), or "pulling strings" in the United Kingdom and United States (Ledeneva, 2018, p. 219), all have an impact on the working life of political institutions. Of the 13 Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom since 1955 ten attended Oxford University and five attended Eton College, a private all-male boarding school. Similar factors are present in all countries which attests to the existence of informal practices across the world. It is hoped that the research presented here will contribute to the further scholarly understanding of the impact of these phenomena on political processes both in the countries studied here and more broadly.

Within the cases studied here there, too, exists scope for further research. As mentioned above the European Commission's new focus on the rule of law in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) highlights the importance of informal political networks after accession as well. Accession, although used here as an end point to the process of Europeanization, is not a panacea and informal networks have a distinct ability to pervert attempts at reform to ensure their continued influence over formal processes and institutions. The experience of backsliding in Hungary, from a "consolidated democracy" to a "transitional or hybrid regime" since accession is illustrative of this (*Hungary: Nations in Transit 2015 Country Report*, 2015; *Hungary: Nations in Transit 2021 Country Report*, 2021).

A similar process is underway in many other countries in CEE including in the countries studied here. Since Janez Janša has become Prime Minister of Slovenia for a second time he has repeatedly attacked the judiciary and other state institutions and members with connections to the youth wing of his political party, SDS, were implicated in a scandal regarding irregularities in the purchasing of personal protective equipment as part of the COVID-19 crisis (Maksuti, 2021a, 2021b). The transformation of Janša from jailed anti-Yugoslav dissident journalist to first elected politician to congratulate Donald Trump for winning the 2020 election highlights the continued fragility of politics in a country that was once the liberal darling of the former Yugoslav region (Perrone, 2020)[94]. Ominously, perhaps, this is an almost identical transformation to that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán who received a scholarship from George Sörös to study in the UK in 1989 before turning on Sörös and attacking the Central European University, a research institute founded by Sörös, and indeed Sörös himself during his second stint as Prime Minister (Keszthelyi, 2016). That the institutions in Slovenia have, so far, held is a testament to some of the longer lasting successes of the learning process during accession. However, it is not guaranteed that they will hold, as they did not in Hungary, which invites questions about the depth of *learning* throughout the accession process as opposed to simple *compliance*.

This is not to overstate the impact of informal networks in the region, but it does highlight some further avenues for research. The rise of populist leaders, with the "people" versus "elites" rhetoric, highlights the importance of such informal networks as a lightning rod for popular anger by those who feel they have been excluded from the benefits of accession. That such populist leaders tend not to reform the system but instead simply insert their own members into the networks or bring their own networks with them is one of the great ironies and tragedies of contemporary politics. Yet this does open avenues for further research. Under what conditions are these new networks able to insert themselves into formal institutions? Why have previously successfully Europeanized countries been so susceptible to these forces? And under what

[94] Janša is also sometimes referred to as "Marshall Tweeto" by his critics, a reference to his authoritarian tendencies by playing on the former dictator of the SFRJ Marshall Tito's name and Janša's frequent use of Twitter to attack his opponents (Savic, 2020; Ozsvath, 2021).

conditions has the EU, if at all, been able to counter the attempts of these networks to influence formal processes? While, obviously, the research presented here does not offer direct answers to these questions it has hopefully shown that the study of informal networks is an important part of the puzzle which deserves the attention that it has been paid here.

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Croatia Interview 3: Croatian politician, November 20, 2020, conducted via telephone in English and Croatian by the author.

Croatia Interview 4: Croatian politician, April 23, 2021, conducted via email in English by the author.

Croatia Interview 5: former Croatian MP, March 4, 2021, conducted via Zoom in English by the author.

Croatia Interview 6: former Croatian MP, March 12, 2021, conducted via Zoom in English by the author.

Serbia Interview 1: former Serbian MP, June 4, 2019, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in English and Serbian by the author.

Serbia Interview 2: former Serbian MP, June 7, 2019, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in English by the author.

Serbia Interview 3: Serbian politician, December 17, 2019, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in Serbian by the author.

