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# The Lion & The Ringmaster: Croatia's Accession to the European Union

Jelena N. Bilandzich

University of San Francisco, jnbilanzich@gmail.com

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UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

# The Lion & The Ringmaster: Croatia's Accession to the European Union

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences  
Masters Program of International Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in International Studies

By

Jelena N. Bilandzich

December 2013

**The Lion & The Ringmaster: Croatia's Accession to the European Union**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

by

**Jelena N. Bilandzich**

December 2, 2013

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Thesis Advisor

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Academic Director

Date

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Dean of Arts and Sciences

Date

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### **Abstract**

July 1, 2013 marked Croatia's official induction into the European Union. For Croatia this was the culmination of a long negotiation process filled with concessions and challenges. This situation inspired the question of how Croatia's alliance with the EU has affected the state? In order to analyze this relationship the aspects of Croatian identity and sovereignty were explored, in addition to the EU's principles and problems regarding member and candidate states. The evidence found within this investigation came from a number of literary sources ranging from the academic to official government documents. Furthermore, nine interviews were conducted within Croatia, which explored how the EU's influence has affected the Croatian state. Through this research it was conclusively found that Croatia's alliance with the EU creates problems and exasperates existing issues within the country. Furthermore, this situation showcases a pattern of discrimination within the EU that benefits Western European EU states at the expense of its Central and Eastern counterparts. As a result, the recommendations would be to promote awareness of the double standards and discriminations occurring within the EU, which victimize Central and Eastern European states, so that these countries may be able to preserve their identity and sovereignty.

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## **Introduction**

### **Background of the European Union**

In recent years the European Union (EU) has become one of the most recognized and powerful institutions within the world. Following the aftermath of WWII, the EU began as an idea built around the concept of economic cooperation. The founding members which included Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg came together in order to achieve the potential benefits and stability this unification could bring. The success of this venture only encouraged these countries to become more interdependent with the hopes that further prosperity would reveal itself in the future. This meant that the original partnership based upon coal and steel and the European Common Market transitioned into the elimination of custom codes held between the states, the development of common agricultural policies, and ultimately the successful proposal of obtaining a common currency. The visible gains of the EU establishment encouraged other countries within Europe to attempt to join the organization as well. Ultimately, this desire led to the EU's expansion into Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. The enlargement not only meant the EU had acquired strength in the added numbers, but it also meant that the organization had become one that was largely comprised and led by Western European countries. Together with its expanded economic policies the EU was quickly becoming an emerging contender within the modern world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The History of the European Union 1945-1969," *European Union*, [http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1945-1959/index_en.htm).(September 20,2013).

The EU's early triumphs also emboldened the institution to make a variety of changes. One of the most noteworthy came in the form of politics. As the EU began to delve deeper into economic interdependency, it likewise began to reflect on the idea of incorporating political laws and bodies within the organization. Over time committees such as the European Commission became an influential factor within the EU. The members of these EU bodies not only dealt with the economic issues that were affecting the organization but political ones as well. As result, these committees began to pass both economic and political laws that reflected the EU's goals and principles.<sup>2</sup> This meant that the EU had expanded from being a strong economic partnership to a powerful political institution. In addition, the larger impact of these changes indicated that the EU would be an influential and deciding factor not only economically, but politically within each of its member states. As the EU has grown it has added policies relating to foreign relations, culture, and the governments of its member states. The diverse expansion of EU power begs the question of where the role of state's rights ends and the EU's begins. Essentially, the EU as a joint economic and political entity leaves it an impressive force to be reckoned with, but one that relies on the balance of control the supranational organization has with its member states.

### **The Issue of the EU's Expansion Eastward**

The other major development affecting the EU and its growth was the demise of communism. As the Soviet Union collapsed, it left many states that had formerly comprised the Soviet Bloc a chance to regain their sovereignty and self determination. From the perspective of the EU, this large transition within Europe provided an opportunity for the institution to gain additional power in the form of new members. Thus the EU began to actively pursue the

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<sup>2</sup> "A Growing Community, *European Union*, [http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1970-1979/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/1970-1979/index_en.htm) (September 20,2013).

countries that had once been considered part of the Soviet Bloc. Although the EU desired to add these new members and many of the states were willing to do so, the EU made it clear it would only accept membership once all of the organization's conditions and requirements had been met. As a result, Eastern European countries such as Poland, and Romania rushed to meet these standards and eventually became part of the EU. In many ways, this expansion was a dramatic change for both the new member states and the EU as an institution. For the states this was a chance to supposedly reap the economic benefits that EU membership offered and they so desperately needed. As for the EU, this was not only a new founded opportunity, but the first time the organization expanded eastward to a part of Europe that was distinctively different. In comparison to the West, Eastern Europe has its own unique history, culture, and political values. While this expansion was seemingly a success, tensions and problematic issues that have arisen over the last few years have proven that this was not as smooth of a transition as originally thought. Questions regarding the fairness of the EU membership process, as well as concerns regarding sovereignty and culture have become significant topics of contention when analyzing the EU's relationship with these countries. In addition to these problems, the stark differences between Eastern and Western Europe combined with the fact that the EU is primarily led by Western states has prompted a discussion about potential discrimination and double standards occurring within the organization. Overall, while the EU has benefitted from eastward expansion, it seems that these new member states have paid more for EU membership than they have gained.

As the EU continued to deal with its advancement into Eastern Europe, a new market emerged when the state of Yugoslavia disintegrated in the early 1990's. Like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia was a communist state comprised of many different members. Once the collapse

occurred each member was granted an opportunity to assert its independence. For the EU, this was yet again another chance for the organization to expand its base to a new clientele. At the same time, however, the EU was commencing relations with states that were equally if not more unique than Eastern Europe in terms of history, culture, and politics. Since tensions and disagreements had already begun to arise between the EU and its Eastern European constituents, this left the question of whether the institution's relations with these newly independent countries would be any different. This has been especially true as the EU has only recently accepted Croatia, one of the former republics of Yugoslavia, as its newest member after a long accession process. Since the beginning of its discussions with the EU, Croatia has made a long list of compromises and changes in order to be considered and eventually accepted as an EU member. These necessary concessions have elicited concerns and discussions of whether EU membership is beneficial or even harmful for the Croatian state. The interactions between the EU and Croatia, and the doubts about what is ultimately gained and lost can be seen as strong indicators of what the country and the region can expect by allowing EU expansion into its territory. While it seems the EU has used the collapse of communism to its advantage, countries, like Croatia, continue to follow a pattern of Central and Eastern European states that pay a far higher price for membership than the benefits they receive.

### **Background of Croatia**

In order to understand the EU's impact on Croatia, it is important to gain knowledge regarding the state's past. From multiple perspectives the history of Croatia can be characterized as a perpetual fight for independence. Most sources note that the Croatian region, which was historically tied to the Roman Empire, was first settled by the Croats during the 6th century. The first Croats, also known as White Croats, are thought to have originated from an area that

presently constitutes parts of Poland and Ukraine. Upon their arrival, the Croats instead of conquering the land settled and mixed with the existing Illyrian tribes that had been living in the territory, primarily along the Dalmatian coast.<sup>3</sup> While working to establish an independent kingdom, the Croats became early converters to Christianity, having been baptized in the 7th century. Despite countless attempts at invasion by rivals, such as the Bulgarians, the Croatian people were able to defend their domain. This early success lasted until 1102, when the Croatian kingdom formed a partnership with Hungary.<sup>4</sup> Throughout its connection with Hungary, Croatia maintained virtual autonomy as their kingdom continued to function under the rule of their own ban (viceroys) and Sabor (parliament). At the same time, however, this union arguably sets the foundation for Croatia's later loss of sovereignty. Due to its association with Hungary, Croatia naturally became absorbed by the Austrians, thus becoming part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Unlike its previous association with Hungary, the Croats could no longer retain their freedom and ability to self-rule. As a result, this led to Croats suffering at the hands of Habsburg oppression for many years. Essentially, Croatia's early history reveals that the Croats were a distinct people with an independent kingdom, whose failed partnerships and loss of sovereignty began a negative pattern that would continue to define the rest of Croatian history.

The loss of Croatia's independence became a driving force for the Croatian people, who fervently searched for ways to regain the sovereignty and stability their country once had. Despite their desire for self-determination, being part of the Austro-Hungarian empire meant that the Croats had no choice but to be subservient to the Habsburg Crown. While Croatian nationalism continued to thrive under Austro-Hungarian rule, it never resulted in the Croats being able to separate themselves from the empire. This status quo continued until the onset of

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<sup>3</sup> John Prcela, Stanko Guldescu, *Operation Slaughterhouse*, (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1970), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Prcela, Guldescu, *Operation Slaughterhouse*, 7.

WWI. By 1918 WWI had resulted in the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire, leaving a gateway for Croatia to re-assert itself within Europe as an independent country. This opportunity was short lived, however, as the kingdom of Yugoslavia emerged from merely an idea into reality. Following the demise of the Austro-Hungarian empire the Croats searched for stability that would benefit the state. This led to Croatia signing a pact with the Slovenes, and Serbs to become part of a joint federation. In many ways, it seemed the Croats were looking to for an association that still allowed Croatia to have virtual autonomy. Yet, this plan abruptly went wrong with the signing of the Yugoslavian constitution in 1921, which gave Serbs more power within the kingdom. This did not sit well with the majority of Croats and Slovenes, and it created numerous tensions between all parties involved. While many Croats protested against the changes, solving these internal issues became complicated as everyone had to contend with WWII. While this war sent the kingdom of Yugoslavia towards its destruction, it unfortunately did not grant the Croats a second chance at freedom the previous war had done. In fact, it opened the window for an even harsher reality that the Croats had to contend with. Basically, this period reveals a pattern in which Croatia's search for stability leads to a loss of sovereignty that they must continually struggle to restore.

As the Croats grappled with the deterioration of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, a much formidable foe in the form of communism became Croatia's next obstacle in the journey towards independence. The embodiment of all that stood between Croatia and sovereignty was Josip Broz Tito. A citizen of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, Tito was a member of the communist party. As the kingdom was falling apart, he took advantage of this period and began his rise to power. By 1945 Tito was recognized as the leader of Yugoslavia. During his leadership Tito expanded Yugoslavia to many territories which in the present are known as: Croatia, Slovenia, Vojvodina,

Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia. While Tito was known for his charm and public relations with foreign countries, his outward demeanor disguised the cruelty and oppressive nature of his leadership within Yugoslavia. Although Tito was a staunch communist, he was known to act only in what he thought was his best interests. As a result, he severed ties with Stalin and the Soviet Union in favor of running communist Yugoslavia under his own terms. This resulted in the persecution of any person, group, or institution Tito thought challenged his leadership. He began by ensuring that theology would never work against him by censoring multiple religions including the Croatian Roman Catholic Church, which had and continues to play an important role within Croatian culture and identity.

In addition to religion, Tito condemned any form of nationalism. Even though favoring and fighting for Croatian sovereignty under the Habsburg crown and the kingdom of Yugoslavia was dangerous, in relation to Tito it was a death sentence for many. During his long reign Tito was responsible for ordering the deaths of anyone he suspected of supporting nationalist aims. As Tito ruled Yugoslavia with an iron fist, his tactics also influenced how the outside world viewed the country and the people in it. Since Tito's reign was long and his oppression of nationalism so successful, many outsiders believed that Yugoslavian was one ethnicity. Furthermore, due to the fact that Yugoslavia covered so much territory and was ruled by a unique form of communism, it became known to outsiders as "the Balkans," which came attached with certain stereotypes about both the country and its citizens. It would be these foreign perspectives along with Tito's dictatorship that would haunt Croatia when an opportunity for independence would reveal itself again. Overall, the reign of Tito and Yugoslavian communism not only prevented Croats from attaining self-determination, but it was a regime that

successfully oppressed the Croatian people and influenced the outside world in a way that would only harm Croatia's attempt to achieve independence.

Despite Croatian nationalism surviving the state's long and complicated history, another chance to regain sovereignty only revealed itself through the demise of communist Yugoslavia. After a long reign of more than thirty years Tito died in 1980. Following his death the various republics attempted to continue Yugoslavia as a federation of equal parties. This idea was short lived, however, as Serbia swiftly revealed its desire to be the ruling power over the other republics. As in the case of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, the other states within this partnership condemned Serbia's goals. Tensions continued to rise until 1991 when both Slovenia and Croatia openly declared independence and an end to their roles within Yugoslavia. Not only did the Serbs refuse to accept this affirmation, but openly resorted to aggressive tactics in order to ensure that the Slovenes and Croats would not leave. While Slovenia had to defend its right to self rule, in terms of physical warfare with Serbia it was left virtually unscathed. Unfortunately, for the Croats they were not so lucky. In an effort to regain sovereignty once and for all the Croats had to wage a long and bloody battle with the Serbs. By the time Croatia had declared independence Serbia had gained absolute control over the Yugoslav army and weapons, forcing the Croats to defend themselves with anything they could obtain. To make matters worse, not only were the Croats battling the Serbs but parts of the European community as well. The years of Yugoslavian communism under Tito had left its mark as many European countries as well the commission of the European Union couldn't understand why the Slovenes and Croats would want to leave. Some like the EU commission even went as far as to openly suggest that Serbia should be aided in regaining control of the seceded states. Although Croatia was practically abandoned during the early part of its war for independence, Croats continued to defend and



persevere. The Croat endurance later earned allies and assisted the Croatian people in winning the war and finally regaining back the autonomy and freedom it had been missing for so many years. Essentially, Croatia's past is vital to understanding the country's relationship with the EU, as it reveals the crucial components of Croatian identity as well how its historical past continues to define the current state.

### **Statement of Croatia's Issues Regarding the EU**

As Croatia had finally tasted freedom, they had come to the next critical phase for their state, which was securing the prosperity and stability of their country. While the war ended successfully, it left both physical and psychological scars on Croatia and its people. The road to rebuilding the country has and continues to be a slow and painstaking journey. As Croatia began to progress the EU extended an offer of membership to the country. By this time, the former republic of Slovenia had already accepted the offer and would eventually be accepted as an EU member quite quickly. For the Croats this was a lucrative offer for a state that was looking to stabilize further. Yet, EU membership was not free nor unconditional. In order to be considered, the country was told to make numerous changes, which the Croatian government has fully abided with. The fulfillment of the EU requirements took years for Croatia to complete, and eventually on July 1st 2013 they were inducted as a full member of the EU. Yet, even during the membership process questions began to arise regarding the benefits and consequences such a venture would have on the country. Was Croatia's search for additional stability within the EU merely a re-enactment of the state's historical past and failures? Additionally, what would such a membership mean for the future of the Croatian people? Basically, Croatia's decision to enter the EU is a transformative change that seems to have brought more questions than answers about the country's future survival.

It is Croatia's entrance into the EU that has inspired the following research. Intrigued by Croatia's past and its new partnership the goal of my investigation was to analyze the effects such a change would have on the country. As my quest continued my focus began to revolve around the idea of what forms EU opposition within Croatia? My interests regarding this question slowly became centered around the topics of geopolitics, internal stability, as well as the types of rights within Croatia that would be affected by EU membership. In particular my research kept referring back to the overarching themes of identity and sovereignty and how these critical aspects of the Croatian state would be represented within its relationship with the EU. While conducting this research multiple academic, literary, and official sources were referenced within this piece. They ranged on topics regarding the EU and its expansion, Croatia, and Croatian-EU relations. In addition, I embarked on primary research within Croatia and completed nine interviews with Croatian citizens. The respondents within my research retain different jobs and positions within Croatian society, but all hold specific opinions regarding the EU and its future within Croatia. Therefore, this investigation and my argument are built upon both secondary as well primary sources I have uncovered throughout my study of this topic.

Following the completion of my research I have concluded that the EU has negatively impacted Croatia by creating issues and exasperating existing tensions, which the country will have to contend with in the future. My examination and analysis have proven that Croatia's bid for the EU is not merely economic, but based around the principles of identity as well. Yet, the irony is while Croatian identity has been a driving force for EU membership, it is actually one of the components of Croatian society that is greatly harmed by the state's association with the EU. In addition, the EU's influence and demands on Croatia have also adversely impacted many

aspects the state's sovereignty as well. My study will address these overarching themes as well as specific issues regarding Croatia's partnership with the EU.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research covers two themes regarding Croatia's accession to the EU. The first part of this work addresses the concept of identity. This section is largely inspired by Tariq Modood's theories regarding multiculturalism and its manifestation or lack thereof within the EU. Modood's theories surrounding multiculturalism help explain the relations between different cultures that come into contact. In addition, it helps assess the connection between multiple cultures and larger institutions such as the state, or supranational organizations like the EU. In specific regards to Croatia's identity within the EU, Edward Said's theory of Orientalism has also influenced the research. Said's Orientalism focuses on how the West's relationship with the East is defined by stereotypes that pervade multiple subjects whether it be politics or culture. While this theory deals with the East, many of the characteristics associated with this concept have come to apply to the perceived view of Croatia within the EU. In addition, the related theory of Balkanism put forth by Maria Todorova has formed the conceptualization of multiple chapters within this work as well. Todorova asserts that Balkanism is a term that encapsulates the negative stereotypes and perceptions of states considered to be part of the Balkans. This is directly related to Croatia, as it is consistently referred to as a Balkan country. Essentially, these three theories work in conjunction to help analyze the journey of Croatian identity within the EU.

The second part of this research is dedicated to addressing the aspect of Croatian sovereignty within the EU. This section of research is inspired by Antonio Gramsci and his theory regarding cultural hegemony, which discusses how the domination of society by the

ruling class is achieved through social constructs and the belief in consented coercion. While Gramsci's ideas are intended to assess the relationship between society and state, it has influenced this analysis regarding the relationship between states and the supranational institution of the EU. It has provided a perspective in which Croatia's membership within the EU can be explored. In addition, the Westphalian concept of sovereignty forms the core of the following analysis regarding Croatia. Within the Westphalian theory is the right of self-determination and equality between states, and the belief in the non-intervention of other states in the domestic affairs of another. These ideas are especially relevant when discussing the challenges Croatia has faced and continues to deal with as an EU member. Overall, these concepts play a pivotal role when discussing Croatia's accession to the European Union.