Serbia Interview 4: former Serbian MP, December 18, 2019, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in English and Serbian by the author.

Serbia Interview 5: former Serbian politician, December 18, 2019, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in Serbian by the author.

Serbia Interview 6: Serbian politician, February 18, 2020, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in English by the author.

Serbia Interview 7: foreign civil servant, February 19, 2020, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in English by the author.

Serbia Interview 8: Serbian MP, February 19, 2020, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in Serbian by the author.

Serbia Interview 9: former Serbian MP, February 20, 2020, conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, in Serbian by the author.

Slovenia Interview 1: former Slovenian MP, August 3, 2020, conducted via email in Serbo-Croatian by the author.

Slovenia Interview 2: former Slovenian MP, December 2, 2020, conducted via Skype in English by the author.

Slovenia Interview 3: former Slovenian MP, January 1, 2021, conducted via Skype in English and Serbo-Croatian by the author.

Slovenia Interview 4: former Slovenian MP, February 3, 2021, conducted via Zoom in Serbo-Croatian by the author.

Slovenia Interview 5: former Slovenian MP, February 12, 2021, conducted via Skype in Serbo-Croatian by the author.

Appendix 1: Opening and Closing Chapters of the *Acquis*

Table A1.1: Slovenian Opening and Provisional Closure of Chapters of the *acquis communautaire* (*Timetable for accession negotiations by chapter and by country (1998-2004)*, 2016)

Date	Chapters opened and provisionally closed	Total *acquis* opened to date	Total *acquis* closed to date
31.3.1998	Ch. **27** Opened	1 out of 30	0 out of 30
10.1998	Ch. **15**, 16, **17**, **18**, 19, 20 Opened, Ch. **17**, **18** Closed	7 out of 30	2 out of 30
11.1998	Ch. 16 Closed	7 out of 30	3 out of 30
12.1998	Ch. 5 Opened	8 out of 30	3 out of 30
3.1999	Ch. 12 Opened	9 out of 30	3 out of 30
4.1999	Ch. 8, **11**, 23, **26** Opened, Ch. 8, **15** Closed	13 out of 30	5 out of 30
5.1999	Ch. 6, 25 Opened Ch. 23 Closed	15 out of 30	6 out of 30
6.1999	Ch. 1 Opened, Ch. 12, 19 Closed	16 out of 30	8 out of 30
7.1999	Ch. 3 Opened	17 out of 30	8 out of 30
9.1999	Ch. **4**, 13, **14** Opened	20 out of 30	8 out of 30
11.1999	Ch. 9, 10 Opened	22 out of 30	8 out of 30
12.1999	Ch. 22 Opened, Ch. **11** Closed	23 out of 30	9 out of 30
4.2000	Ch. 21 Opened	24 out of 30	9 out of 30
5.2000	Ch. 2, 24, 28, **29** Opened, Ch. **27, 28** Closed	28 out of 30	11 out of 30
6.2000	Ch. 7 Opened, Ch. 5 Closed	29 out of 30	12 out of 30
11.2000	Ch. 3, 13 Closed	29 out of 30	14 out of 30
3.2001	Ch. 1, 22 Closed	29 out of 30	16 out of 30
5.2001	Ch. **4**, **14**, 20, **26** Closed	29 out of 30	20 out of 30
11.2001	Ch. 6, **25** Closed	29 out of 30	22 out of 30
12.2001	Ch. 2, 9, 10, 24 Closed	29 out of 30	26 out of 30
4.2002	Ch. **30** Opened	30 out of 30	26 out of 30
7.2002	Ch. 21 Closed	30 out of 30	27 out of 30
12.2002	Ch. 7, 29, 30 Closed; Negotiations Concluded	30 out of 30	30 out of 30

Bold: unclear opening/closing date, best estimate available

Table A1.2: Croatian Opening and Provisional Closure of Chapters of the *acquis communautaire* (Council of the European Union, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, p. 666, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e, 2010f, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Brigljević, 2009)