### **Terms**

**Identity-**Within this work, my definition of identity includes the beliefs, values, characteristics, and lifestyles that formulate nation states.

## **Literature Review**

The European Union's new role as not only an economic, but a political institution has elicited strong reactions from both its members and potential EU candidates. While some have applauded these changes, negative responses towards the EU have been gaining strength within Eastern Europe. Many of these countries contest the instilled EU conditionality requirements within their respective states. The discontent surrounding the EU has made many question the institution's intentions in the areas of member equality, and its respect for the unique histories and cultures of its members. As for Croatia, it is not excluded from this discussion. Many individuals and groups within and outside the country have voiced concerns about the small nation state's relationship with the EU. Explaining these issues, and how they affect Croatia, requires addressing the multiple dimensions of this conflict. The literature reviewed will provide support and analysis in relation to the theoretical origins of these challenges, the fissures of EU policy in regards to Eastern Europe, and exactly how Croatia is affected by this institution. The specific types of literature used for my research will deal with topics of identity both as a theoretical concept as well as specific studies on how this concept relates to EU relationships, especially with Croatia. To supplement the analysis regarding the role of identity, research concerning multiculturalism and sovereignty will be addressed as well. In addition, literature analyzing the specific issues that Croatia faces as a result of EU integration will be part of my study.

## **Identity & Inequality**

As the EU has been accused of inequality in terms of the organization's treatment of its members, the allegations can be seen as an example of "othering." In his work regarding how the Orient was portrayed, Edward Said theorized that those located within this part of the world were

seen and treated differently. He argued that this was the result of "Orientalism," the way in which the West depicted the East as the continual outsider. As a result, this allowed for a certain power dynamic to develop between the East and the West. The power relations between the two could be characterized as one of domination and subordination, with the West being in control (Said 1978). Said's theory is related to the EU in that the organization is no longer a homogenous institution made up of Western states. The fact that eastern members are now included, brings up the question of whether Said's theory of orientalism is being carried out within the EU. If a form of orientalism is taking place, it would explain how power is distributed within the organization. While Said's theory offers insight, it has limitations in that it only directly discusses the Orient. The reason being that Said's theory is focused solely on the perceptions and relations with countries within the far East. Even though aspects of Said's theory can be applied to the EU situation, it does not provide specific evidence of an inner European form of othering. Essentially, in order for Said's theory to be fully applied the unique cultural and epistemic differences of Europe must be taken into account.

While not engaging Said's concept of the other directly, there are numerous authors who have focused their research on the apparent inequalities within the EU. These theorists tend to emphasize that the ideals of EU integration are far different than the realities Eastern European members are facing (Medvec 2009, Carroll 2010). Stephen E. Medvec argues that despite the EU welcoming Eastern European countries on the basis that they would prosper, there continues to be a disparity of benefits between east and west. This is important because it provides physical evidence that eastern EU members are facing real issues as a result of their integration. As for Dean Carroll, he points out that the expansion of the EU is difficult for the institution as well as the country seeking membership.

Like Medvec, Carroll acknowledges that the joining state may risk its economic stability by accepting EU membership. While the prevailing notion is that the EU will only bring economic benefits, theorists like Carroll point out that there actually may be economic risks involved as a result of integration. He cites waiting periods and economic conditionality requirements may actually hinder the internal market of these countries. The noted inequalities bring up the question of whether these are a result of some form of internal and geographical discrimination. It is important to note these physical issues because they can be regarded as surface indicators of a deeper rooted problem concerning inner EU relations. Said often noted that the treatment of those hailing from the Orient were outward expressions of the othering taking place and perpetuated within Western society. Specifically, in how the West perceived, taught, and depicted individuals and groups coming from that part of the world. As a result, by citing the risks faced by Eastern European EU members and potential candidates, it is acknowledging that there are legitimate concerns in regards to the subject of EU integration within this geographical region. Yet, purely addressing the economic side of EU integration fails to take into account identity politics and how it affects both the EU and its members.

One of the ways to explore identity within the EU is to analyze the institution's policy towards expansion within Eastern Europe. Multiple researchers have studied how the EU relates to its new members (Hursoy 2010, Jura 2012, Xuereb 2011). Siret Hursoy, argues that the EU lacks a defined institutional identity and that its foreign policy does not function in the same way as nation states (Hursoy, 93). This statement is important as it recognizes the organization's failure to address its multiple members with varying cultural values and historical backgrounds. In addition, since the organization does not have a specific approach in member relations, this creates a setting where discrimination can occur.

Operating along the same lines Karsten Xuereb notes how internal EU migrants are affected by the institution not having a comprehensive cultural policy. Xuereb discusses how the lack of an EU standardized cultural policy does not consider the place of migrants of different cultures, especially non-Europeans (Xuereb, 30-31). Again, this proves an absence of a cultural approach has perpetuated a series of negative effects. Cristian Jura takes these assessments a step further by arguing that the EU refuses to acknowledge the importance of learning how to operate within multiculturalism. He also says that the leading EU countries of Germany, France, and the U.K. have failed to address the problem properly. Jura's analysis implies that the EU does not view multiculturalism as a valid issue that should be part of the EU's platform or goals. This is important because it reveals that the denial of this problem works into the issues faced by Eastern European EU members and candidates. It also goes back to the topic of identity. Since identity is not part of EU discourse and that the organization is led by Western European nations, it allows the institution to be driven by western ideals and perceptions that may or may not be in contention with those of Eastern Europe. While these authors provide a detailed perspective on the EU's official cultural policy, it does not address how the Western EU members view their eastern counterparts, and how it affects the institution's policy on these countries. Basically, this research reveals the fissures within the EU concerning its official relation to multiculturalism, but it does not discuss the specifics of Eastern European portrayal and treatment.

In order to fully analyze internal dynamics within the EU, literature regarding multiculturalism was addressed as well. Many of the authors assert that the concept of multiculturalism plays a large role in the policies and the successes or lack thereof within the EU (Modood & Meer 2012, Brljavac 2012, Aggestam & Hill 2008, Sprague-Jones 2011). In their work, Modood and Meer explore what David Cameron calls a "failure" of the EU in terms of



multiculturalism. He goes on to analyze the fact that this concept has received a backlash from those rediscovering their national identity, or minority groups who feel violated by the institution. Aggestam and Hill explicate on the idea of multiculturalism and issues further by highlighting the fact that this concept is consistently politicized. In addition, it is also a point of tension in regards to certain groups, in this case Muslims, which were used as a case study. While Sprague-Jones, chooses to focus more on the political aspect of multiculturalism that Modood and Meer mentioned within their piece. She argues that awareness of one's personal heritage or ethnicity, and the election of right wing parties influences the way multiculturalism is perceived and functions within the EU. As for Brljavac, he explains these arguments using Bosnia & Herzegovina as a case study. Brljavac asserts that the reason why the EU has not made much progress with the state is because its failure of having a successful standardization of multiculturalism.

The literature concerning multiculturalism provides much needed information, but also has limitations as well. On a positive note, the theorists provide a contextual background that can be used when analyzing the EU's relationship with Croatia. It shows that multiculturalism is an important factor that both drives and works against EU policy. This is an aspect to keep in mind when exploring the conditionality requirements as well as the reaction against the EU. At the same time, the literature on how EU multiculturalism effects Eastern Europe, and specifically Croatia and the Balkans is very scarce. The goal is for my study to fill in these gaps and provide more evidence for this area of research. Basically, the concept of multiculturalism is an important factor, but needs more expansion in my area of research.

Another important factor related to this discussion is how the western led EU perceives and treats Eastern European countries. Theorists have studied how the characterization of

Eastern Europe has affected its relations with the EU (Pusca 2008, Carroll 2010). Researcher Anca Pusca argues that as the EU has expanded eastward, it has proven that every country has a specific view of what an imagined Europe should be like. At times these views come into conflict with one another. Pusca highlights this argument by providing the example of the "Polish Plumber." When Poland had become integrated within the EU, France experienced a rampant and public expression of xenophobia against the Poles. The argument behind their action was that the Poles were migrating to take jobs away from French citizens. In the end France moved to extend the transition period before Poles were allowed to migrate. While Pusca uses this example to analyze EU visibility, it can also be argued that this is an example of discrimination. French feelings and perceptions of the Poles not only dictated their treatment in the public forum of media, but it also resulted in Poland being dealt an extra conditionality. This shows how western values came at the expense of an Eastern European country, and further illustrates how Western and Eastern European relations influence EU policy.

Dean Carroll also discusses how identity politics factored into the perceptions of Eastern Europe and its place within the EU. He argues that the EU should not veto states on the basis of their religious or cultural values. In addition, Carroll states that the EU should refrain from implementing widespread western values and attempting to create a homogenous Europe. These are imperative assertions as they point out that the EU organization is doubtful of accepting any state that does not fit in with what is considered the norm. It also depicts an EU that will only support new members if they conform to EU standards. This implies that the EU is functioning as an institution that is not only in favor of economic and political integration, but in molding these new members into what Pusca calls the EU's own imagined Europe. Both of these authors show that the western response towards Eastern Europe has dictated much of the EU's treatment

of these states. Although these works provide insight into the relations the EU has with Eastern Europe it is not specific enough, as this thesis directly deals with the impacts the EU will have on Croatia. The state of Croatia is part of what is considered the Balkans, a Central European region that shares characteristics with Eastern Europe, but has its own distinct attributes as well. Overall, these works engage in the idea of how identity affects EU relations, but fails to take into account the specificity of the Balkans.

As Croatia is finishing its final procedural stages before becoming part of the EU, in order to understand the EU's impacts, it is important to note how the Balkan identity is received by the western led EU. Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990's a number of theorists have analyzed the progression these newly independent states and their relations with the EU (Todorova 2009, Belloni 2009, Krajina 2009). In her study of the Balkans, Maria Todorova acknowledges the work of Edward Said and argues that a similar but different concept known as Balkanism was in existence. Todorova defines Balkanism which, "information about the Balkans is placed, most notably in journalistic, political, and literary output" (Todorova, 192). She points out that like the Orient, the Balkans found itself as the victim of long standing perceptions. Unlike the Orient, however, it was the ambiguity of the Balkans that committed the west to retaining certain unwavering views of the region that existed from World War I to the present. She goes on to note the EU is an experiment of the supranational, and that in order to be welcomed into an organization, there has to be a sense of similarity or cohesion within the state that relates to others. These are all vastly crucial assertions. To begin with, by acknowledging that a theory similar to Orientalism exists for the Balkans, may work to indicate that states that are located within the west and part of the EU are predisposed to view and treat Balkan countries in a certain way. This relates to the case of Croatia as its treatment and conditionality

requirements may be traced back to Todorova's concept. In addition, her discussion about these states and cohesion indicates that the existence of Balkanism makes it far more possible for the EU to have an ultimatum for these countries in terms of changing its culture, values, etc. in order to be accepted by the institution.

Roberto Belloni makes similar assertions about the Balkans when discussing potential EU integration within the region. He too argues that there is a form of Orientalism, which is influencing the EU's relations with the Balkans. Belloni argues that the EU should shed the focus on European elitism and emphasize stable EU integration within the region. In order to do this, Belloni argues that the Balkans should be dealt with sensitively if its integration is to be sustained. The analysis that Belloni provides points out the potential weaknesses and risks if the EU is to rely on its preconceived notions of the region. From the perspective of the EU and its stability, using assumptions rather than researched facts could hinder the well-being of the institution if one of the Balkan states would react adversely to the EU and its role within the region. In terms of the countries themselves, if the EU does not recognize and respect the histories and cultures of each of the countries, then the institution may not be working in its benefit and in the long run may actually cause harm. This is an especially important concept to keep in mind when analyzing the EU as a powerful actor within the Croatian state. If the EU relies on the idea of Balkanism to guide its relations with the state, it may exasperate old problems and provide new challenges the country may not be prepared to deal with.

Zlatan Krajina expands on both Todorova and Belloni's assertions by specifically analyzing how Croatia's bid for the EU was represented within the media. Krajina argued that Todorova's concept of Balkanism was visible within the media's treatment of Croatia and its relations to the EU. He noted that Croatia was depicted as Europe's other and that the country as

well as the Balkan region was depicted as negative, socially backward, and violent. Krajina also notes that when the state of Croatia disagreed with the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia, it was portrayed as inferior and socially immobile. In relation to his findings, Krajina cites Said's Orientalism as guiding the way the state was viewed and treated. This is important as it reveals that Croatia's negative depiction could have influenced how the EU has treated the state in terms of conditionality requirements, and whether the state will be viewed as an equal member within the organization. Essentially, the prevailing idea of Balkanism has proven that the EU may be inclined to treat Croatia and other Balkan countries on the basis of their perceptions and assumptions, rather than reality.

In connection to the concept of Balkanism, there is also a prevailing idea regarding the EU and Europeanism. Many authors have found themselves interested in researching the belief that the EU is seeking to instill a Western European lifestyle on its Eastern European counterparts (Krajina 2009, Miosic-Lisjak 2006, Serbos 2008, Ashbrook 2010). While Zlatan Krajina focused his work on Croatia's EU accession and the media, he also focused on the concept of European. He argues that in the world of today to be considered European, one must be an integrated member within the EU. Krajina goes on to say that in regards to Croatia's bid for the EU, the state was constantly referred to as having a "choice" to be part of the European arena or not. In many ways this proves to be a vital analysis of Croatia's situation. It seems as if the state was put in a position where it had no rights to contest what the EU desired in return for membership. If Croatia openly rejected the institution's terms, which ranged from issues concerning territory, minority rights, economic interdependence, etc., it would not be considered as part of the European identity. Krajina's assessments of the situation depict a scene in which

the EU uses its power as an organization associated with the European identity as leverage on Croatia to accept all of its terms in order to be considered a European nation.

Nives Miosic-Lisjak expands on this idea in her analysis of Croatia's integration within the EU. In her work, Miosic-Lisjak discusses the reforms and reservations the Croatian state has undergone since it had begun to actively work towards EU integration. She argues that part of the incentives driving Croatia towards the EU is this idea of being European. As a result, revealing a push pull situation occurring in Croatia in regards to the EU. Miosic-Lisjak argues that being considered part of Europe was seen as increasingly important for the state. Her analysis seems to indicate that Croatia held a form of desperation when contemplating a chance to enter the EU. As a result, this may have led the state to accept conditionality requirements that it either did not agree with or have proved to be potentially damaging for the county. This argument continues to show how the concept of identity proves highly influential when discussing EU relations with Central and Eastern Europe, especially Croatia.

Sotiris Serbos continues this pattern by discussing the concept of European and power relations in regards to the EU and the Balkans. For Serbos he argues that the war within the Balkans puts the states belonging to the region in a non-advantageous position when attempting a bid for EU integration. He goes on to point out that the violence that the region had experienced has prompted the EU to look towards the Balkans as a project where the EU could "Europeanize" it. In many ways this sets up a power dynamic in which the EU views itself as the norm and controlling entity, while the Balkans would have to allow itself to be molded by the organization. The analysis of Serbos continues to add to the idea that the concept of European is used as both an incentive and leverage tool within the EU when it is looking to expand to another country. It

also proves that the states located within Central and Eastern Europe are not only seeking economic benefits, but a certain identity in their bid for integration.

John E. Ashbrook also chooses to expand on Croatia's relate to the European concept in his study of the country's future membership within the EU. Ashbrook notes that within the Croatian state there is a yearning to be part of a greater cosmopolitan Europe. He argues that this is driven by the state elite who view this as a chance to gain an added sense of legitimacy. At the same time, he also says that Croatia gravitates towards this idea because it is unhappy that the Balkans is consistently associated with Eastern Europe. The country and others in the region want the distinction to be recognized and the feeling is that joining the EU might change that. This shows that this interest in being European directly connects back the concepts of Balkanism as well as identity. In addition, it reveals that the EU holds a powerful position in regards to countries like Croatia. Overall, the concept of European explains an added dimension to not only how countries like Croatia are depicted, but treated as well.

### **Sovereignty & Croatia's Integration Challenges**

Another vital topic that needs to be considered, is the idea of sovereignty. Numerous theorists contend that sovereignty is a significant factor when discussing the relationship between states and the EU (Bailes 2006, Mamudu & Studley 2009, Adler-Nissen 2011). Bailes asserts that part of the problem with the EU is that it actually lacks the power that it needs because of sovereignty. She claims that grassroots movements resolved to maintain whatever national autonomy is left has hindered the EU from reaching its full potential. As for Adler-Nissen the main aspect is that EU created treaties signed with member states encourages deeper integration, which takes away sovereignty. While Mamudu and Studley, using tobacco policy as a case

study, theorize that there is an idea of "shared sovereignty" taking place within the EU. They argue that shared sovereignty allows for negotiations to take place between the EU and member states.

The concept of sovereignty is an important aspect to consider when exploring how Croatia has negotiated with EU conditionality and integration. As the theorists pointed out there seems to be a desire for the EU to gain more power, but there are still groups willing to do anything to maintain sovereignty. This directly connects to my own topic as Croatia's ties to its own sovereignty has become one of the focal points of the EU opposition platform within Croatia. In addition, the idea put forth regarding shared sovereignty and negotiations is also representative of the issues Croatia is facing. Croatia's attempts to arbitrate its integration with what the EU desires also plays a part when discussing the problems that have seemingly arisen as a result of EU integration. At the same time, literature regarding Croatia's sovereignty and the EU is virtually non-existent. My research will be a step in readdressing this issue since Croatia achieved independence in the 1990's. Basically, sovereignty is an imperative component of EU relations.

In order to analyze the potential challenges the EU's presence within Croatia it is important to acknowledge the state's issues. As far as the EU is concerned Croatia and the Balkan region poses numerous risks for the institution itself due to the prevailing beliefs the organization has concerning the area. Theorists have touched upon how the perceived issues affects the conditionality requirements the EU has on the Balkans (Hardy 2010, Hursoy 2010). Angelique Hardy argues that one of the EU's vital concerns for Croatia is its problem with government corruption and that as a result the EU has implemented harsh conditionality requirements. At the same time, Hardy questions the long term benefits of the approach as he



cites the backsliding of Romania and Bulgaria in the same area following their achievement of official membership within the EU. Hardy asserts that strict conditionality requirements is not always equivalent to sustainability. This is important in terms of Croatia as it also provides an added layer to the explanation as to why the EU implements such harsh conditionality requirements on the state. In addition, it begs the question of whether the EU's demands creates a setting where the government would rather hide or improperly deal with issues, such as corruption, in order to obtain membership quicker.

Working along the same lines as Harding, Siret Hursoy also focuses on the reasons behind EU conditionality within the Balkans. Hursoy's argument that the EU's extensive presence within the region is the result of its failure to intervene during the wars that had taken place during the 1990's. He claims that the intense requirements are due to the fact that the EU fears that there will be repeat security challenges that will threaten the institution, such as state disintegration and organized crime. Again, it seems that the EU desires the advantages of adding the Balkan region to its list of members, however it also wants a quick fix of the perceived issues. In addition, it is implied that these obstacles are to be solved according to EU terms. The strict requirements and the push for quick integration, may potentially create problems for not only the Balkan countries, like Croatia, but the EU itself.

The EU's conditionality demands has evoked negative reactions from various parts of the Croatian nation. Some of these researchers argue that many Croatian feels that certain conditionality requirements should be debated due to the part Western Europeans played within the state's war during the 1990's (Caratan 2009, Jovic 2011, Stojic 2006). Branko Caratan characterized that for many Croatians Western Europe is viewed as having been characterized by numerous misjudgments and belated responses during the state's fight for independence. In many

ways, Croatians feel that Western Europe had abandoned the country when it needed help the most. As a result, Croatian citizens find it hard to accept harsh conditionality requirements from a part of Europe that arguably refused to provide assistance. This reveals that there is already unresolved tensions between Croatia and the EU even at the beginning of the bidding process. Yet, the country continues to deal with the desire to be recognized as part of the European community. It also presents a potential problem that could reveal itself in the future since Croatia considers Western Europe's role in the wars an unresolved issue.

Dejan Jovic further explores the issue of Western Europe, the EU, and the wars of the 1990's in regards to Croatia. Jovic argues that since many Western European countries refused to come to Croatia's aid the issue was not only left unresolved, but created feelings of doubt and suspicion amongst the Croatian public. Since many of the Western European countries are also the leaders within the EU, the intentions of the organization have been brought up as well. The implication is that if the Western European countries had refused to aid Croatia in the past, how can the state trust that the EU has its best interests at heart. This analysis also brings up legitimate concerns regarding Croatia's future stability. Adding the dimension of distrust into the relationship further intensifies the risks of Croatia entering the EU.

Marko Stojic expands upon the same ideas as Caratan and Jovic, as he also analyzes the impact of the EU on Croatia. Stojic also questions the motivations of the EU in regards to Croatia, citing the war as one of the causations of doubt amongst Croatian society. He argues that the beliefs in the doubts concerning EU membership may put Croatia's sovereignty into question. The nation of Croatia underwent a war for independence in which there continues to be not only physical but emotional scars as a reminder of what occurred. Even remotely thinking about Croatia's future as an independent country being threatened adds an immense amount of tension

to the state's relationship with the EU. Basically, the position Western European nations had in response to Croatia's plight in the war has affected how the country views the EU and its conditionality requirements.

Another source of discontent is the fact that EU conditionality demands are aggravating and creating geopolitical problems for Croatia. Many authors have argued that the EU's demands are adding to Croatia's list of issues rather than benefits (Pridham 2008, Caratan 2009, Ashbrook 2010, Roter and Bojinovic 2005, Jovic 2011, Miosic-Lisjak 2006). Geoffrey Pridham argues that since the war there are still territories that still need to be resolved with other members of the former Yugoslavia such as Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is a very intense process for Croatia, and Pridham argues that the EU is not helping the issue by getting involved. The EU's desire to have an opinion on the matter doesn't sit well with many Croatians. It relates back to the claims that since Western Europe did not intervene, it also means that it does not adequately understand or respect the process of partitioning territory. In addition, the EU's role concerning this situation can create more tension rather than ease it.

Both Branko Caratan and Dejan Jovic address the issue of Slovenia as evidence of a new geopolitical problem as the result of EU intrusion. The location known as Piran Bay, a seaport within the Adriatic Sea, had been under Croatian jurisdiction for many years. As Croatia began its bidding process for EU accession, Slovenia contested Croatia's rights to the bay. After Croatia refused to surrender the bay to Slovenia, the Slovenes threatened to veto Croatia's application into the EU. In order to maintain Croatia's integration process, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor agreed to arbitration, which effectively increased the probability that Croatians could lose the bay to Slovenia. Caratan and Jovic cite this as a negative impact of the EU's effects on Croatia. In addition, it brings for the idea of conflict of interest in that Slovenia used its position as an EU

member to gain leverage against Croatia. Also this example points out that this incident created tensions between Croatia and Slovenia that had previously not existed before.

Petra Roter, Ana Bojinovic, and Nives Miosic-Lisjak also address a similar situation in which Croatia lost rights at the hands of the EU. Since Croatia has territorial rights to part of the Adriatic Sea, the country wanted to install ecological laws and preserves that would maintain the health of the sea. These laws were soon contested, however, as they would affect the fishing habits of both Italy and Slovenia. While Croatian parliament announced that the laws would be better restructured to address Italy and Slovenia, the EU indicated that it would rather Croatia forget the entire thing. Again, it seems that the EU used its power to work in the benefit of other countries at the expense of Croatia's sovereignty. This also leads to not only further strained relations with Slovenia, but Italy and the EU itself.

John E. Ashbrook also emphasizes the geopolitical pitfalls that have occurred within Croatia as a result of the state's relationship with the EU. Ashbrook argues that the EU's Stabilization and Association Policy (SAP) as well as the EU's Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has resulted in strong tensions within Croatia and its relationships to other countries as well as the EU. His point is that these policies are pushing Croatia to have more relations and dependencies on states that it had been part of Yugoslavia with. Since independence is still very new for Croatia, it does not want to risk its sovereignty for anything close to what the Yugoslavia had been. Although the state found itself consistently making concessions. In addition, issues of territory, and other consequences of war have not been fully resolved, which means that increased interdependencies between these countries only creates more stress and issues. Also Ashbrook notes that these policies call for an extended waiting period before Croatians can migrate to other countries as EU citizens, however, the time taken before outside citizens can

buy Croatian land is noticeably shorter. All of this indicates that Croatia is dealing with a variety of drawbacks as a result of EU conditionality. As a result, this works to prove that the EU has increased and created a variety of geopolitical problems for Croatia.

Another important issue that the EU has caused more tension with is the issue of minority rights within Croatia. Many authors note that the EU's push for quick inclusion and rights for minorities is actually creating more problems for Croatia and these groups (Caratan 2009, Roter & Bojinovic 2005). For Branko Caratan, Petra Roter and Ana Bojinovic the EU's push for minority rights within Croatia is conjuring up the past and creating challenges. Relating back to the fact that Croatia's war was recent, the country has been slowly stabilizing and progressing in all areas including minority rights. The quick push from the EU, however, is directing Croatia towards a position that it may not be ready for and is also allowing for negative memories to take precedence over progress. Again, it seems the EU disregards Croatia's past in order to achieve ideal integration from the state, but in the process the institution may have caused more issues.

A final concern from many Croatians is how the EU will impact the state's culture and values. Some theorists argue that the EU's goal may be to attempt Croatia's culture and values with that of their own (Stojic 2006, Ashbrook 2010). In terms of John E. Ashbrook he argues that the Eurocritics within Croatia feel that EU integrations will come at the cost of the nation's identity and values. They cite issues of geopolitics, and the war as reasons to believe that the EU intends to change the country. This plays upon the fears of those who fought or supported the war for an independent Croatia. In addition, this relates back to how Croatia and the rest of the Balkans may always be viewed as the other that must be molded and changed.

Marko Stojic analyzes the same fears in his research into the effects of Croatia becoming an EU member. Stojic asserts that if Croatia were to lose its culture and economic independence, it would also mean a loss of sovereignty. In addition, he notes the multiple organizations and groups who have vocally spoken against EU integration as an effort to preserve Croatian culture. Again this shows another added dimension to not only the tensions and the problems Croatia faces as a result of EU integration, but the very concept of identity as well.

Overall, these various works provide patterns that address the multiple dimensions of this conflict. The very heart of the matter is identity politics, and many of the works rely on this concept to not only discuss the EU's relation with Croatia but Central and Eastern Europe as a whole. They also work to show the similar lines of thinking in regards to the perceptions of Croatia., as well as sovereignty in regards to the potential effects the EU will have on the country. The goal of my research will be to add significant information to the subject of Croatia's accession with the EU, which will bridge the previously mentioned literature and will provide a new outlook in relation to this topic.

## Methodology

In order to assess and analyze my research question regarding Croatia's accession into the European Union (EU), I employed a variety of strategies. The first step taken was to obtain information regarding the European Union, particularly dealing with the area of EU expansion. This was achieved by using multiple online databases including JSTOR, and EBSCO as well as the official site of the EU. Also a number of books pertaining to this subject were found within the University of San Francisco library and used as part of my research. This information helped provide the factual components needed to understand the foundation and the goals that the EU was built upon. In addition, it assisted in presenting perspectives concerning how the EU's principles have grown and or changed throughout its existence. The evidence also helped in revealing how these changes have far greater impacts than its intended effects. In addition, the information gave insight into the EU's expansion into Central and Eastern Europe and how this has affected the EU as an organization, as well as the new member countries.

Following my research into the EU, I began to focus on collecting information regarding the specific relationship between the institution and Croatia. This involved gathering facts, perspectives, and statistics regarding not only Croatia's bid for EU membership, but its history as a country. This meant performing another exploration of the university library and the databases JSTOR and EBSCO. Also an investigation into the information provided by the CIA and the Clinton Library on Croatia added to my understanding and research as well. All of these documents provided insight into Croatia's journey to independence and the necessary steps the country was required to take in order to become eligible for EU membership. They also highlighted the potential issues this process could have for Croatia and other EU members. In

addition, the information produced knowledge in relation to the EU's strategy regarding Croatia and the potential pitfalls of this relationship.

The next stage of my investigation required me to travel abroad to Croatia in an effort to secure more research related to my topic. In order to acquire better knowledge regarding the relationship between the EU and Croatia, I visited the official EU office located in Zagreb, Croatia's capital city. At the office I gained access to the EU's library, which held literature regarding EU policy and its dealings with Croatia. The information I obtained revealed the EU's position in regards to their policies, especially those concerning culture and politics, which was helpful in understanding EU strategy in its preparation of Croatia becoming its newest member. Also other literature within the library presented pro-EU views from Croatians reacting to the accession process. This allowed me to understand some of the thought processes that went behind choices the country has made in order to become eligible for the EU. Basically, the EU library provided an additional dimension to understanding relations between the institution and Croatia.

While at the EU office I was directed by the personnel to explore the official website dedicated to Croatia and its pathway towards membership. Acting on this advice I investigated the site and uncovered various pieces of information that proved helpful for my research. Some of the evidence found on the website included the original Lisbon agreement, and specific questions regarding the EU's relationship with Croatia. This helped identify the agreements Croatia had signed on to as part of its conditionality for membership. They also pointed out other expectations the country had and must continue to meet if it is considered to be in good standing with the institution. These documents assisted in providing the necessary information needed to properly analyze the potential effects these requirements had on Croatia. In addition, the website



also allowed users to gain access to the speeches and articles given and written by the EU ambassador to Croatia as it strove for membership. This evidence provided a gateway into the EU's perspective of where Croatia met or failed to meet EU standards and exactly where the organization would like to see the country change. This meant further understanding the greater ramifications these changes would have on Croatia. Essentially, the website provided the EU perspective on the questions I had regarding its expansion into Croatia.

After acquiring the necessary research I needed to understand the EU position regarding Croatia, it was important for me to gain access to Croatian citizens and their opinions and thoughts regarding EU membership. In order to do this it was vital to find someone who not only knew people that were informed on this subject, but could assist me in achieving access to these individuals as well. In my search for such a person I came into contact with Ante Beljo. A former member of Sabor (Croatian Parliament), Beljo has and continues to be a major figure within Croatian politics. After pitching my research assignment to him, he quickly became my point of contact. Throughout the duration of my research Beljo educated me on multiple figures that held various roles within Croatian society, but were also heavily opinionated on the subject of the EU. After gauging who would be relevant and accessible for my research, Beljo assisted me in arranging interviews with the selected individuals. The help that Beljo provided me during my research in Croatia proved invaluable.

The interviews proved both informational as well as enlightening in relation to my research. In total 9 interviews were completed, 8 of which took place in Zagreb while the 9th interviews took place in the coastal city of Split. The respondents all held a variety of positions within Croatian society which included professors, parliament members, activists, reporters, and editors. Each interview took place in an area where the respondent felt was accessible and

comfortable for this process. The various locations included coffee houses, Croatian parliament, and office buildings. In addition, each respondent was asked a series of questions relating to Croatia's bid for EU membership. The type of questions asked ranged from general opinions regarding the EU, to inquiries into specific issues and or developments that have resulted from the country's relationship with this organization. The diversity of the respondents led to detailed and informative answers that assisted me in paving the way for my research. The knowledge imparted from these interviews have served as a large part of the evidence surrounding my arguments. Overall, the successful interview process proved vital for achieving my research goals.

The final phase of my research in Croatia was to obtain as much Croatian literature regarding the accession process as possible. This phase was worked on co-currently during the interview process. I obtained most of this literature from various individuals who had access or owned copies of books relevant to my research, while the rest were compiled from various Croatian bookstores throughout Zagreb and Split. These books and documentations also play an important role within my own research as well. The majority of this literature covers the Croatian EU perspective that is both hopeful as well as questioning in regards to the changes that the EU has influenced Croatia to undertake. It provides an introspective into Croatian life, principles, etc. all of which are important in my research assessment. In addition, the evidence proved to be incredibly helpful as much of this documentation could not be found in the United States, thus providing an opportunity to take a closer look into this Croatian perspective. Basically, the literature obtained in Croatia has proved to be an incredible addition to my research.

Overall, in order to answer my questions regarding Croatia and EU membership required me to undertake a detailed research process. The various stages of my work has taken a lengthy amount of time to complete. Roughly 9 months of research, 2 and a half months spent in Croatia,

was needed in order for me to collect the necessary evidence in order to properly analyze and answer my research questions. Various approaches were used to complete this process which included internet and library research, as well as interviews and literature collection. All of this served to enhance and provide the fundamental evidence needed to supplement my argument.

## **Chapter 1: The Legend of the European Union Identity**

Croatia's accession into the European Union on July 1st 2013 is not only the state's official induction into the supranational institution, but an equinox marking the division between Croatia's past and future relationship with the EU. The accession day bridges Croatia's turbulent journey of obstacles and concessions as an EU candidate with its future existence and challenges as an EU member. To a large extent EU expansion and membership is not only an agreement, but a fusion between the state and the organization. While this synthesis encompasses economics, and to a large degree politics, the aspect of identity often remains a forgotten component among this list. In many ways it can be argued that the concept of identity plays an important role when discussing the hardships that Croatia has and continues to face in regards to its alliance with the EU. Yet, in analyzing any relationship it is important to note both sides of the equation. As a result, one cannot discuss the impact EU membership has on Croatian identity without discussing how the institution views its own expansion. This is especially poignant in regards to the EU's approach of the identity issue and how this ultimately defines the way in which it relates to its members states. Over the duration of the EU's existence it has evolved in a number of ways, including its decision to leave the familiar sphere of Western Europe and expand eastward. This choice meant that the EU had to contend with states that had unique attributes and noticeably different cultures, hence making identity a vital concern for the organization's future. As time progressed the sustainability of the EU has become dependent on fostering a solid and independent identity. Yet the reality of multiculturalism has presented not only the institution's limitations, but its lack of ability to reconcile its failures in this area, which ultimately impacts new member states like Croatia.

### **The Quest for Prosperity, Power, and Immortality**

While the EU evolved and expanded it became apparent that identity must be a vital part of the organization's foundation in order to ensure future sustainability. The successful beginnings of the EU as an economic partnership naturally inspired reflection on ways in which this achievement could be enlarged and preserved. As a result, the concept of identity became the key that could both unite and maintain the institution in the future. This is touched upon by Dean Carroll who says, "Only by cementing a sense of European solidarity and identity, albeit by economic means, will Europe avoid a return to the sectarianism of its past and enter a metaphorical new Pax Romana era of prolonged peace."<sup>5</sup> In this statement Carroll points out the immense benefits a united European identity could provide, even if it relied on economic means to come into being. From the EU's perspective identity supplied a way in which it both anchored the organization and allowed ceaseless growth. At the same time, an opportunity to be part of the EU's successes is incredibly enticing for a state such as Croatia. Part the EU's attraction lies in the potential security and benefits a shared economy could provide a member state. In addition, the idea that the institution could create a European Pax Romana of peace and prosperity remains a large part of the EU's image and allure, which drives states like Croatia towards EU membership. Another correlating aspect of identity is the concept of a multicultural union based upon shared values. This is aptly discussed by Lisbeth Aggestam and Christopher Hill who say, "Prominent among the latter are the ideals of democracy, tolerance and respect for human rights, which both internally and externally have become key identity markers of the EU as a would-be carrier of universal values."<sup>6</sup> By the EU publicly emphasizing these beliefs they

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<sup>5</sup> Dean Carroll, "How Selective Should the European Union Be When Selecting Its Future Members?" *Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies* 12, no.3 (2010): 287.

<sup>6</sup> Lisbeth Aggestam and Christopher Hill, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* 84, no.1 (2008): 99.

are appealing to many aspects of human nature. These supportive and inclusive standards are captivating as they erase any doubt a state could have about the principles behind EU identity. It can be argued that this is especially true for states like Croatia, that had battled years of communist rule, and are presently looking for alliances that could be supportive of its own state. Essentially, the EU has realized that identity is a necessary component for both stability and growth, which functions to solidify the institution while drawing in new members.