Date	Chapters opened and provisionally closed	Total *acquis* opened to date	Total *acquis* closed to date
12.6.2006	Ch. 25 Opened, Closed	1 out of 35	1 out of 35
11.12.2006	Ch. 26 Opened, Closed	2 out of 35	2 out of 35
21.12.2006	Ch. 17, 20, and 29 Opened	5 out of 35	2 out of 35
29.3.2007	Ch. 7 Opened	6 out of 35	2 out of 35
26.6.2007	Ch. 3, 6, 9, 10, 18, and 32 Opened	12 out of 35	2 out of 35
12.10.2007	Ch. 28 and 30 Opened	14 out of 35	2 out of 35
19.12.2007	Ch. 21 and 33 Opened	16 out of 35	2 out of 35
21.4.2008	Ch. 14 and 15 Opened	18 out of 35	2 out of 35
17.6.2008	Ch. 2 and 19 Opened	20 out of 35	2 out of 35
25.7.2008	Ch. 1 Opened, Ch. 20 Closed	21 out of 35	3 out of 35
30.10.2008	Ch. 30 Closed	21 out of 35	4 out of 35
19.12.2008	Ch. 5 Opened, Ch. 7, 10, and 17 Closed	22 out of 35	7 out of 35
2.10.2009	Ch. 4, ,11, 12, 16, 22, and 24 Opened; Ch. 2, 6, 18, 21, and 29 Closed	28 out of 35	12 out of 35
27.11.2009	Ch. 9, 15, and 28 Closed	28 out of 35	15 out of 35
21.12.2009	Ch. 3 and 19 Closed	28 out of 35	17 out of 35
19.2.2010	Ch. 13 and 27 Opened	30 out of 35	17 out of 35
19.4.2010	Ch. 1 Closed	30 out of 35	18 out of 35
30.6.2010	Ch. 8, 23, and 31 Opened; Ch. 5 and 16 Closed	33 out of 35	20 out of 35
27.7.2010	Ch. 12 and 32 Closed	33 out of 35	22 out of 35
5.11.2010	Ch. 34 Opened; Ch. 4, 14, and 34 Closed	34 out of 35	25 out of 35
22.12.2010	Ch. 24, 27 and 31 Closed	34 out of 35	28 out of 35
19.4.2011	Ch. 11 and 22 Closed	34 out of 35	30 out of 35
6.6.2011	Ch. 13 Closed	34 out of 35	31 out of 35
30.6.2011	Ch. 35 Opened; Ch. 8, 23, 33, and 35 Closed	35 out of 35	35 out of 35

Table A1.3: Serbian Opening and Provisional Closure of Chapters of the *acquis communautaire* (*Milestones in EU - Serbia relations*, 2020)

Date	Chapters opened and provisionally closed	Total *acquis* opened to date	Total *acquis* closed to date
14.12.2015	Ch. 32 and 35 Opened	2 out of 35	0 out of 35
18.07.2016	Ch. 23 and 24 Opened	4 out of 35	0 out of 35
13.12.2016	Ch. 5 and 25 Opened; Ch. 25 Closed	6 out of 35	1 out of 35
27.02.2017	Ch. 20 and 26 Opened; Ch. 26 Closed	8 out of 35	2 out of 35
20.06.2017	Ch. 7 and 29 Opened	10 out of 35	2 out of 35
11.12.2017	Ch. 6 and 30 Opened	12 out of 35	2 out of 35
25.06.2018	Ch. 13 and 33 Opened	14 out of 35	2 out of 35
10.12.2018	Ch. 17 and 18 Opened	16 out of 35	2 out of 35
27.6.2019	Ch. 9 Opened	17 out of 35	2 out of 35
10.12.2019	Ch. 4 Opened	18 out of 35	2 out of 35

Appendix 2: Financial Inflows

Table A2.1: Slovenian Pre-Accession Assistance (in millions of Euros)