In addition to identity becoming a necessary cornerstone of the EU, it aids the function of the organization at a supranational level. While the EU uses identity to attract new members, it is also used in ways to further solidify the institution. Rachael Craufurd Smith touches upon this notion by saying, "More boldly it might be argued that a shared sense of identity is also important in a democracy, in order to foster the sense of trust and mutual responsibility which is necessary to ensure that voters and politicians transcend their personal interests and act in the common good."<sup>7</sup> In her discussion of EU culture, Craufurd Smith is noting the relationship between identity and responsibility. In regards to the mindset of the EU this is extremely beneficial. If a member state acknowledges its EU membership as part of its identity, then undoubtedly a sense of obligation towards the institution is formed. As a result, the EU would have a cohesive organization with loyal member countries. On the other hand, the goal of a shared identity provides more questions than answers in regards to EU member states. While many of these countries welcome EU membership, the extent in which they desire EU identity can be disputed. A state, like Croatia, has its own perspective on EU identity, which in turn affects how responsible the country feels towards the organization. Karsten Xuereb expands on this view by saying, "Although the Commission does say it aims at combining cultural policy

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<sup>7</sup> Rachael Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004),201.

with other policies in order to contribute towards achieving fuller social cohesion and a shared sense of citizenship...it is difficult to see how the present political disposition of the EU's member states will help achieve that."<sup>8</sup> Xuereb correlates identity with the sense of citizenship, but questions whether states could transcend their politics and achieve the EU's goal of a unified identity. If this were attained, the EU would have the ability to function as a state, with its members acting as citizens. Yet, the question remains of not only the ability of countries to do this, but would they do it? Basically, while identity offers the institution power and stability it can only be achieved if the member state accepts an EU identity.

As the organization recognized the value and need for an EU identity, it had to discover ways in which to implement it amongst its member states. One of the approaches the EU has used to achieve the creation of a European identity is through the use of state relations. Siret Hursoy mentions this aspect in the following, "The development of foreign policy activities gradually fostered the creation of an independent European identity and a more unified political performance in the international arena. In other words, it became essential to have a European foreign policy to help to create an independent European identity."<sup>9</sup> Hursoy explains that by having member states follow certain foreign policies, it not only gives the EU a powerful reputation internationally, but works to unite its participants under one identity. In addition, foreign policy ensures that candidate countries are aware that these EU markers are a fundamental part of the organization's membership. Maintaining solidarity as a subconscious element of foreign policy works in the EU's favor. At the same time, however, to what extent are

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<sup>8</sup> Karsten Xuereb, "Why Should Cultural Policy In the European Union Address the Impact of Migration on Identity and Social Integration?" *European Cultural Policy and Migration* 49, no.2 (2011): 46.

<sup>9</sup> Siret Hursoy, "The European Union Foreign and Security Actions and the Western Balkans," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 9, no.1 (2010): 97.

states willing to conform to an EU classification? Does a country like Croatia have the desire to fully accept EU identity and more importantly does it really have a choice? These questions reveal the possible expense a state must undertake as it begins a relationship with an EU that is steadfast on solidifying its status through identity. This train of thought is also brought up by Craufurd Smith who says, "Cultural policy can be understood as an effort by the state to influence the transmission and development of this public culture. A narrow definition is needed, however, given that many public policies aim in one way or another to affect public culture."<sup>10</sup> While not discussing EU foreign policy, Craufurd Smith does note that there is an effort on part of the organization to use cultural code to further entrench EU identity within its member and candidate states. From the perspective of the countries involved with the EU, this can be seen as an effort on part of the organization to mold the state in accordance with EU values. Overall, the EU has used its own policies to foster the creation of an independent EU identity. As a result, this has had an additional impact on the organization's relationship with its member and candidate states and their respective ideals and beliefs.

As the EU uses policy to promote its own individualism , this goal has expanded to other areas of the organization as well. The development of a shared identity has formed the core of many EU decisions and codes that the institution decides upon. Cristian Jura contemplates this idea as follows, "The Commission work to ensure that the promotion of culture and cultural diversity is given due consideration when all regulatory and financial decisions or proposals are made."<sup>11</sup> Jura's analysis reveals that the EU's extensive involvement in the area of culture is another way in which it can further create and maintain an EU identity. The organization retains

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<sup>10</sup> Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law*, 172.

<sup>11</sup> Cristian Jura, "Multiculturalism: A Confusing European Approach," *Journal of Politics and Law* 5, no.2 (2012): 107.



this ability as it can decide what is beneficial or obstructive in regards to EU ideals. Craufurd Smith expands on this idea when she says, " In seeking to 'nation build' in this way the Union faces, however, a central difficulty: to select symbols or traditions from any one Member State entails rejecting those from other Member States. "<sup>12</sup> From this quote it is clear that Craufurd Smith associates the EU's investment in cultural policy as a form of nation building. Again, by making identity a focal point, the organization is re-enforcing its foundation. Despite the profit this tactic has for the EU, it remains to be seen whether this can be successful for both the institution and member states. As Craufurd Smith conveniently points out choosing specific traditions and ignoring others can create tension. If members feel that the EU's policies regarding identity negatively affect them how are they able to overcome these setbacks? Also how does the EU deal with these seemingly inevitable challenges? While the EU has made identity creation a priority, there is doubt of whether the implementations aspect can be successful for both the institution and its members.

### **Subdued By the Illusion of Identity**

Despite the EU maintaining an ambitious vision regarding identity, the realities of multiculturalism have generated complications for the organization. One of the larger issues being the sheer magnitude of differences that can be found throughout Europe. This is indicated by Aggestam and Hill who say, "Europe is immersed concurrently in deeply contested political debates about the roles of culture, religion, ethnicity and identity."<sup>13</sup> This is a crucial analysis as it reveals that culture and identity pervade so many subjects that people and even states themselves consider a vital part of existence. Yet, the problem lies in the fact that many times

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<sup>12</sup> Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law*, 278-279.

<sup>13</sup> Aggestam and Hill, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy," 97.

these issues are the source of deeply entrenched debates and tensions. How can an organization, even one as large and powerful as the EU be able to define an identity that could be inclusive for all of its members? In addition, how does a state like Croatia proceed if the identity standards marketed by the EU are in conflict with its own values? This idea is expanded upon by Jura who explains, "The European political project cannot ignore this plurality of cultures in which each national culture expresses and imposes itself differently."<sup>14</sup> Again, the obstacle presented is how does the EU ensure that the organization is not only maintained, but its members are satisfied in regards to identity if each state has its own beliefs regarding the concept. Essentially, it seems that while the EU has vast goals regarding identity, it must contend with a variety of controversial subjects that it may have not envisioned undertaking.

Not only does the EU have to commit to solving these identity topics, but it must deal with the obscurity that comes attached to such a challenge. As the EU attempts to push forward doubt remains about how to approach these problems. This idea is presented by Aggestam and Hill in the following, "The multicultural idea of 'unity in diversity' rests on a 'constructive ambiguity' to enable it to be acceptable to everyone. There are tensions inherent in the concept, between the European and the national, and between the individual and the community."<sup>15</sup> In this statement Aggestam and Hill suggest that the EU strategizes to make identity issues vague in nature so it is seemingly inclusive and universal. Yet, this also leads to difficulties regarding divisions between the EU, the state, and citizens. Xuereb also suggests similar thoughts on this tactic when he states, " However, whether cultural communities can be viewed as groups with their own special rights or as citizens with particular cultural characteristics whose rights and

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<sup>14</sup> Jura, "Multiculturalism: A Confusing European Approach," 107.

<sup>15</sup> Aggestam and Hill, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy," 99.

duties are part of those of the larger community remains unclear."<sup>16</sup> Xuereb takes the uncertainty approach of the EU further by implying that inconclusiveness still leaves the question concerning the role of unique cultural groups and EU identity unanswered. What obligations does the EU have towards these factions and vice versa? It seems that the obscure strategy of the EU to deal with identity has only muddied the waters for both organization and state.

In many ways the presence of multiculturalism has only exposed the limitations of the EU in this area as it attempts to obtain a universal European identity. The uncertainty and constraint regarding multiculturalism and identity can be found within the EU's core. This concept is illustrated by Jura who remarks, "In fact, there was no strategy to really implement multiculturalism as a transversal policy in European societies. No relevant document has been adopted; no specific laws to promote multiculturalism were passed."<sup>17</sup> Jura points out that while the EU has consistently acknowledged and implemented identity and culture within its platform and decisions, it still has not dealt with the issue of multiculturalism. It seems the EU seemingly would rather avoid the subject that find a way to adequately find a solution. As a result, states and cultural groups belonging to the EU are left in an effective limbo regarding the safety of their beliefs and rights within the organization. This is further exemplified by Craufurd Smith who says, "Though Community law is in principle able to accommodate Member State policies in the cultural field, in practice many domestic regulations of this type have been found to be either disproportionate or discriminatory."<sup>18</sup> Craufurd Smith expands on the EU's inability to contend with these problems by recognizing that even the legislation produced in relation to

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<sup>16</sup> Xuereb, "Why Should Cultural Policy In the European Union Address the Impact of Migration on Identity and Social Integration?" 34.

<sup>17</sup> Jura, "Multiculturalism: A Confusing European Approach," 113.

<sup>18</sup> Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law*, 29.

multiculturalism has gaps and contradictions within it. Thus, the whole topic of multiculturalism is left a tangled mess, which inevitably leads to immense tensions not only between EU states and the organization but members themselves.

The inability of the EU to contend with multiculturalism is further compounded by the trickledown effect the organization's uncertainty has had on its own member states. The lack of direction from the EU has led member states to be more expressive of their own beliefs and rights. This an idea that is touched upon by Aggestam and Hill who say, "Approaches to multiculturalism still vary greatly between EU member states because they are linked to distinct national experiences of state-building and concepts of citizenship...Multiculturalism as an approach is far from universal."<sup>19</sup> This reveals that the states themselves have different views on what constitutes acceptable multiculturalism due to each having unique attributes and experiences. As a result, it makes the ability for states to agree on the issue so much more difficult, which ultimately fosters tensions within the organization. Roberto Belloni follows this train of thought when he explains, "Not only do EU member states hold different views, but European institutions themselves reflect these disagreements."<sup>20</sup> Belloni's assessment reveals that the mutual benefits advertised by the EU also mean shared problems as well. Since the EU does not have a firm direction regarding multiculturalism, it allows states to express their differing and often contending beliefs on the matter, which in turn begins to characterize the institution itself. Therefore, multiculturalism has proven to be one of the major flaws of the EU, which in the end may have negative consequences for all member and candidate states involved with the organization.

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<sup>19</sup> Aggestam and Hill, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy," 103.

<sup>20</sup> Roberto Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," *Journal of Balkan & Near Eastern Studies* 11, no.3 (2009): 325.

## Battles Fought Over Shattered Dreams

The EU's shortcomings in the realm of multiculturalism has resulted in an array of tensions and challenges that continue to negatively affect the institution and its members. A significant issue is the EU's lack of direction regarding multiculturalism has led to animosity within the organization. This notion is covered by Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood who assert, "In Europe this charge assumes a role in the backlash against multiculturalism and is particularly evident in debates concerning the accommodation of religious minorities..."<sup>21</sup> This statement indicates that without a clear agreement regarding multiculturalism, member and candidate states find themselves arguing over their own beliefs and EU's policies. Craufurd Smith argues that these matters worsened with the development of the Single European Act, which limited member state power in the area of culture. Craufurd Smith notes that, "With the loss of the Member State's legislative veto in significant areas, the Commission's willingness to develop cultural policies tailored to Community rather than domestic needs, would, from the Member States' point of view, have taken on a more troubling dimension."<sup>22</sup> From the standpoint of the EU, it seems their strategy is to maintain control by limiting member power. At the same time, however, this naturally prompts concerns about whether this restraint is really in the benefit of the members? How can a state, like Croatia, make a viable contribution and even protect itself if it has no power to do so? Jura accounts for these complications in the following, "The French President Nicolas Sarkozy declared in February 2011 that the multicultural model is a European 'failure'; he thus, adhered to similar opinions previously expressed by Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, and by David Cameron, the British Premier, says AFP 'Yes, it is a

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<sup>21</sup> Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, "Interculturalism, Multiculturalism or Both?" *Political Insight* 3, no.1 (2012): 33.

<sup>22</sup> Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law*, 48.

failure."<sup>23</sup> This statement reveals the severity of the multicultural issue within the EU. The fact that representatives from the leading EU countries, France, Germany, and Britain have all declared multiculturalism a failure leaves the organization in chaos. As a result, what fills this void of uncertainty? Is the issue meant to be ignored or dismissed? How can states remain stable in an organization immersed in confusion concerning such a sensitive and valuable subject for all involved? Seemingly the road to a unified EU identity has only meant fragmentation and a loss of direction and rights for member states.

In addition, the failure of EU identity and multiculturalism has pervaded the organization's processes. It has led to EU member states questioning whether multiculturalism can ever be attained within the organization successfully. Jessica Sprague Jones covers this topic when she remarks, "With that cultural diversity came a complicated history of policy adoption, as several European states came to question the efficacy of multiculturalism as state policy in the face of race riots and the failure of some immigrant communities to become economically and culturally integrated within their host countries."<sup>24</sup> It seems that with the EU being unable to contend with multiculturalism, states have begun to distrust the organizations belief that all groups could be included and successfully assimilated. This has led to an outward expression of disagreement amongst citizens and cultural groups in the form of protests, riots, etc. It has also meant the states have expressed doubt in regards to overall trust in the EU on this matter. Anca Pusca delves into this topic through her case study of Poland entrance into the EU and France's insistence that Polish migration within the EU be delayed due to a fear of Polish plumbers taking jobs away from French nationals. Pusca expresses the significance of this event as follows, "The

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<sup>23</sup> Jura, "Multiculturalism: A Confusing European Approach," 110.

<sup>24</sup> Jessica Sprague-Jones, "Extreme Right-wing Vote and Support for Multiculturalism in Europe," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 34, no.4 (2011): 536.

metaphor of the 'Polish plumber' thus came to signify a divided Europe, one side of which was ready to defend itself against an incoming wave of 'Polish plumbers.'"<sup>25</sup> This is a prime example of the brewing tensions underneath the surface of EU principles of inclusiveness and multiculturalism. The fact that the French successfully supported a bid to stall Polish migration is an act of self-interest that goes against the so-called EU standards the organization was founded upon. More importantly it can be considered a serious case of double standards and divisions that defines the EU and European state relations. Essentially, the breakdown of EU identity and multiculturalism has only created further challenges that put the organization's sustainability into question.

As the EU's fantasies of a European identity have arguably failed, the very principles of the organization have had to adapt and transform to the realities of a complicated and multicultural Europe. The tensions that had been growing amongst EU member states regarding identity has outwardly expressed itself through the expansion process. This is covered by Belloni who says, "Many EU member states, led by France, are opposed to further enlargement in the absence of a new treaty. Only Croatia is expected to be admitted, once the objections of neighboring Slovenia are overcome. For the most part, the issue of enlargement is frustrated by a lack of enthusiasm among European officials."<sup>26</sup> While EU expansion had always been correlated with prosperity, the issues regarding multiculturalism has physically slowed and transformed this process. It seems that EU members are beginning to see expansion as a negative, rather than positive outcome. This is also significant as Belloni uses Croatia as an example for his argument. From his analysis it is implied that Croatia has only narrowly been

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<sup>25</sup> Anca Pusca, "Visualising the EU: The Central and East European Enlargement Experience," *Perspectives: Central European Review of International Affairs* 16, no.1 (2008): 11.

<sup>26</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 328.

accepted into the organization. Therefore, this lack of support has a direct impact on Croatia's place within the EU and its stability as a state. Similarly Xuereb argues, "... for the EU to develop an agenda which promotes ideas and values about being European that go beyond establishing strict norms of what distinguishes communities from others, thus separating European and non-European people on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion and other cultural differences."<sup>27</sup> This quote is important as it reveals that the organization may be allowing personal beliefs about subjects such as culture and race dictate how it relates to an EU member state, candidate, or particular group within the organization. Pusca expands this concept by again noting the Polish plumber and saying, "...but the extent to which it managed to address the larger problem of discrimination and xenophobia, present not only in France, but all throughout the European Union, Poland included, is unclear."<sup>28</sup> Directly attacking the issue of discrimination within the EU and its member states has called into question whether the EU is actually a wellspring of problems rather than prosperity. The EU appears to have become a haven based on divisions, rather than the unified Europe it claims to be.

While the EU continues to promote itself as the epitome of unity and mutual prosperity, the reality of the EU's image is one riddled with problems due to its failures in the area of identity. The divisions and debates surrounding the EU's identity have come to define how the EU operates. This is an aspect touched by Pusca who says, " It was also a question of defending one's identity and nation and defeating a potentially wrong turn in how the EU thinks about itself. Representation, at least in this particular case, remains very much about identity if not also

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<sup>27</sup> Xuereb, "Why Should Cultural Policy In the European Union Address the Impact of Migration on Identity and Social Integration?" 46-47.

<sup>28</sup> Pusca, "Visualising the EU: The Central and East European Enlargement Experience," 11.



about ideology."<sup>29</sup> This statement reveals that the EU has become driven by powerful member states making decisions on their own personal perceptions rather than the original principles the EU was founded under. This can be a potentially disastrous outcome not only for Croatia, but many other EU member and candidate states, as multiple beliefs and standards would create problems rather than solve them. Craufurd Smith supports this point by saying, "Article 151(2) requires one to focus on a separate, though related, issue, namely *who* should be regarded as European."<sup>30</sup> Reverting back to the foundations of the EU and its Lisbon Treaty, Craufurd Smith notes that expansion and relations has come down to whether one is considered European or not. Yet, what standards or characteristics define European? Who or what decides that definition? Finally, how are states impacted by such an approach? It seems that EU identity began as an empowered idea gone wrong, which has inevitably turned the organization into a breeding ground for fragmentation and discrimination.

### **Conclusion: What Exactly is Plan B?**

While this report centers on the particular challenges regarding Croatia's relationship with the EU, it is important to fully understand the organization it has now aligned itself with. Croatia has entered an institution that marketed itself around the ideas of unity, identity, and prosperity. Yet, while the EU attempted to achieve its goal of an EU identity, the realities of multiculturalism have proven too complicated for the organization to handle. Strategies involving an obscure approach to multiculturalism has only shattered alliances and has created tensions amongst member states. Without the EU providing direction, support, or solutions to these issues the institution has dwindled down to discrimination and double standards. As a

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<sup>29</sup> Pusca, "Visualising the EU: The Central and East European Enlargement Experience," 12.

<sup>30</sup> Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law*, 286.

result, this leaves many questions regarding the protection of state's rights within this field.

Despite the EU's epic inefficiency in promoting an inclusive identity it still continues to survive.

With multiculturalism being deemed a failure, exactly what new tactic has the organization resolved to use in order to maintain its sustainability? More importantly how does this strategy affect member states?

## **Chapter 2: Europeanization: The Profits and Prices of A Movement**

Not only did the European Union fail to create an independent identity, but the unsuccessful attempt developed tensions within the organization itself. Although the EU has not provided a solution for the situation, it continues to sustain and even grow. The institution's ability to expand into Croatia reveals that the EU has begun to rely on a new approach, while outwardly maintaining its platform based on the ideas of inclusive identity and multiculturalism. With so many member states expressing their distaste for the changes that occurred within the EU and their own countries as a result of this identity goal, it was inevitable that a power struggle would ensue. As noted previously leading members of the EU, which included France, Britain, and Germany, had announced their disappointment with the results of the multicultural approach the organization had taken. Unsatisfied with the situation left to the EU and their respective states regarding this matter, it seems that these powerful members had resolved that the best approach would be to change any state or group that did not conform to their ideals and standards. In effect, these Western European states launched a campaign of Europeanization within the institution. Suddenly, states that weren't considered "European" had to transform themselves in order to either remain in the organization's good graces, or to merely be considered as a candidate for membership. Of course this transformation has a significant impact on Croatia as it must contend with this project of European homogenization. The larger ramifications of this strategy on states like Croatia can be seen through the EU's development of this tactic and the consequences that have already begun to reveal themselves.

### **Western Protectionism**

It can be argued that the failures of inclusive multiculturalism within the EU, made Europeanization not only attractive, but profitable. EU members began to move towards this plan as identity became seen as a necessary evil in the path of the organization's interests. This thought is explored by Xuereb who says, "The cultural agenda in Europe is of relatively minor importance yet ideologically highly charged. Culture is a thorny issue particularly when the division of competencies between the EU and its Member States is considered."<sup>31</sup> This remark indicates that culture is a tension filled subject that comes attached with an enormous amount of power. As a result, it is in the organization's benefit to attempt to bring this issue under control. Another influential factor leading Western European members towards Europeanization is that true multiculturalism means an exchange between all parties involved. Jura touches on this subject in the following, "It appears that multiculturalism addresses to elites not to individuals who live their life in the midst of other cultures. But most of all we must not forget that multiculturalism is a policy that encompasses at least two parties willing to share each other values."<sup>32</sup> This analysis drives to the very heart of the matter of multiculturalism within the EU. The institution desired an independent identity that worked in the best interests of the organization, rather than being inclined to exchange beliefs and culture. As a result, once Western European EU members became unsatisfied with the multitude of cultures being shifted throughout the expanse of the organization, it became clear that they had to make this area work in their favor. This concept is suggested by Zlatan Krajina who asserts, "Nonetheless, the idea of 'common European identity' remained both a necessity and a repeatedly discovered problem."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Xuereb, "Why Should Cultural Policy In the European Union Address the Impact of Migration on Identity and Social Integration?" 41.

<sup>32</sup> Jura, "Multiculturalism: A Confusing European Approach," 113.

<sup>33</sup> Zlatan Krajina, "Mapping' the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs: BBC's 'Pre-Accession' Coverage of EU Membership Candidate Croatia," *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 46, no.5 (2009): 143.

This implies that the EU recognized that the power of identity could not be dismissed. At the same time, the prospect of Western European states containing the issue became increasingly appealing. For countries like France, Germany, and Britain this is a welcomed proposal, but what happens to states, like Croatia, who are not only unwelcome within this club, but are seen as liabilities that must be dealt with? The failure of the EU identity project did not inspire the organization to continue its search for a solution based on its principles, but allowed the belief of a Western European controlled culture to come into being.

The failures of EU identity has not only compelled Western European states to assume control over the organization, but has fostered the development of a Europeanization campaign. It has become clear that identity within the EU has only encouraged discrimination and divisions. Tobias Theiler expands upon this notion in the following, "Yet while west Europeans unconditionally trust in one another's peaceful mutual dispositions they have not experienced a corresponding rise in overarching communal identifications (that is, as European or EU-European)."<sup>34</sup> Theiler makes a key assessment of Western European EU members, by saying that these countries mistrust any state outside the western sphere. As a result, this strong divide may have far reaching implications for members and candidates hailing from Central and Eastern Europe. The mistrust indicates that Western European states do not view their eastern counterparts as equals. Therefore, it is fair to say that the organization's policies towards Central and Eastern Europe are inspired and driven by what the Western EU members desire. In addition, Europeanization is also a way for Western Europe to extract a profit from Central and Eastern European countries anxious to enter the institution. Carroll delves into this subject matter when he explains, "The polar opposite to integration is disintegration and no progressive

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<sup>34</sup> Tobias Theiler, "Does the European Union Need to Become a Community?" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50, no.5,(2012):791.

European leader will countenance regression when there is an opportunity to proceed forwards by propelling EU norms to new geographical territories."<sup>35</sup> This statement reveals that these so called "EU norms" are a way for Western European members to extend control and reap the benefits these states have to offer. Furthermore, Carroll's depiction of the EU in this area is very similar to the way in which one would describe an empire, or a controlled state like the Soviet Union. Is Croatia and other states within this part of Europe entering an EU founded on mutual benefits and equality or an organization focused on obtaining members that will merely be subservient to a larger EU agenda? In truth, the EU campaign of Europeanization is a tactic used to exploit EU member and candidate states outside of the western sphere.

### **Unity Without Identity**

Once Europeanization began to take hold within the organization, Western EU members began to focus on the ways in which this strategy could be implemented across Europe. Establishing Europeanization within the EU's relations with members and candidates became the first plan of action. Bedrudin Brljavac explains the depth of Europeanization when he remarks, "Europeanization process may have two functions. First, it explains the influence of the European politics and institutions on the domestic politics. Second, Europeanization stresses the process of change through which domestic actors adapt to European integration."<sup>36</sup> It can be inferred that Europeanization is a transformative process that must be undertaken by the state in question. Furthermore, Europeanization in this case is defined as a far reaching mechanism that has the ability to change any aspect of the state whether it be politics or culture. This means that if a state, like Croatia, has policies or values that are not seen as in accordance with EU

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<sup>35</sup> Carroll, "How Selective Should the European Union Be When Selecting Its Future Members?" 287.

<sup>36</sup> Bedrudin Brljavac, "Assessing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Litmus Test for the European Union," *Journal of Comparative Politics* 5, no.1 (2012): 9.

standards, it will have no choice but to change them. Not doing so would put a member's position within the organization in jeopardy and candidate states would risk their EU membership negotiations. This idea is considered by Marko Stojic who says, "The influence of the European Union is today widely accepted by all European states as an integral part of their policy-making process. The final goal of this process, often called Europeanization, is to prepare countries to become EU member states and to accept the democratic values and norms shared by all EU member states."<sup>37</sup> Again, this statement supports the idea that Europeanization is not a process that a state has the ability to dismiss or even be selective about regarding certain subject areas. Belloni comments on the wider impact of Europeanization goals when he mentions, "In the long term, inclusion into European institutions can soften exclusive, nationalist identities by adding a new layer of identification."<sup>38</sup> This reveals that Europeanization will not only be a changing force within the European state who undertakes the process, but the EU's goals will be to create an allegiance within these states that is far stronger than any national identity a person may value and adhere to. Essentially, the Europeanization system is a powerful mechanism within the EU that has the ability to apply extensive changes on a country that works in the organization's benefit.

While the Europeanization process is a powerful strategy within the EU, it had to be implemented properly in order to be successful. The tactic had to be undertaken in a way that maintained the efficacy of the project, but made it seem an unimportant step to the states in question. This concept is touched upon by Theiler who says, "Yet as was equally argued, if citizens are to develop commitments to the EU through their existing national identifications,

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<sup>37</sup> Marko Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia: Party and Popular Attitudes towards Membership of the European Union in Serbia and Croatia," *Perspectives on European Politics & Society* 7, no.3 (2006): 312.

<sup>38</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 323.

overarching institutions and processes must..retain a measure of ‘constructive ambiguity’ to facilitate their incorporation into the different national identity constellations.”<sup>39</sup> Before when attempting to establish a unified EU identity based on multiculturalism, the tactic of obscurity resulted in a complete failure for the institution. This time, however, the EU used this strategy to their advantage. By making their Europeanization process ambiguous, states will not see the campaign as an exploitative measure. At the same time, this will grant the EU an opportunity to instill its selective ideals and standards within multiple areas of the state. Brljavac also comments on this approach when he remarks, "In addition, Europeanization can be comprehended from the angle of —top-down approach as some form of domestic change that is caused by European decision-making.”<sup>40</sup> The significance of this statement is that Europeanization isn't a subject that every EU member state is allowed to make a contribution to. Without this aspect, the EU is implementing so-called European standards decided by a small group of Western European states. This implies that all of Europe must adhere to these EU requirements if they desire to have a meaningful relationship with the institution. Basically, Europeanization has allowed the EU to assert their standards and desired changes on countries, who by all account are largely unaware of the massive implications this mechanism has on their states.

Not only does Europeanization provide the EU extensive control over its members and candidates, but it works in a way that subtly encourages these states to conform to this process. Countries continue to aspire to be part of the EU's greatness, which in turn creates an impulsive drive for the states to join and remain in good standing with the organization. The result of this is that under these conditions the countries do not confute unwanted changes or at times even question them. Brljavac points out an example of this when he explains, "Since Europeanization

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<sup>39</sup> Theiler, "Does the European Union Need to Become a Community?"793.

<sup>40</sup> Brljavac, "Assessing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina,"8.



process is a two-way street both the EU and aspirant country hold a responsibility for the pace of the process."<sup>41</sup> This indicates that pressure is put on states to meet Europeanization demands. Essentially, the EU informs the country about desired changes and explains that the state must be held accountable for these adjustments if it is to remain in good standing. Thus, countries rush to placate the EU without thinking about the future consequences these changes could have on the state itself. Stojic expands on this topic when he says, "The mechanism of Europeanization – i.e. the way the EU influences different countries – can be described as combining policies of conditionality and norm diffusion or social learning."<sup>42</sup> This implies that Europeanization provides the EU an advantage over states as they use it as part of the organization's conditionality requirements. Since this process is part of those obligations a country, like Croatia, does not have the chance to undergo EU negotiations on a level playing field, there will always be this feeling that the country must undertake the EU's required changes. In addition, by using terms such as "norm diffusion" and "social learning" to characterize Europeanization, Stojic is reflecting the discriminatory undertone this mechanism has. Brljavac summarizes the impact of Europeanization on states when he remarks, "In fact, Europeanization process is not only about adopting and implementing EU policies, rules, norms and values... it is equally important that the EU has set clear standards, measures and rules which are to be adopted by aspirants on the membership."<sup>43</sup> Brljavac reveals that Europeanization is merely a plan to influence countries to conform to EU standards, regardless of what the future ramifications may be. In many ways, Europeanization has become the EU's oppressive tool that forces countries to be submissive in the area of state transformation.

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<sup>41</sup> Brljavac, "Assessing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina,"6.

<sup>42</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia,"313.

<sup>43</sup> Brljavac, "Assessing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina,"8.

## Navigating the Seas of Doubt

In regards to the states undertaking or commencing the process of Europeanization, they are also contributing to the EU's plan of control and uniformity. The EU through this strategy is seemingly moving the organization towards a point in which it would have absolute control over European ideals, values, and standards. This idea is expanded on by Carroll who comments, "Pure homogeneity must not be the goal—rather it should be celebrated heterogeneity through a partnership of countries adhering to some universal traits and values as well as establishing unbreakable partnership links that in future must define the supranational body."<sup>44</sup> Through his criticism of EU and identity, Carroll is acknowledging that there is an effort to homogenize Europe. This means that states who hold their differences as invaluable, may have to abandon them upon the EU's request and adapt themselves to a life dictated by what the EU views as normal. This train of thought is continued by Theiler who notes, "While perceptions of Europe remain heavily 'nationalized' national identifications have become partially 'Europeanized.'"<sup>45</sup> This statement means that the EU is achieving its goals by having citizens claim an EU identity and in turn responsibility that supersedes their own national country. The implications of this is that future choices of how a state proceeds will be highly influenced by what the EU desires. Yet, some like Krajina have noted the negative consequences that homogenization may bring. This can be seen when he remarks that, "A complex unrest has been contextualizing discussions about what kind of unity the EU imagines, and in what ways it demarcates its borders over a single geographical entity – the continent of Europe – claiming its name, and infusing it with a culture of divisions."<sup>46</sup> Through this statement Krajina is questioning the concept of

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<sup>44</sup> Carroll, "How Selective Should the European Union Be When Selecting Its Future Members?"288.

<sup>45</sup> Theiler, "Does the European Union Need to Become a Community?"788.

<sup>46</sup> Krajina, "Mapping' the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs,"143.

Europeanization and even going as far as to note the divisions and problems that may occur in Europe as a result of it. Essentially, Europeanization has been successfully implemented, but potentially at a high cost for member and candidate states of the EU.

Although Europeanization can be considered an effective plan, it still has created tensions within states aligned with the EU. Many times Europeanization attacks the very core or belief system of a country. Brljavac explains this notion when he says, "However, very often it happens that European norms and values are in clash with EU aspirant's values and norms."<sup>47</sup> This quote indicates that states are often forced to give up their individual beliefs and standards. Usually countries desire EU membership and benefits to the point that they undertake the transformations, but it is not without resentment. This begs the question of not only whether a loss of values is worth a place within the organization, but where does this animosity lead? The larger ramifications of this tension is expanded upon by Carroll who argues, "This indoctrination is not always viewed positively by the demos in the candidate country but fear of loss of national identity is accepted and often overwhelmed by positivity about employment and trade opportunities..."<sup>48</sup> Again, this statement seems to point out that in the moment of negotiation states submit to EU policy. Yet, there remains a doubt of whether these changes come at the cost of one's own identity and values. The Europeanization process is not only unequal and discriminatory, but it creates an antagonistic environment within Europe, where states pay a high price for this alliance.

### **Conclusion: Finding Yourself on the Wrong Side of the Fence**

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<sup>47</sup> Brljavac, "Assessing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina,"8.

<sup>48</sup> Carroll, "How Selective Should the European Union Be When Selecting Its Future Members?"279.

With the failures of an inclusive multicultural identity far behind the EU, it found success in the Europeanization approach. Fed up with the failures of multiculturalism, Western European EU countries took it upon themselves to use EU power in their favor. Hence Europeanization, a campaign of exploitation came into being. The process of Europeanization meant that states had to become part of an EU effort at homogenization. This implies that any belief or value a state that the EU considered in conflict with its own standards would have to be changed as part of conditionality requirements. While this has caused tension, the desire of maintaining an alliance with the EU often supersedes any doubt a state may have. As a result, the EU is able to pervade its member and candidate states and expand its control. In addition, Europeanization standards are very much driven by Western European states leading the organization. The larger implications is that EU standardization policy completely alienates the Central and Eastern European members that have arguably become part of a discriminatory East-West divide within the organization. Furthermore, it also puts these states into a submissive role within the institution where they must consistently conform to EU norms, thus putting a state's individual identity at risk. In this chaos of tension, double standards, and power struggles the EU has expanded into Croatia. A country geographically located within Central Europe, Croatia enters the organization on the disadvantaged side of the east-west divide. In many ways, the Europeanization process can be held accountable for many of the challenges Croatia has had to contend with in regards to its relationship with the EU. These are issues that attack the very heart of the state, beginning with the EU's insistence that Croatia be marked with a label reading Balkan.

### **Chapter 3: Balkanization: The EU's Blacklist**

Croatia, like any other European state, found itself allured to the potential benefits the EU could offer the country. As a result, it underwent years of transitions and negotiations in order to be inducted into the organization. Unfortunately, for Croatia many of the hopes and dreams it associated with EU membership, were mere illusions in the end. This is especially true in regards to the country's identity. For Croatia EU membership symbolized an opportunity for the state to be recognized as an independent European nation, that had and continues to contribute to the well being of the continent. Despite these ambitious dreams, Croatia found itself entering an EU based upon divisions and the insistence that every member that did not meet Western European standards must be Europeanized. As a result, Croatia became an additional victim and part of a long list of states that have become entangled in the tensions, and issues the Europeanization approach created. In the case of Croatia, this meant a long road of concessions that threatened the very heart of the state and its people. For every benefit the country received, it had to give up tenfold in the area of its own identity. Croatia hoped that EU membership would mean an abolition of the negative experiences and associations that had been part of the state's history. The tragedy of it all is that the EU embodies every malicious aspect of the country's past that Croatia has been determined to escape from.

One of the elements that pervades Croatia's history and its relationship with the EU is the concept of Balkanization. For many years the EU has referred to Croatia as a Balkan country. Not only do Croatians disagree with this label, but the characterization has become synonymous with numerous stereotypes and negative beliefs regarding the country. The classification of Balkan is in contention with the ways in which Croatia views its own state and how it foresees its future within the EU. To make matters worse, the EU has allowed Balkanization to guide its

relations and policy making towards Croatia. As a result, the EU has effectively put Croatia in a category where it receives systematic punishment due to its forced attachment to the Balkan label. The negative effects the term Balkan has on Croatia can be seen in a variety of ways. To begin with, it is a concept that defines the way in which the EU views Croatia and challenges the state's perspective of itself. In addition, it is a depiction that has influenced the EU's Europeanization of the country, and the Croatian determination to preserve its identity.