Year	PHARE	SAPARD	ISPA
1992	192		
1993			
1994			
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			
1999			
2000	33.4[95]		19.6
2001	28.3[96]	6.6	16
2002	41.9[97]	6.6	14.8[98]
Total:	295.6	13.2	50.4

Unless otherwise specified, source: (Commission of the European Communities, 2002, pp. 12–15)

Table A2.2: Croatian Pre-Accession Assistance (in millions of Euros)

Year	CARDS	PHARE	ISPA	SARPAD	IPA
2001	262[99]				
2002					
2003					
2004					
2005		80	25		
2006		80	35	25	
2007					141[100]
2008					146[101]
2009					151[102]
2010					154[103]
2011					156.5[104]
Total:	262	160	60	25	748.5

Unless otherwise specified, source: (European Commission, 2005, p. 6)

[95] Includes a €7m Cross-Border Cooperation Programme allocation.
[96] Includes a €7m Cross-Border Cooperation Programme allocation.
[97] Includes a €7m Cross-Border Cooperation Programme allocation.
[98] Source: European Commission, 2004a, p. 63.
[99] National Programme only.
[100] Source: European Commission, 2007, p. 6.
[101] Source: European Commission, 2008a, p. 6.
[102] Source: European Commission, 2009a, p. 6.
[103] Source: European Commission, 2010, p. 5.
[104] Source: European Commission, 2011b, p. 4.

Table A2.3: Serbian Pre-Accession Assistance (in millions of Euros)

Year	IPA I	IPA II	IPA Rural Development
2007	1,400[105]		
2008			
2009			
2010			
2011			
2012			
2013			
2014		1,400[106]	
2015			
2016			
2017			25[107]
2018			30[108]
2019			40
2020			
Totals:	1,400	1,400	95

[105] Source: European Commission, 2014b, p. 4.
[106] Source: European Commission, 2020, p. 121.
[107] Source: European Commission, 2018, p. 90.
[108] Source: European Commission, 2019, p. 97.

Appendix 3: Political Parties

Table A3.1: Slovenian Political Parties

Party Name (English)	Party Name (SL)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Državni zbor*	Relevant information
Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia	*Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije*	DeSUS	Pensioners interests	1996-2004	Centrist party of government
Democratic Party	*Demokratska Stranka*	DS	Centrism	1992-6	
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	*Liberalna demokracija Slovenije*	LDS	Liberalism, Pro-Europeanism	1992-2004	Emerged from DEMOS coalition, Dominant party in 1992-2004 period, headed by Janez Drnovšek
New Slovenia – Christian Democrats	*Nova Slovenija – Krščanski demokrati*	N.Si	Christian Democracy, Pro-Europeanism	2000-4	Formed originally as vehicle for 2000 PM Andrej Bajuk
Social Democratic Party of Slovenia	*Socialdemok-ratska zveza Slovenije*	SDSS	Social conservatism	1992-2004	Emerged from DEMOS coalition, Led by Janez Janša and has experienced rightward and populist drift since founding

(Table A3.1 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (SL)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Državni zbor*	Relevant information
Slovene Christian Democrats	*Slovenski krščanski demokrati*	SKD	Christian Democracy, pro-Europeanism	1992-2000	Emerged from DEMOS coalition, merged with SLS in 2000
Slovenian People's Party	*Slovenska ljudska stranka*	SLS	Conservatism, Christian democracy	1992-2004	Emerged from DEMOS coalition, absorbed elements of the SKD in 2000
Slovenian People's Party+ Slovene Christian Democrats	*Slovenska ljudska stranka* + *Slovenski krščanski demokrati*	SLS+ SKD	Conservatism, Christian democracy	2000	Briefly existed as a combinatio n of SLS and SKD before the name was changed in 2001 back to just SLS
Youth Party of Slovenia	*Stranka mladih Slovenije*	SMS	Green politics, Social liberalism	2000-4	
Slovenian National Right	*Slovenska nacionalna desnica*	SND	Slovenian nationalism, Euroscepticism	1992-6	
Slovenian National Party	*Slovenska nacionalna stranka*	SNS	Far-left/Far-right politics, Euroscepticism	1992-2004	Vehicle of populist leader Zmago Jelinčič Plemeniti