### **The Meaning of the Balkan Mark**

In order to understand the ramifications the term Balkan has on Croatia, it is important to explain the various meanings behind the concept. While some attribute the Balkan label as a purely geographical term, although highly inaccurate, it is a classification that comes loaded with a variety of beliefs. Maria Todorova explores this idea in her analysis of the depiction and treatment of countries considered part of the Balkans. She addresses the geographical perspective of using the term Balkan in the following, "In fact, this is a simultaneous process: at the same time that 'Balkan' was being accepted and widely used as geographic signifier, it was already becoming saturated with a social and cultural meaning that expanded its signified far beyond its immediate and concrete meaning."<sup>49</sup> This evidence is significant as it proves that Balkan is much more than a geographical marker, it is a label that represents many views ranging from the cultural to the political. In addition, by classifying Croatia as Balkan, it becomes synonymous with all of the perspectives that are part of the term. The signifiers that are attached to Balkan also work to create a division within Europe. This is touched upon by Belloni who says, "... the Balkans has been described as a form of Orientalism, part of a dichotomy between the rational and enlightened West and the feminine, passionate and irrational Orient. For some commentators,

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<sup>49</sup> Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21.

the Western Balkans continues to be constructed as an 'Other' towards which European identity is constantly redefined."<sup>50</sup> This analysis of the name Balkan is crucial for a variety of reasons. To begin with, Belloni affiliates the term with Edward Said's theory of Orientalism. Said's concept largely deals with how the depiction of the East pervades many subjects whether it be politics or culture, and how this ultimately influences the way the West relates to the region. By joining these two ideas together, Belloni is asserting that countries considered part of the Balkans experience similar situations as the East does within the topic of Orientalism. Furthermore, Belloni's explanation is that the Balkans will always be considered as Europe's negative other. While Todorova does not argue that Orientalism and Balkanism are one in the same, she does note correlations. This can be seen when Todorova remarks, "That the Balkans have been described as the "other" of Europe does not need special proof. What has been emphasized about the Balkans is that its inhabitants do not care to conform to the standards of behavior devised as normative by and for the civilized world."<sup>51</sup> This statement also supports the idea that Balkan is an adverse and divisive term. As a result, by regarding Croatia as Balkan, it puts the state in a negative and non-European category. Essentially, Balkan is more than a geographical term, it is an alienating and destructive label.

Not only are the Balkans considered separate from all that is European, but they are perceived as a problem by the EU. The beliefs behind Balkanism also expand to the citizens of these so-called Balkan countries, as their presence within this region and throughout Europe is seen as a vital issue. This aspect is explored by Todorova who explains, "'Balkanization' not only had come to denote the parcelization of large and viable political units but also had become a

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<sup>50</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 330.

<sup>51</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 3.

synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian."<sup>52</sup> This means that countries, like Croatia, that are considered to be part of the Balkans are thought to be uncivilized. As a result, this naturally opens the doors for unequal and maltreatment within organizations such as the EU. Krajina directly attacks this point when he comments, "A subsequent reference to a weak and backward entity (Croatia) before a strong and ordered system (EU) follows from this quite easily."<sup>53</sup> In his work, Krajina covers Croatia's depiction within media throughout its accession process. He conclusively found that the negative aspects of Balkanism came to define the characterization of Croatia. The significance of this statement is that Balkanism is a legitimate concept that has very real ramifications for a country considered to be Balkan. Furthermore, Krajina's analysis of Croatia reveals that its forced association with the term Balkan has produced visible consequences for the state. Basically, the infamous perceptions behind Balkanism has extreme effects on the countries that are classified as such.

The believed challenges attached to the Balkans plays an important role in influencing the EU. In many ways the EU's goals for the Balkan region are driven by the stereotypes associated with Balkanism. This is expanded by Branko Caratan who remarks, "...the Europeanization of the Balkans provides the best protection against the Balkanization of Europe. Here the term 'Balkanization' does not mean the fragmentation of nation-states, but the entanglement of South-Eastern European countries in retrograde processes and unsolved problems."<sup>54</sup> Caratan's assertion continues to portray the Balkans as a destructive region. His suggestion that the Balkans must be Europeanized, suggests that the area is in some way a threat to the rest of Europe. It is exactly these stereotypes that encourage Western Europe and

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Krajina, "Mapping' the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs," 161.

<sup>54</sup> Branko Caratan, "The European Union, South-Eastern Europe and the Europeanization of Croatia," *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 46, no.5 (2009): 174.



institutions like the EU to discriminate against states deemed to be Balkan. These thoughts are explored within Belloni's assessment of the EU's role within the Balkans in which he says, " This approach reinforced the feeling among international observers and citizens and leaders in the Western Balkans that the EU lacks a real strategy to address the region's problems."<sup>55</sup> Again, Belloni compounds this idea that the Balkans somehow represents insurmountable challenges for the EU. As a result, countries like Croatia are treated more like criminals rather than equals within the EU. An example of the issues this perspective creates is revealed by Krajina who argues, "The news screening of the intense awaiting for the European Council's decision on whether to start the negotiations with Turkey and Croatia, sheds light on the sophisticated cultural refurbishment of new/old fronts of Europe's margins, and its 'others': the Orient and the Balkans."<sup>56</sup> This shows that Croatia has been viewed as Europe's other even at the beginning of its EU accession process. As a result, this is evidence that the EU is driven by the negative associations attached to the Balkan name. In many ways, EU policy within the Balkan region is dictated by the superstitious beliefs that constitute Balkanism.

The influence of Balkanism has continued to create a permanent view of the region, even within the EU. In regards to the Balkans the EU has depicted itself as an effective knight in shining armor. It seems the goal is to salvage the Balkan region by saving the states from themselves. This is covered by Belloni who remarks, "...today the Balkans are better understood as a transitional concept, something not yet Europe, or not quite European, but on its way to European integration. The Balkans might be backward, but they have the potential, at least in nuce, of entering the European mainstream, defined by progress, stability and prosperity."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles,"325.

<sup>56</sup> Krajina, "Mapping' the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs,"145.

<sup>57</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles,"330.

From Belloni's depiction he implies that the only aspect that isn't wrong with the Balkans is its potential to be molded into proper European states. In addition, Belloni repeatedly characterizes the region using Balkan stereotypes by claiming that it is both non-European and backward. This definition only supports the fact that so called Balkan countries entering the EU are being accepted at a disadvantage. These ideas are expanded by Carroll who says, "It may take 10 or 15 years or more but South Eastern European and Balkan states actually have the potential to transcend cultural and religious boundaries, the East–West divide and to redefine the principles of the Western world and the EU."<sup>58</sup> Again, the Balkans are discussed in terms of European potentials and divides. This subversive condescending attitude towards Balkan states is very much characteristic of the treatment these states receive in regards to their alliances with the EU. Marijan Bošnjak makes the correlation between Balkanism and EU policy within his book when comments, "We mainly learn about the creation of the Western Balkans through the media. There are, however, some concrete plans that are funded by the EU Commission, but the media does not talk about them."<sup>59</sup> This quote is significant as it reveals that Balkanism is very much a living concept within Europe that continues to adversely affect states that are classified within this category. In addition, it also indicates that the EU plays an important role in supporting and marketing this concept within Europe, as well as its relations with so called Balkan countries, like Croatia. Overall, any state that is considered to be Balkan has and continues to be victimized by the stereotypes and negative views attached to this label.

The combination of Balkanism and the EU has led to the organization forming very specific views in regards to Croatia. From the beginning of its accession process, Croatia has unhappily voiced its concern with the EU's insistence that it be classified as Balkan or in more

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<sup>58</sup> Carroll, "How Selective Should the European Union Be When Selecting Its Future Members?"289.

<sup>59</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, (Zagreb:kolovoz, 2010), 282. Author Translated.

political terms the south-eastern region. This pattern has been noted by Josip Jović who remarks, "Croatia is increasingly treated as part of a united region, called the Western Balkans or southeastern Europe..."<sup>60</sup> This statement indicates that the EU is resolved to treat Croatia as part of the Balkan region, despite its desire to be recognized as an independent European state. The larger ramifications of the EU's view of Croatia is explored by John E. Ashbrook who says, "One of the most controversial aspects of Croatia's road to candidacy has been the EU's decision to consign Croatia to the Western Balkans. The Croatian government resisted this grouping, but it was only through compliance that they were offered the promise of potential candidacy."<sup>61</sup> This confirms that the EU had been well aware of Croatia's distaste for the Balkan label. Yet, the organization not only insisted on maintaining the classification, but used EU membership as leverage against the country. Knowing how much Croatia desired to be inducted with the EU, the institution made it clear that unless the state accepted the marker there would be no EU membership. Essentially, this situation is proof of how Balkanism allows Croatia to be treated unfairly within the EU. Krajina compounds this concept by arguing, "... Croatia's prosperity and problem-causing for the 'Western' evaluators, which brought the opposing forces of 'accession' and 'othering' to a schizophrenic relation of mutual support. Between these forces, the overriding impression was that of a transitional stage in attaining 'European-ness' which the country appeared in."<sup>62</sup> Krajina's analysis indicates that Croatia is considered an outsider in regards to Europe. It is portrayed as both a challenge and a lucrative prospect for the EU. Since the state is perceived in such adverse terms, it has no equality within the institution. Therefore, Balkanism has formed the foundation of the EU's view and treatment of Croatia.

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<sup>60</sup> Josip Jović, "Božnstvo Novog Montoeizma," *Globalizacija i Identitet*, ed. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, Ivan Bekavac (Zagreb:Katma, 2004), 72. Author Translated.

<sup>61</sup> John E. Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism, and the Identity Politics of EU Enlargement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 57, no.3 (2010): 33.

<sup>62</sup> Krajina, "Mapping the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs," 164.

## Croatian Truth Against Balkan Perceptions

In regards to Balkanism and Croatia, the state desperately desires to disassociate itself from the term. One reason is that the controversial label influences the self perception of states deemed to be Balkan. Todorova comments on this idea when she says, "It is virtually axiomatic that, by and large, a negative self-perception hovers over the Balkans next to a strongly disapproving and disparaging outside perception."<sup>63</sup> This statement indicates that so called Balkan states are very much aware of the negative perceptions that are associated with this classification. Instinctively, Croatia has continuously voiced that the views and beliefs behind Balkanism are very much in conflict with how Croats perceive their own state. The importance of a distinct Croatia identity is covered by Dr Đuro Njavro who asserts, "Croatian national identity as the essence of a moral community whose solidarity as a group has created a solid foundation for the modern Croatian state."<sup>64</sup> Njavro reveals that Croatia identity is an integral part of the state itself. As a result, Croatians do not want to accept an identity that is not their own. Unfortunately, Croatia's self perception and the prevailing Balkanist attitude within the EU has only created tension. This is expanded upon by Krajina who notes that, "Another Balkanist continuity is evoked as the story goes on to negotiate Croatian identity between its Balkan origin and contested 'European-ness.'" As Krajina documented the portrayal of Croatia's EU accession process, this analysis brings an important issue to light. His statement proves that the EU declines to accept the ways in which Croats view their own state. This EU's refusal to recognize Croatia according to the country's terms indicates that the state is not only discriminated against, but that it must battle Balkanism itself in order to sustain. Basically, Balkanism has challenged

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<sup>63</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> Đuro Njavro, "Hrvatski Identitet i Globalizacija Hrvatski nacionalni i kulturni identitet u procesu globalizacije," *Globalizacija i Identitet*, ed. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, Ivan Bekavac (Zagreb:Katma, 2004), 36. Author Translated.

Croatia's sense of self as this strange concept as formed the foundation of EU perceptions regarding Croatia.

One aspect of Croatian identity the EU refutes, is the state's insistence that it has always been a European country. For Croatians they have always considered themselves part of Europe. This is acknowledged by Dr. Goran Dodig who investigates why Croatians do not question the area of identity within the EU accession process. Dodig concludes the following, "At first glance, one might say that this issue was completely unnecessary because it is the most natural fact that Croatia is a member of the European family."<sup>65</sup> This reveals that European classification is an integral part of Croatian identity. The issue, however, is that the EU does not view the country as such. As a result, this encourages tensions among Croatians who are aware that the EU categorizes the country as non-European. The dispute this creates is illustrated by Zvonimir Šeparović. When asked whether obtaining a European identity formed part of the state's desire for EU membership, Šeparović stresses, "We don't need to prove we're European."<sup>66</sup> This reveals that doubting Croatia's European identity is an unfathomable concept for Croatians. In addition, it brings attention to the disagreements between the EU and the Croatian state on this matter. From Šeparović's statement it is implied that since Croatia is asked to consistently provide evidence that it is European, is a form of discrimination against the country. This idea is compounded by Branimir Lukšić reflecting on Croatian identity argues, "To be Croatian is to be representative or part of a very old culture to be oriented towards Middle, Western Europe and part of the Mediterranean society."<sup>67</sup> This quote supports the belief that Europe is such an

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<sup>65</sup> Dr. Goran Dodig, "Hrvatsko društvo i Europska unija-nadanja i strahovi," *Hrvatska nacionalni interesi i EU*, ed. Dr. Mate Ljubičić, Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, (Zagreb:Katma, 2006), 237. Author Translated.

<sup>66</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.

<sup>67</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.

integral part of Croatian identity that it cannot be separated from it. Therefore, the EU's refusal to acknowledge Croatia as European attacks the very heart of Croatian identity.

Not only is Europe part of Croatia's internal and official political identity, but it is a concept that is continually expressed within Croatian culture. For Croatians, Europe is the state's past, present, and future. This is aptly expressed by Dr. Vinko Grubišić when in responding to questions regarding Croatia and Europe states, "Croatia always part of Europe traditionally, and culturally."<sup>68</sup> By using the terms "tradition" and "culture," Grubišić is indicating that European identity pervades all of Croatian society, and is an aspect that is continuously expressed by the Croatian people. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman details this concept within his own response, "Croatia was always part of Europe historically, culturally, politically even during history of time when it was not independent. Even from Roman times Croatia belongs to the West part, Croatia part of Austro-Hungarian empire developed concept of Middle/Central Europe. If you ask anybody in Croatia if he or she belongs to Balkans or Europe the answer will always be Europe."<sup>69</sup> This reveals that Europe isn't something that is only felt by Croatians, but it is a concept that is part of the state's history. In addition, Tuđman's statement emphasizes the universality and attachment Europe has amongst the Croatian people. It shows that Croats do not perceive nor do they want to have any affiliation with the Balkan name. The desire for Croatia to be recognized as separate from the Balkan classification is presented by Ivan Miklenić as follows, "By joining the EU, Croatia is returned to its natural environment - Central Europe, where it formally belonged from 1102 until 1918."<sup>70</sup> This shows that Croatians believe that they have always been part of Europe, and that EU membership is a logical step for the country. In addition, Miklenić's statement

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<sup>68</sup> Dr. Vinko Grubišić, author interviewed, June 28, 2013.

<sup>69</sup> Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, author interviewed, July 5, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> Ivan Miklenić, author interviewed, July 7, 2013.

indicates that Croatians believe EU membership will officially recognize Croatia as a European country. Despite the EU's affirmation that Croatia is non-European, Croatians consider Europe a very important part of their culture and heritage.

While Croatians regard Europe as a significant part of their identity, to be regarded as Balkan is both offensive and detrimental to Croatians. The elimination of Croatia's forced affiliation with the Balkan term is extremely vital for the Croatian state and its people. This can be seen when Ashbrook asserts, "Ever since independence a common identity discourse in Croatia has focused on the country's place as a Central European—not Balkan—territory. In discussing accession experiences, Croatian writers find it appropriate to compare Croatia with other Central and East European countries."<sup>71</sup> Ashbrook's comments reveal that the eradication of the Balkan label is so important for the country that it has become a vocalized campaign within Croatian politics, and academia. Yet, the EU's consistent desire to categorize Croatia as Balkan has encouraged Croatians to dispute this action and prove the legitimacy of their self-perception. Responding to the allegations that Croatia is Balkan Bošnjak clearly explains his view as follows, "Not really we are Middle Europe, almost Mediterranean as well because Adriatic extension. No we're not, East of the river Drina no not Eastern Europe partly. I've got objections on all grounds politically, geographically. Look at the term Balkans, set of hills in Bulgaria entire region given name due to bloody hills in Bulgaria. Geographically should name region based on dominant features."<sup>72</sup> This statement provides compelling information related to Croatia's stance regarding the Balkans. To begin with, Bošnjak points out that according to standardized geography, Croatia is no way part of the Balkans. This presents an issue that reverts back to the stereotypes and beliefs behind Balkanism. This is clearly a discriminatory act

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<sup>71</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 29.

<sup>72</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

because if Croatia is not geographically part of the Balkans then why does the EU continue to define it as such? Also Bošnjak's response supports the fact that Croatians do not agree with Balkan classification. These concepts are also presented by Ashbrook who says, "The post-Tudjman governments, the Croatian public, and various experts often expressed distaste at being 'forced' into agreements and classification with the Western Balkans."<sup>73</sup> This further indicates that Croats are very dedicated to their anti-Balkan campaign, and are aware that the EU membership process has continued to make the Balkan label an issue the country must deal with. Basically, Croatians believe the Balkan label is nothing more than an improper term that is affecting Croatia, and they are willing to defend and justify their position against this perception of the country.

Not only do Croatians openly disagree with the Balkan term, but they view it as a negative symbol of the past that the EU has happily been promoting. While Croatians are quick to defend their anti-Balkan stance, there is also a growing awareness that the EU does not agree with their position. This is expressed by Ashbrook when he remarks, "Croats resented this geopolitical placement because it countered their self-perceptions and self-promotion as Central European or Mediterranean. Moreover, as many pointed out, Romania and Bulgaria, arguably less economically and politically developed than Croatia, were not forced into a general Balkan agreement before their accessions, even though both are Balkan states."<sup>74</sup> This highlights both the discrimination and determination of the EU's Balkan efforts within Croatia. The unfairness towards Croatia is illustrated by the EU's refusal to put Romania and Bulgaria within the same Balkan category. In addition, the EU's treatment of Croatia as a Balkan country, continues the trend that challenges Croatia's self perception. Bošnjak's addresses these issues in the following,

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<sup>73</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 31.

<sup>74</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 29.