(Table A3.1 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (SL)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Državni zbor*	Relevant information
United List of Social Democrats	*Združena lista socialnih demokratov*	ZLSD	Social Democracy, pro-Europeanism	1992-2004	Successor to League of Communists of Slovenia (*Zveza komunistov Slovenije*)
Greens	*Zeleni*	Z	Green politics, pro-Europeanism	1992-6	Grouped with LDS under Zeleni/LDS designation

Table A3.2: Croatian Political Parties

Party Name (English)	Party Name (HR)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Hrvatski Sabor*	Relevant information
Bosnian Democratic Party of Croatia	Bošnjačka demokratska stranka Hrvatske		Bosniak Minority interests	2011-13	Bosnian minority ethnic party
Democratic Centre	*Demokratski centar*	DC	Centre-right conservatism, pro-Europeanism	2000-7	Split from HDZ in 2000
Croatian Bloc	*Hrvatski blok*	HB	Conservatism, Nationalism	2000-3	Split from HDZ
Croatian Democratic Union	*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*	HDZ	Conservatism, Nationalism, pro-Europeanism	2000-13	Party in power at moment of independe-nce, party of ex-president Franjo Tuđman
Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja	*Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije i Baranje*	HDSSB	Slavonian regionalism, Right-wing populism	2003-13	Split from HDZ
Croatian Civic Party	*Hrvatska građanska stranka*	HGS	Right-wing populism	2011-13	
Croatian True Revival	*Hrvatski istinski preporod*	HIP	Conservatism	2000-3	Split from HDZ, merged into HDZ
Croatian Christian Democratic Union	*Hrvatska kršćansko-demokratska unija*	HKDU	Christian democracy, National conservatism	2000-3	
Croatian Labourists – Labour Party	*Hrvatski laburisti - Stranka rada*	HLSR	Social democracy, Left-wing populism	2007-13	
Croatian Independent Democrats	*Hrvatski nezavisni demokrati*	HND	Conservatism	2000-3	Split off from HDZ in the 1990s

(Table A3.2 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (HR)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Hrvatski Sabor*	Relevant information
Croatian People's Party	*Hrvatska narodna stranka*	HNS	Liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2000-3	Successor to historic liberal party, merged with LIBRA in 2005 to form HNS-LD
Croatian People's Party – Liberal Democrats	*Hrvatska narodna stranka – Liberalni demokrati*	HNS-LD	Social liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2003-13	Formed from the merger of the HNS and LIBRA in 2005
Croatian Social Democrats	*Hrvatski socijaldemo-krati*	HSD	Social democracy	2007-11	Split from SDP
Croatian Social Liberal Party	*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka*	HSLS	Conservative liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2000-10	Merged with independent ists and disappeared from *Sabor* in 2010 when the two MPs left the party to sit as HSLS/IND
Croatian Social Liberal Party/ Independent	*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka/Neza visni*	HSLS/IN D	Conservative liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2011	MPs who split off from HSLS to sit independent ly before losing seats in 2011 election

(Table A3.2 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (HR)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Hrvatski Sabor*	Relevant information
Croatian Party of Rights	*Hrvatska stranka prava*	HSP	Conservatism, Ultra-nationalism	2000-11	Collapsed following exit of former MPs to form HSP-AS
Croatian Party of Rights Dr. Ante Starčević	*Hrvatska stranka prava dr. Ante Starčević*	HSP-AS	Nationalism, Social conservatism	2011-13	Formed from ex-HSP MPs, named for historical Croatian politician dr Ante Starčević
Croatian Peasant Party	*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*	HSS	Agrarianism, Pro-Europeanism	2000-13	Successor to historic Croatian party, slowly lost support and now mostly a local party
Croatian Party of Pensioners	*Hrvatska stranka umirovljenika*	HSU	Pensioners issues	2003-13	Single interest party of government
Istrian Democrats	*Istarski demokrati*	ID	Istrian regionalism, pro-Europeanism	2011-13	Formed as a splinter from IDS
Istrian Democratic Assembly	*Istarska demokratska stranka*	IDS	Istrian regionalism, Liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2000-13	Regionalist, SDP aligned party
LIBRA - Party of Liberal Democrats	*LIBRA - Stranka liberalnih demokrata*	LIBRA	Social liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2000-3	Split from HSLS in 2002 and merged with HNS in 2005