"Project of 'Balkan' EU driven project. I have proof that this is an EU project financed by them the logical question, is why forming those countries--minus Slovenia and Albania. A reconstitution of Yugoslavia just under another name, an attack on Croatian independence."<sup>75</sup> Bošnjak brings several important issues to light within his response. Not only does Bošnjak note the EU's affiliation with the Balkan term, but he argues that the organization has been fully supporting and marketing this label within Croatia. In addition, he also acknowledges the discrimination aspect of it as he explains that Slovenia and Albania are surprisingly left out of the Balkan category, despite either bordering or being geographically close to Croatia. Finally, Bošnjak identifies a disturbing trend by acknowledging the similarities behind the EU marketed Croatian Balkans and the former Yugoslavia, which have elicited legitimate concerns regarding the Croatian state within the EU. Antun Dubravko Jelčić also contributes to these ideas in the following, "The terms of Western Balkans does not exist in history or geographically. Something leaders in EU brought to existence, synonym for Yugoslavia. Many ideas before Yugoslavia fell apart term like Euroslavia that is what is dangerous for us those types of terms."<sup>76</sup> Like Bošnjak, Jelčić acknowledges both the EU's involvement with defining Croatia as Balkan, and the striking similarities between the EU's Balkan Croatia and Yugoslavia. His analysis alludes to Croatia's tortured past and the fears associated with the parallels between the EU's Balkanization campaign and Yugoslavia. As a result, Croatians are recognizing the EU's Balkan plan for Croatia and are defending themselves against this classification.

The EU's ambition to establish a Balkan Croatia has elicited numerous fears amongst Croatians. The comparison between the EU's vision of Croatia and Yugoslavia has aroused suspicions that Croatia may be forced to relive its negative past. This is expanded upon by

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<sup>75</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>76</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo who says, "That is the biggest problem for Croatia because EU put in Croatia on Western Balkans that is synonymous for Yugo. Western Balkans never existed geographically, economically, historically, culturally something they don't want to use term Yugoslavia (Yugo) because knew people would be against so use synonym forcing that term which is against Croatian interests altogether. People in Croat government won't do anything about it."<sup>77</sup> In his response, Lošo addresses the potential ramifications if the EU's policy within Croatia is anything like the former Yugoslavia. He argues that while there are elements of Yugoslavia within the EU's Balkan campaign, the organization intelligently avoids using the terms Yugoslavia or Yugo. This is done so the EU does not directly express its intentions or arouse the anger of the Croatian state and its people. Lošo makes an additional and valid point by commenting that nothing about the EU's Balkan campaign within Croatia is in the interests of the country. From his analysis it is implied that there are already visible risks for Croatia in regards to its identity and the dangers of Balkanism. This idea is expanded upon by Grubišić when responding to question of a potential Euroslavia, "Question of terminology, there is a saying those who do not regret Soviet Union heartless, those who think it can be restored brainless. Croats not heartless but think of unity, it's nonsense."<sup>78</sup> Grubišić's analogy of Croatia's battle with the Balkan term is both striking and informative. To begin with he remarks that Euroslavia and other labels are only a question of semantics. Therefore, he is explaining that no matter how one addresses the EU's campaign the root problems and dangers for Croatia are still there. In addition, by using his analogy he is arguing that Croats do not regret the dissolution of Yugoslavia, but have dreams of a type of unity within the EU that is based on ideals rather than reality. Basically, the EU's Balkan policy poses direct threats to Croatian interests, but Croats

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<sup>77</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>78</sup> Dr. Vinko Grubišić, author interviewed, June 28, 2013.

still cling to their feeling that should provide benefit of the doubt in regards to how beneficial and secure EU membership will be for Croatia.

### **Croatian Ideals of EU Membership and the Tragic Realities of EU Europeanization**

Despite the risks of the EU's Balkan policy, Croatians believe they can contend with the adverse campaign. The overwhelming idea is that official EU membership provides an escape from this Balkan classification. This is brought forth by Jelčić who says, "EU can have positive and negative effects. If EU would mean to go away from Balkan concepts in that case would be positive, if happen opposite than it will be negative for Croatia, with that we need to make difference between stances of Europe and EU."<sup>79</sup> Jelčić's statement provides a number of implications. The fact that although there are acknowledged risks, Croats are willing to gamble with their identity, reveals the immense allure the EU continues to have on states like Croatia. In addition, while the EU's association with Balkanism is felt by Croatians, they still believe EU membership holds the key to their escape from such a label. As a result, this continues to drive Croats and the state towards the institution. Yet, Jelčić stresses that if membership results in a permanency of Balkanism within the country, Croatians will be willing to fight. This idea is supported by Admiral Lošo who remarks, "Instead of definition of Croatia in EU would rather talk about what stand Croatia should take in EU. First Croatia should stand and explain to other member states not to put us in Western Balkans category, Croatia shouldn't agree."<sup>80</sup> From Lošo's response it seems that the prevailing idea is that official EU membership will give Croatia the power to justify their platform regarding Balkanism and remove the label altogether. While these are encouraging goals for the Croatian people, these ideals omit the possibility that not only

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<sup>79</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

may these ambitions be unsuccessful, but that Croatia may find itself in a far more precarious position. Essentially, while Croatians disapprove of the EU's Balkan position, they believe EU membership would provide an opportunity for the country to enact change in this area.

The Croatian belief in the ability to create change, has led them to have very idealistic expectations regarding EU membership. One of the prevailing beliefs is that EU membership will mean an end to the Balkan classification of Croatia. This is exemplified by Ashbrook who comments, "For most, inclusion in the EU means that Croatia will finally become an accepted member of the European community, severing the cognitive link their state and the Balkans that many Westerners take for granted."<sup>81</sup> This shows that Croatians feel that EU membership will provide the European legitimacy that forms such a large part of their own identity. This concept is touched upon by Miklenić who emphasizes, "Deliverance from the Balkans in Croatia is an extremely important step. Given the strong legacy of the totalitarian period and abuse of power and position for personal and group interests, I expect that the EU will be the framework for the development of the rule of law, and pluralist democracy."<sup>82</sup> This indicates that an escape from Balkanism is crucial for Croatians to the point that they are willing to take a risk with EU membership, with the hopes that it will be provide a new beginning for the country. This is compounded by Admiral Lošo who says, "If Croatia doesn't join EU, Croatia would be staying Western Balkan, synonymous for former Yugoslavia. Joining EU Croatia will be same as Slovenia, won't be part of that region anymore. Only because of that am I for EU membership."<sup>83</sup> This proves that EU membership seems to be a means to an end for Croatians anxious to escape the Balkan label. This desire is so infectious that it has become the primary if not only force

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<sup>81</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 27.

<sup>82</sup> Ivan Miklenić, author interviewed, July 7, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

driving Croatians towards EU membership. Therefore, EU membership is far more than an economic opportunity for Croatians, it is considered to be a pathway of escape from the Balkans.

Although Croatians have high expectations for EU membership, there is a growing concern that these ambitions may end in catastrophe for the state. Some Croatians have already begun to note the gap between Croatia's expectations of EU membership and the unfortunate realities. Branimir Lukšić addresses this subject when he remarks, "Croats want the community of European nations remain Europeans the Croatian way, as they have been over the centuries of its history, and like other European nations Europeans on their national way."<sup>84</sup> Lukšić points out that Croatians want EU membership according to their terms, however, this may not be a viable option for the state. He indicates that Croatia wants to be part of a European community and organization, but retain everything that is held sacred within the country. Unfortunately, it seems that the EU does not share Croatia's views, therefore setting up the state for disappointment. This is commented on by Belloni who argues, "On balance, the current strategy risks raising the expectations of south-east European citizens about the future benefits of membership, with little assurance of positive short-term, concrete developments. The difficulty to deliver on promises explains a growing disillusionment about the EU."<sup>85</sup> Belloni focuses on the fact that the expectations of Croatians have already put them at odds with the EU, as the organization either cannot or will not deliver the ideals that Croatia had in mind when it decided to become part of the EU. As a result, this naturally will lead to strenuous relations between the institution and the Croatian state. Lukšić addresses a significant and related point when he asserts, "Europe is obviously not the same as the EU. Therefore personally accept EU-skepticism, not

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<sup>84</sup> Branimir Lukšić, *Nedovršena Hrvatska*, (Mostar:Fram Ziral, 2008), 84. Author Translated.

<sup>85</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles,"330.

euroscepticism."<sup>86</sup> Lukšić argues that Croatians are naturally a part of Europe and desire to continue this affiliation. Yet, he notes that the principles of the EU is drastically different than the Europe Croatia wants to be a part of. Therefore, he claims that Croatians who voice their dissatisfaction with the EU should be labeled EU-skeptic rather than euroskeptic. Even though Croatians have ambitious hopes for the EU, there are suspicions that membership may be more problematic for the state than it is beneficial.

Despite Croatia's perseverance to eradicate Balkanism, the EU has continued with its plans to Europeanize the state. The EU continues to insist that Croatia needs to be Europeanized, if it is to be considered a welcomed member within the organization. This is expanded upon by Belloni who comments, "As long as such a process is structured around the idea of the increasing involvement of the EU in the Western Balkans with the intent of including this region into European institutions and socializing it by means of European norms..."<sup>87</sup> This proves that the EU continues its efforts to mold Croatia according to its standards of what is considered European. Milan Jajčinović notes the EU's emphasis on transforming Croatia when he says, "Balkanization is a goal that is especially aimed at the Croatian culture."<sup>88</sup> Jajčinović's comment reveals that the EU is not only promoting Balkanization within Croatia, but it has shaped the EU's policy and relations regarding the country. It is implied that the EU will only relate to Croatia according to Balkan terms, which is in direct conflict with everything the country stands for. Krajina notes an example of this in the following, "A sense of the country's immobility and inferiority before its individual evaluator comes to mind here, as Croatian politicians are referred to as a group against the 'Western' individual, who is to meet the country's alleged need of

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<sup>86</sup> Lukšić, *Nedovršena Hrvatska*, 85. Author Translated.

<sup>87</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 326-327.

<sup>88</sup> Milan Jajčinović, *Od Jugoslavije Do Euroslavije*, (Zagreb, Grafički zavod, 2013), 194. Author Translated.

'policing from without.'<sup>89</sup> As Krajina points out the EU treats Croatia as a primitive state. This even pervades to the EU's relationship with Croatian politicians, as they are considered to be the epitome of everything that is not Western. Again, there is this ongoing trend that no matter how vocal Croats are that they share no characteristics with the perceptions forming Balkanism, the EU is still intent on treating them as such. In many ways the EU's Europeanization approach regarding Croatia is to make sure it is retained within the Balkan category.

Not only does the EU's Europeanization plan within Croatia mean the state must continue to be defined as Balkan, but it must also make numerous changes related to this approach as well. The Europeanization of Croatia is more about the country's conformity and appeasement of the EU, than it is a process that benefits the sustainability of the state. Caratan delves into this topic when he claims, "The Europeanization and transition have been essentially one and the same process – the former, with its requirements, has significantly helped and facilitated the latter. It has all boiled down to the adoption of EU requirements and regulations."<sup>90</sup> This statement indicates that since Croatia must undergo this Europeanization process, it is really taking part in a forced transformation, where it must make significant changes to its own state in order to satisfy the EU. One of these transitions is the country accepting an unwanted Balkan identity. Mladen Stančić focuses on the specificity of this issue when he emphasizes, "Western Balkans - will have to be able to adapt to the standards and criteria of the Euro-Atlantic structures. Due to the Croatian accession to the structure in the desired time it is absolutely the last chance for Croatia."<sup>91</sup> While Stančić is referring to Croatia's accession process, his analysis

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<sup>89</sup> Krajina, "Mapping the 'Other' in Television News on International Affairs," 152.

<sup>90</sup> Caratan, "The European Union, South-Eastern Europe and the Europeanization of Croatia," 171.

<sup>91</sup> Mladen Stančić, *Dugo Putovanje Hrvatske U Europsku Uniju*, (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2005), 131.

is key as it shows that the country had no choice but to oblige the EU in any way possible unless it wanted to lose its chance to obtain EU membership. Furthermore, Stančić's referral to Croatia as the Western Balkans implies that assuming this Balkan identity forms a major portion of EU policy within the country. This reveals that while Croats continue to protest the Balkan name, it continues to be part of EU relations with the country. Essentially, the EU disregard of Croatia's self-perception and dissatisfaction maintains that the state must remain Balkan and transform in the ways in which the organization wants.

### **Defending Croatian Identity**

In the midst of the Europeanization of Croatia, the Croatian people have begun to focus on maintaining the preservation of their identity. With the increasing number of changes that have taken place within Croatia as a result of the EU, there has been a growing concern that the Croatian identity and lifestyle will be lost. This is commented on by Ashbrook who remarks, "Euroskeptical Croats see the EU as not only more stringent but in some cases threatening to both nation and state.. In their view, EU membership means the erosion of the characteristics that make Croats Croatian, including religion and national identity."<sup>92</sup> This illustrates that there are worries that the EU required changes will eventually force Croatia to transform or abandon the fundamental aspects of the state. This idea is also professed by Dodig who claims, "We need to be deprived of the misconceptions that the economic parameter is the only parameter of a good and quality of life. Croatian tradition, individual and collective consciousness is based on a much broader basis of quality of life and therefore with caution: Croatia and the EU can with and without the EU to achieve quality of life for its citizens."<sup>93</sup> Dodig is pointing out that Croatians

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<sup>92</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 32.

<sup>93</sup> Dodig, "Hrvatsko društvo i Europska unija-nadanja i strahovi,"242. Author Translated.



value much more than economic benefits. He cites cultural traditions and the collective conscience as fundamental characteristics of Croatians that must be preserved. Furthermore, he implies that Croatians should not think of the EU as the only way for the state to achieve quality of life and stability. These concepts are expanded by Lukšić who says, "I think that Croatian accession to the EU would be too fast, such that the political unifying approaches of the super-state, and the entry with the current conditions, will be harmful to the economy, national identity, and the social and moral life of Croatians."<sup>94</sup> This reveals that like Dodig, Lukšić believes that EU membership poses great risks for Croatians regarding their identity. He is arguing that the fast changes occurring within Croatia to appease the EU may come with large consequences for Croatia later on. As a result, Croatians have a legitimate fear that the Europeanization approach of the EU is also a direct attack on Croatian identity.

The Croatian fears of Europeanization reveals the importance of identity within Croatia, and the possibility that it could all be lost as a result of EU membership. One belief is that if the EU negatively impacts identity, there may not be a way to stop it. This theory is put forth by Stojic who asserts, "The source of their Euro-rejects' attitude is the fear that the Croatian identity would be in danger within the European Union and that Croatia will be in the position of a slave. Though not a priori against the EU, they underline that there are no guarantees that the Croatian identity will be preserved..."<sup>95</sup> This shows that Croatians acknowledge that there is a risk that losing their identity may be the ultimate price for EU membership, and that Croatian EU membership will only benefit the organization, rather than the country. Božo Skoko explores these fears further when he explains, "Identity in the modern world is becoming almost synonymous with a number of general trends, which are expressed through the policy of violent

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<sup>94</sup> Lukšić, *Nedovršena Hrvatska*, 25. Author Translated.

<sup>95</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia," 331.

political and cultural unification."<sup>96</sup> Skoko notes that the EU's insistence on Europeanizing Croatia could lead the country into a situation where its identity must be abandoned in order for the EU to achieve political and cultural unification. Croatians like Mate Kovačević contemplate the possibility of an EU that is detrimental for the state when he reflects, "In politics, like in the film, everything possible. But I think it will not happen, unless it is wanted by the Croatian people. Everything else would be violence like what happened in 1918 and 1945."<sup>97</sup> This statement indicates that the Croatian people reflect on the possibility that the country may be worse off within the EU identity wise as it was within the former Yugoslavia. Yet, Kovačević also reveals his faith in the endurance of the Croatian people, that they will not change unless they desire to do so. He goes so far as to make parallels between the negative possibilities of the EU and significant points within Croatian history where the people struggled to preserve their national identity in the face of both the kingdom and communist Yugoslavia. Kovačević implies that Croatians would not surrender without a fight if these adverse possibilities became reality. Essentially, the Europeanization of Croatia has encouraged Croats to reflect on their identity and the possibility that EU membership could mean its demise.

The grim prospects for Croatian identity within the EU, has also influenced Croats to assess their weaknesses in this area. For Croatians the smallness of the country is a constant concern. Njavro articulates these concerns in the following, "If this hypothesis is correct, the survival and development of small countries such as the Croatian must be based on a constant reflection of their cultural identity in terms of the constant changes surrounding the situation."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Božo Skoko, " Kako Očuvati Hrvatski Identitet Učiniti Ga Prepoznatljivim, privlačnim i profitabilnim u svijet?" *Globalizacija i Identitet*, ed. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, Ivan Bekavac (Zagreb:Katma, 2004), 47. Author Translated.

<sup>97</sup> Mate Kovačević, author interviewed, July 8, 2013.

<sup>98</sup> Njavro, "Hrvatski Identitet i Globalizacija Hrvatski nacionalni i kulturni identitet u procesu globalizacije," 38. Author Translated.

In this quote, Njavro is expressing that Croatians should be aware of their identity and work to preserve it. His argument is based on the assertion that the changes that the EU commences could be detrimental for small countries, like Croatia, that want to retain the unique values and characteristics of the nation. Miklenić compounds these thoughts when he remarks, "As a small country, Croatia will have to make more effort to preserve their identity and values. Croatian public is not aware of the facts on which all Croatian negotiators agreed that Croatia received membership in the EU."<sup>99</sup> In his assessment of the EU, Miklenić acknowledges that preserving Croatian identity will be difficult within the EU. In addition, he regrets that the Croatian people have not been made aware of all of the negotiations and changes that have taken place as a result of EU membership. This implies that if Croatians were more informed about these EU transitions, there would be an even stronger campaign for identity preservation amongst the public. Bošnjak acknowledges the importance of Croatian awareness when he explains the dangers of being a small country within the EU. This can be seen when he comments on the risks Croatia faces within the EU in the following, "When we were in some kind of state or community of nations, we were exposed to their domination, political, economic, linguistic, cultural, and there were attempts to us seize parts of our territory, and our identity. Majority of people with whom we were in common states for us, unfortunately, led politics of conquest, and some even genocide."<sup>100</sup> Bošnjak is noting an alarming pattern within Croatian history, that every time the state had been part of a larger community it resulted in negative and tragic consequences for the country. As a result, Bošnjak is pointing out that there is a strong chance history may repeat itself as Croatia has been accepted as an EU member. In addition, he notes the various important aspects of Croatian identity ranging from the cultural or political that could be

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<sup>99</sup> Ivan Miklenić, author interviewed, July 7, 2013.

<sup>100</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 192. Author Translated.

at risk due to the small nature of Croatia and the power that the EU wields. Basically, the small size of Croatia has elicited concerns regarding identity preservation within the EU.