(Table A3.2 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (HR)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in the *Hrvatski Sabor*	Relevant information
Liberal Party	*Liberalna stranka*	LS	Social liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2000-3	Merged into HSLS
Alliance of Primorje-Gorski Kotar	*Primorsko goranski savez*	PGS	Regionalism	2000-7	
Slavonia-Baranja Croatian Party	*Slavonsko-baranjska hrvatska stranka*	SBHS	Regionalism	2000-7	Merged into HDSSB in 2008
Party of Democratic Action of Croatia	*Stranka demokratske akcije Hrvatske*	SDAH	Bosniak minority interests	2003-11	
Social Democratic Party of Croatia	*Socijaldemo-kratska partija Hrvatske*	SDP	Social democracy, pro-Europeanism	2000-13	Reformed successor party to the League of Communis-ts of Croatia (*Savez komunista Hrvatske*)
Serb People's Party	*Srpska narodna stranka*	SNS	Serb minority politics	2000-3	Essentially eclipsed by SDSS
Independent Democratic Serb Party	*Samostalno demokratska Srpska stranka*	SDSS	Serb minority politics, pro-Europeanism	2003-13	Serb minority party, on and off coalition member

Table A3.3: Serbian Political Parties

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
Association of Small and Medium Enterprises and Entrepren-eurs of Serbia	*Asocijacija malih i srednjih preduzeća i preduzetnika Srbije*	APPS	Single interest party	2012-14	
Bosniak Democratic Party of Sandžak	*Bošnjačka demokratska stranka Sandžaka*	BDSS	Bosniak minority interests	2008-12	Bosniak minority party
Bosnian Democratic Union	*Bosanska Demokratsk a Zajednica*	BDZ	Bosniak minority interests	2012-14	Bosniak minority party, Re-named to the Justice and Reconciliati on Party (*Stranka pravde i pomirenja*, SPP) in 2017
		BI		2012-14	Unclear what this party is or was and its only MP was Zoran Ostojić who was elected on the LDP ticket
Bosniak People's Party	*Bošnjačka narodna stranka*	BNS	Bosniak minority interests	2012-16	Bosniak minority party

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
Rich Serbia	*Bogata Srbija*	BS	National conservatism, Euro-scepticism	2012-14	Merged with Third Serbia (*Treća Srbija*) after 2014 election and the new party won no seats in 2016 election
Better Serbia	*Bolja Srbija*	BS	National conservatism, Agrarianism	2016-20	Spit from NS
Christian Democratic Party of Serbia	*Demohrišćanska Stranka Srbije*	DHSS	Christian democracy, pro-Europeanism	2008-16	Split from DSS
Democratic left of Roma	*Demokratska levica Roma*	DLR	Roma minority interests	2008-12	Roma minority party
Democratic Party of Macedonians	*Demokratscka partija Makedoniaca*	DPM	Macedonian minority interests	2012-14	Macedonian minority party
Democratic Party	*Demokratska Stranka*	DS	Social democracy, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	Founding member of Democratic Opposition in 2000, Party of assassinated Serbian PM Zoran Đinđić, boycotted 2020 election

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina	*Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini*	DSHV	Croat minority interests	2008-12	Croatian minority party, almost exclusively active in Vojvodina
Democratic Party of Serbia	*Demokratska stranka Srbije*	DSS	National conservatism, Christian democracy	2008-14, 2016-20	Founding member of Democratic Opposition I 2000, historically muddled position on Europe, pro-EU until 2008 and drift towards Eurosceptic ism after
Serbian Movement "Dveri"	*Srpski pokret Dveri*	Dveri	Serbian nationalism, Right-wing populism	2016-20	Founded as a youth organisat-ion, Boycotted the 2020 election

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
G17+	G17+	G17+	Neo-liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2008-14	Party grew out of an NGO funded by the US's National Endowment for Democracy, merged into United Regions of Serbia which failed to win any seats in the 2014 election
United Serbia	*Jedinstvena Srbija*	JS	National conservatism, Regionalism	2008-20	Vehicle for clientelist leader Dragan Marković "Palma"
Communist Party	*Komunistička partija*	KP	Communism, Titoism	2016-20	Headed by Josip Joška Broz (2020), the grandson of Josip Broz Tito
Coalition of Refugee Associations in the Republic of Serbia	*Koalicija udruženja izbjeglica u Republici Srbiji*	KUIRS	Refugee interests	2012-14	
Liberal Democratic Party	*Liberalno demokratska partija*	LDP	Liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2008-14, 2016-20	Split from DS, personal vehicle for Čedomir Jovanović

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	*Liga socijaldemo-krata Vojvodine*	LSV	Social democracy, Regionalism, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	Vojvodina specific political party
People's Party	*Narodna stranka*	NARODNA	Liberal conservatism, pro-Europeanism	2016-20	Founded and run by former Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić, boycotted 2020 election
None of the Answers Offered	*Nijedan od ponuđenih odgovora*	NOPO	Direct democracy, "Third Way" liberalism	2012-14	
New Party	*Nova stranka*	Nova	Social liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2014-20	Split from DS, founded by former Prime Minister Zoran Živković
New Serbia	*Nova Srbija*	NS	Christian Democracy, Monarchism	2008-20	Split from SPO, personal vehicle for Velimir Ilić
People's Peasant Party	*Narodna Seljačka Stranka*	NSS	Agrarianism, National conservatism	2012-14, 2016-20	
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	*Pokret obnove Kraljevine Srbije*	POKS	Monarchism, National conservatism, Euro-scepticism	2016-20	Founded 2017, split from SPO

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
The Economic Revival Movement of Serbia	*Pokret privredni preporod Srbije*	PPPS		2012-14	
Movement for Reversal	*Pokret za preokret*	Preokret	Social democracy, pro-Europeanism	2014-16	Split from SDS, boycotted 2020 election
Movement of Socialists	*Pokret socijalista*	PS	Serbian nationalism, Populism, Euro-scepticism	2012-20	Split from SPS
Strength of Serbia Movement – BK	*Pokret Snaga Srbije – BK*	PSSBK	Economic liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2012-20	
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	*Partija ujedinjenih penzionera Srbije*	PUPS	Pensioners interests, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	Founded by former members of the SPS
The Movement of the United Vlachs	*Pokred Ujedinjenih Vlaha*	PUV	Vlach minority interests	2012-14	Vlach minority party
Serbian Veterans Movement	*Pokret veterana Srbije*	PVS	Veterans' interests	2008-14	
Party for Democratic Action	*Partija za demokratsko delovanje*	PZDD	Albanian minority interests	2008-12, 2014-20	Albanian minority party

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
I Live for Krajina Movement	*Pokret Živim za Krajinu*	PŽK	Regionalism	2012-14	Merged with merged into United Regions of Serbia which failed to win any seats in the 2014 election and then with SNS in 2017
Romani Party	*Romani partija*	RP	Roma minority interests	2012-14	Roma minority party
Party of Democratic Action of Sandzak	*Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžaka*	SDA	Bosniak minority interests	2012-16	Bosniak minority party
Social Democratic Party of Serbia	*Socijaldem-okratska partija Srbije*	SDPS	Social democracy, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	
Social Democratic Party	*Socijaldem-okratska stranka*	SDS		2014-20	Founded as a personal vehicle for ex-DS leader and former president Boris Tadić, boycotted 2020 election
Social Democratic Union	*Socijaldem-okratska unija*	SDU	Social democracy, Democratic Socialism, pro-Europeanism	2008-14	

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
Social Liberal Party of Sandžak	*Socijalno liberalna partija Sandžaka*	SLPS	Bosniak minority interests	2008	Bosniak Minority Party
Serbian People's Party	*Srpska narodna partija*	SNP	National conservatism, Euro-scepticism	2014-20	Split from DSS
Serbian Renewal Movement	*Srpski pokret obnove*	SPO	Monarchism, liberalism, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	Personal vehicle for Vuk Drašković since founding in 1990
Justice and Reconciliation Party	*Stranka pravde i pomirenja*	SPP	Bosniak minority interests	2016-20	Bosniak minority party, second incarnation of the BDZ
Socialist Party of Serbia	*Socijalisti-čka partija Srbije*	SPS	Social democracy, Left-wing populism, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	Successor to the League of Communi-sts of Serbia (*Savez komunista Srbije*), party of Slobodan Milošević,
Serbian Progressive Party	*Srpska napredna stranka*	SNS	Populism, Neo-liberalism, Pro-Europeanism, “Big Tent”	2012-20	Split from SRS in 2008, ruling party since 2012

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
Serbian Radical Party	*Srpska radikalna stranka*	SRS	Serbian ultra-nationalism, Irredentism, Russophilia, Euro-scepticism	2008-12, 2016-20	Split from SPO, Party of convicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj, SNS split from SRS in 2008
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	*Savez vojvođansk-ih Mađara*	SVM	Hungarian minority interests, pro-Europeanism	2008-20	Closely associated with FIIDESZ in Hungarry
		UG		2012-14	Unclear what this party is or was and its only MP was Sanja Čeković who was elected on the SPO ticket
United Peasant Party	*Ujedinjena seljačka stranka*	USS	Agrarianism	2014-20	
Green Party	*Zelena stranka*	ZES	Green politics, Slovak minority interests, Pro-Europeanism	2016-20	Green party, Slovak minority party
Greens of Serbia	*Zeleni Srbije*	ZS	Green politics, pro-Europeanism	2012-20	Merged with SDS briefly for the 2014 election
Together for Serbia	*Zajedno za Srbiju*	ZZS	Progressiv-ism, pro-Europeanism	2016-20	Boycotted 2020 election

(Table A3.3 Continued)

Party Name (English)	Party Name (RS)	Acronym	Political Orientation	Periods in *Narodna Skupština*	Relevant information
Together for Šumadija	*Zajedno za Šumadiju*	ZZŠ	Liberal conservatism, pro-Europeanism, de-centralisation	2012-16	Merged into United Regions of Serbia which failed to win any seats in the 2014 election and re-founded in 2015

Appendix 4: A Note on Pronunciations

The language(s) used throughout this piece contains spellings and letters which may not be familiar to some. As such, this appendix is intended to provide a brief note on the proper pronunciation to aid the reader in deciphering some of the unfamiliar characters present in this thesis. The relevant characters are:

- Č: -ch as in chalk
- Ć: -ch as in church (or for British readers, similar to the T in Tube)
- Đ: -dz as in the J in Jack
- Š: -sh as in shut
- Ž: -zh as in pleasure

Further, the rolling -r is standard in all cases under study here. As such, it is technically treated as a vowel which is the cause of some of the spellings which, to an English speaker, seem illogical and impossible to pronounce.

Some examples from the text written in an exaggerated anglicized spelling to demonstrate:

- Janez Drnovšek
    - Yanez Drrnovshek
- Zoran Milanović
    - Zoran Milanovich
- Aleksandar Vučić
    - Aleksandarr Vuchich
- Državni Zbor
    - Drrzhavni Zborr
- Hrvatski Sabor
    - Hrrvatski Sabor
- Narodna Skupština
    - Narodna Skupshtina