As the speculation regarding the status of Croatian identity within the EU continues to grow, Croats have become increasingly protective of their character. There is this prevailing idea that Croats can defend themselves from any changes desired by the EU that they feel is damaging to the state. Brljavac addresses this issue when he comments, "Put differently, the promise of European Union membership has not been a sufficient instrument for the Bosnian politicians to make them respect the European values, norms and rules and work on their implementation into domestic policies."<sup>101</sup> Although Brljavac is specifically discussing Bosnia, many of the assertions he puts forth can be related to Croatia. To begin with, Brljavac notes the discord between EU policy and the domestic country, which is something that Croats clearly experience as well. He takes his analysis further by indicating that Bosnians do not feel that they need to implement EU policies they feel are negative within their state. Croats hold the same view in regards to the protection of their identity from policies that the EU has put forth. This can be seen when Admiral Lošo reflects on the EU's influence on Croatian identity when he remarks, "No, every Croat who is conscious of his identity there is nothing that should change his life. Standard of living is important but it is not so important to change way of living they are what they will live for. The so called EU standard are nothing else than the way of how to destroy identity and we have to stand against that."<sup>102</sup> Lošo explains that the EU should not have any effect on Croatian identity, and that if the institution poses any risk Croats will stand against it. Through his statement, Lošo is illustrating the unity and loyalty Croats have towards their identity. In many ways there is almost a sense that Croats feel they are untouchable. This is

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<sup>101</sup> Brljavac, "Assessing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina,"5.

<sup>102</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

exhibited by Jelčić as he emphasizes the EU's impact on Croatian identity as follows, "They really won't have any influence there."<sup>103</sup> This reveals that the Croats have an unshakable faith in regards to the strength of their identity. Yet, this belief almost becomes a detriment for Croats as it could prevent them from recognizing or taking action against EU changes within this area. Overall, as concerns regarding the preservation of Croatian identity become more frequent, Croats become more resolved to protect their character.

### **Conclusion: The EU's Balkan Croatia & the Future**

For Croatia EU membership has meant that the state must wage a war against Balkanization. The term Balkan is not merely an inaccurate geographical term, but a classification that is based upon a variety of negative stereotypes and perceptions. Unfortunately, this superstitious label has been forced upon Croatia by the EU. Despite Croats consistently vocalizing that their identity shares no similarities or characteristics with the term, the EU continues to insist on letting this categorization guide its policies in regards to Croatia. As a result, this has led Croats to assess the risks EU membership poses towards the stability of their identity, which has resulted in Croats becoming increasingly protective of their character. As there are visible tensions between the EU and Croatia regarding the Balkan term, it arouses questions and doubts about the ways in which this issue will affect Croatia in the future, specifically characteristics it may lose as a result of EU membership.

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<sup>103</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

## **Chapter 4: Christianity: Croatia's Salvation and the EU's Obstacle**

In regards to identity within the EU, Croatia has already begun to meet a number of challenges. Battling the stereotypes associated with Balkanism and contending with the fears of a potential end to Croatia's unique identity, have all been obstacles the state has had to endure throughout its relationship with the EU. This has led Croatians to evaluate their lifestyle and beliefs and reaffirm the values that they do not want to see compromised. One of these standards is maintaining religion within the country. For Croatians religion plays an important and active role within society. Since Roman Catholicism represents the majority of the country it retains a special place within Croatian culture, traditions, and life. At the same time there is a question of whether the EU truly respects the Croatian dedication to their religion? If not then how do Croats contend with EU membership that comes at the expense of their belief system. The tensions that arise from these differences can be seen through the EU's stance and characterization of religion, the importance of Roman Catholicism within Croatia, and the conflict that ensues when both sides come into contact.

### **The EU's Embrace of Secularism**

In regards to the EU, the institution has embraced secularism as one of its principles. From the perspective of the organization religion is an obstacle that prevents the EU from attaining its goals. This theory is addressed by Aggestam and Hill who argue, "European secularism has come to incarnate these universal aspirations: the dignity and autonomy of the individual, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They are considered to be universally applicable because they stand free of cultural, historical and political circumstance... Yet the

emphasis on tolerance also implies a view of Others in need of change."<sup>104</sup> The analysis presented by Aggestam and Hill provide significant information regarding this subject. To begin with, they are indicating that the EU believes that avoiding religion will allow the organization to easily expand its ideas and principles. At the same time, however, the authors point out that the EU's desire to segregate religion not only alienates religious groups, but attempts to force change upon them. This approach raises suspicion about how religious countries, like Croatia, will be treated within the EU in regards to their belief system. Carroll explores this problem when he comments, "Religious and cultural differences should not be used as an excuse to veto any state's candidacy unless they contravene the union's norms of human rights and democracy."<sup>105</sup> From this statement, Carroll is implying that the EU has used its power as leverage against states that exhibit religious and cultural beliefs that do not compliment the EU's secular standards. Carroll cites EU membership as one the organization's methods of compelling changes, such as devotion to religion, within its member and candidate countries. As a result, rather than complimenting the religious and cultural beliefs of states, the EU positions itself as an adversary intent on minimizing the role of religion.

The EU's secular approach defines the institution, and influences the religious identities of member and candidate states. In order to achieve secularism the EU has made these principles part of the organization's foundation. This can be seen when Aggestam and Hill note, "While there is a diversity of views over the precise interpretation of this tenet, a clear expression of its strength was the rejection of any reference to God, religion or a Christian heritage in the Berlin Declaration celebrating the EU at 50."<sup>106</sup> Essentially, the EU has made it clear that religion does

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<sup>104</sup> Aggestam and Hill, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy," 100.

<sup>105</sup> Carroll, "How Selective Should the European Union Be When Selecting Its Future Members?" 288.

<sup>106</sup> Aggestam and Hill, "The Challenge of Multiculturalism in European Foreign Policy," 100.

not hold a place within the institution's beliefs and policies. At the same time, the EU's rejection of religion can be seen as a move against states that consider religion as not only important, but influential within their state. This concept is touched upon by Lošo who asserts, "... 'New Age', is designed to spiritually impoverish Europe and Europeans, to take away their identity, that is to make them what they are. Mysticism 'New Age' puts the spotlight on a man's subjective emotional experience of their own happiness and the pursuit of satisfying their own needs and egotistic impulses."<sup>107</sup> Lošo illustrates that the New Age of secularism promotes a negative aspect of individualism that focuses on profits and a self serving attitude rather than supporting the well being of the community at large. In addition, Lošo notes that these changes have the potential to destroy identity. This statement reveals that the EU's desire to promote secularism may be at the cost of the religious identities of states. Therefore, the EU's belief in secularism has large ramifications for religious countries that have aligned themselves with the organization.

### **The Catholic Foundation of Croatia**

For Croatians Roman Catholicism holds a sacred place within their culture. From one aspect, the importance of Catholicism can be seen through the sheer magnitude of Croatian believers. Lukšić touches upon this when he says, "Of course 92% of Croats have declared that they belong to the Catholic Church."<sup>108</sup> Lukšić's comment reveals that Catholicism is a natural and important part of the majority of the Croatian population. In addition, the shared religion is an aspect of Croatian identity that unites the people as one. This is expanded upon by Ashbrook who remarks, "Traditional Croats are highly critical of the secularism of the EU project. They argue that to be a true Croat, one must be Catholic, and thus trends toward increased

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<sup>107</sup> Davor Domazet Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, (Zagreb: Detecta, 2007), 171. Author Translated.

<sup>108</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.



secularization directly threaten Croatian identity."<sup>109</sup> This statement illustrates the importance of Catholicism within Croatian identity, as to be a true Croatian one must be Catholic. In addition, it accurately portrays the legitimate fear Croats have that the secularism of the EU will pose a danger to their Catholic identity. Lošo compounds these ideas when he explains, "Croats one of the oldest nations in Europe, but they have to be clear of importance of their own identity. I would treat in one way identity moral and Christianity, frontier of Christianity. It is in one way defined through Croatian Catholic identity, language, and special alphabet."<sup>110</sup> Lošo's response indicates Catholicism is a part of Croatian culture that is rooted in its history and its traditions. Furthermore, he is reaffirming that Christianity cannot be separated from the Croatian identity. Essentially, Catholicism plays a crucial role within Croatian culture as it defines its cultural identity.

Not only does Catholicism comprise a large part of Croatian culture, but it is also an influential factor on Croatian society. In many ways, Catholicism is viewed as a trusted guide for the Croatian people. Stojic explores this relationship as follows, "The Croatian Catholic Church is very influential institution in Croatia and its stance towards European integration is important and can decisively influence Croatian public opinion taking into consideration that in Croatia (compared with the EU-25 countries) there is an above-average number of practicing believers."<sup>111</sup> Stojic's analysis shows that the strength of the Catholic belief system within Croatia has the power to sway the people regarding a number policies ranging from the cultural to the political. In addition, Stojic also comments about the fact that Croatia in comparison to other EU members have the highest amount of believers and that the Croatian Catholic Church

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<sup>109</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 33.

<sup>110</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>111</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia," 331.

has a respected voice within the area of Croatian EU integration. This implies that there may already be brewing tensions between the EU and Croatia, as Catholicism is highly influential within the country, while the EU is a proponent of secularism. The importance of Catholicism within Croatia is also touched upon by Stančić who affirms, "Part of it stems from the traditional position of the Church in society, where it is often considered a guardian of national interests..."<sup>112</sup> This explains that not only is Catholicism important from a traditional aspect, but from a political one as well. Since Croats view Catholicism as the state's protector it means that Croats have the utmost respect for the opinion the Church has to offer, further indicating the discord between the country and the EU. Lukšić summarizes the influential factor of Catholicism in relation to the EU when he argues, "What, therefore, should be the future of Croats in Europe? If Christianity created Europe as a spiritual and cultural term, and if it is the basis of its moral and political order, Europe cannot survive the death of Christianity. Being a witness of religious and moral foundations, despite all their national weaknesses, is the role of Croats in Europe, if Croatia does not want to betray his identity."<sup>113</sup> Lukšić emphasizes that for Croats to potentially give up Catholicism would mean sacrificing the Croat identity, which has formed the foundation of the Croatian state. He also stresses that Croats have a duty to help Europe preserve Christianity and the moral values associated with it, thus making Croatia a religious supporter in the face of EU secularism. Essentially, Catholicism is not just a cultural component of the state, but an active player within Croatian society.

### **When Two Worlds Collide: The Conflict Between Secularism and Christianity**

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<sup>112</sup> Stančić, *Dugo Putovanje Hrvatske U Europsku Uniju*, 106. Author Translated.

<sup>113</sup> Lukšić, *Nedovršena Hrvatska*, 27. Author Translated.

The Croatian faith in Catholicism has also affected how the EU's secular policies are perceived within the country. Since Croatia and the EU hold differing views regarding religion, this has led to divisive tensions between the organization and the country. This is addressed by Njavro who argues, "The consensus in Croatian society will have to be struck between the traditional religious and secular ideological values."<sup>114</sup> Njavro is expressing that Croatians must find a way to retain their Catholic beliefs as the EU attempts to promote its secular agenda. By analyzing this situation in terms of opposing views, Njavro is illustrating that the EU and Croatia are as compatible as oil and water regarding the subject of religion. The Croatian dissatisfaction with EU policy is mentioned by Šeparović who says, "Judeo-Christian culture civilization is our civilization, Bible is what is connecting us. Unfortunately, EU did not accept Christianity as a cultural element and as basis of what is European."<sup>115</sup> This reveals that Croatians not only believe that Christianity is the core of their own identity but Europe as well. Therefore, by the EU not accepting Christianity as a tenet of their institution it is seen as a disappointment for Croatians that hold their belief system as sacred. This idea is expanded upon by Lošo who remarks, "The EU won't respect Croatian history and identity because it won't recognize its own. Only civilization that threw God from their constitution. Christianity is fundamental to Euro history and identity."<sup>116</sup> Lošo's comments provide additional support in that Croatians view Christianity as a vital component of European identity. In addition, his statement implies that Croatians are not pleased that the EU has rejected religion, as this decision is in contention with Croatia's religious views. As a result, this creates an environment where Croatia and the EU find

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<sup>114</sup> Njavro, "Hrvatski Identitet i Globalizacija Hrvatski nacionalni i kulturni identitet u procesu globalizacije," 39. Author Translated.

<sup>115</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.

<sup>116</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

themselves on opposing sides rather than partners. Basically, the EU's policy of secularism has created divisions between the organization and the Croatian state.

Not only are Croatians disappointed with the EU's secular policies, but they view it as a threat to their religious identity as well. As the EU continues to promote secularism, Croatians have grown increasingly wary about how this campaign will influence their own religious identity. Ashbrook details these thoughts in the following, "In line with this train of thought, Croatian conservatives decry the inherent hypocrisy of Western Europe's liberal ideology. Therefore, Brussels promotes atheism and progressivism, cloaking both notions in the legitimating mantle of European identity, thereby denying the legitimacy of competing forms of identity."<sup>117</sup> This statement is significant as it notes that Croatians believe that the so called unity EU secularism provides, only works by rejecting other religious identities. As a result, this validates the fears that Croatian Catholicism could be in jeopardy if EU secular policies were allowed to take hold within the country. Lošo also addresses these concerns when he says, "An attack of those Northern Europe states that have no Christian values on Christian part of Europe, they can accept that or not but that is what it is."<sup>118</sup> Lošo comments that the EU's secular policies are nothing more than tools that are used against Christian countries. In addition, by categorizing these policies as an attack, Lošo indicates that Croatians already feel that their Catholic identity has been harmed by the EU. Lukšić explains the severity of this claim when he argues, "Today Croatia is leading a covert war against the three values forming the organic pillars: religious communities, families, and the nation state...with the offensive promotion of homosexuality and lesbianism, and the full liberalization of abortion."<sup>119</sup> In his response, Lukšić is asserting that the

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<sup>117</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 33.

<sup>118</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>119</sup> Lukšić, *Nedovršena Hrvatska*, 135. Author Translated.

EU policies of secularism are aggressive tactics that are intent on damaging the Catholic values that Croatsians hold sacred. The implications of this is that instead of benefits, EU membership has the potential of inflicting an immense amount of harm on Croatia. This means that Croatsians will have to fight to preserve their faith in an organization that seemingly promised security. Overall, the secularism of the EU threatens the very heart of Croatian Catholic beliefs, which means Croats will have to struggle to defend them.

### **Conclusion: An Identity In Danger**

In the midst of forcefully undergoing the Europeanization process, Croatsians have found themselves at odds with the secularism embraced by the EU. While the EU promotes secularism as an all encompassing approach, it risks alienating and even harming religious countries like Croatia. As a result, Croatsians have not only vocalized their disappointment with the EU's lack of necessity for religion, but have striven to protect their own religious identity from being eroded away by EU policies regarding this matter. While Croatsians feel that the EU has put the state in a precarious position, the people continue to hold on to their beliefs. Unfortunately, this situation leaves more questions than answers upon reflecting on the future of Catholicism within Croatia. Will the Croatian people continue to endure and hold on to their Catholic values, or will they succumb to the secularization of the EU? In addition, where will the tensions between the country and the EU lead as the topic of religion grows increasingly controversial? Will the EU also adversely impact other aspects of Croatian identity as well? It seems that Croatia has found itself swimming in dangerous waters in terms of its alliance with the EU.

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## **Chapter 5: Language: Croatia's Form of Expression & The EU's Unnecessary Formality**

As Croatia's relationship with the EU increases, so has the organization's attempts to influence Croatian identity. Not only does Croatia have to contend with the EU's lack of respect and support for the nation's Catholic religion, but the Croatian language as well. For Croatians language is considered to be one of the fundamental principles of Croatian identity and the state. It is not only a form of communication, but an expressive act that is representative of Croatia's history and its people. Despite the importance Croatians place in regards to the preservation of their unique language, the EU does not share the same views. As far as the organization is concerned, it is just another aspect of Croatian identity that needs to be changed in order for the country to meet EU standards. While the EU recognizes Croatian as an official language, it is not interested in preserving or properly respecting this component of Croatian identity. Evidence of this can be found through the treatment of languages within the EU, how the Croatian language is perceived, and the larger ramifications the organization's policies regarding the Croatian language have on the state and its people.

### **The Divide Between High Expectations and Sobered Realities**

The potential risks for the Croatian language can be seen through the expectations and realities of the treatment of languages within the EU. From a state's perspective the idea is that the EU would support a country's unique language. This is expressed by Kovačević who says, "Of course, the EU is not an ideal community... These two forces, which are still recognizable in the EU favor the Republic of Croatia to compete economically on a large market, and

individually preserve its statehood, culture, language and tradition."<sup>120</sup> This reveals that while Kovačević realizes the EU has limitations, he still has faith that the organization will work to uphold Croatian identity, including language. This perspective continues the Croatian trend of viewing the EU far too optimistically. The realities of language preservation within the EU is addressed by Dr. Slaven Letica who remarks, "National identities in other European countries were created in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries through violent crimes that suppressed dialects and imposed a literary or standard language..."<sup>121</sup> In this statement Letica is noting parallels between how national identities were formed throughout European history, with the EU's present quest to establish a unified identity as well. He explains that none of the forged identities within history were done so without violence, and illustrates this by using the standardization of language as an example. As a result, this raises suspicions of whether the EU's recognition of official languages is merely a superficial motion that masks its intent to obtain one standardized EU language. This idea is explored by Bošnjak who argues, "One of the biggest fallacies of the European Union constantly expanding, is that all of the languages are considered the official languages of the Member States and, as such, are quite equal within the European Union. This is not only not true but it is a lie."<sup>122</sup> Bošnjak goes on to explain that there are a number of languages that are categorized within the EU, for example there are some languages that are in use, but not formally recognized on paper. Bošnjak's point is that this is evidence that the EU's self promotion as an organization that treats all languages as equals is simply an empty and idealistic notion that is not representative of the reality of the situation.

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<sup>120</sup> Mate Kovačević, author interview, July 8, 2013.

<sup>121</sup> Dr. Slaven Letica, "Hrvatska identitetska politika u Europskoj uniji," *Hrvatska nacionalni interesi i EU*, ed. Dr. Mate Ljubičić, Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, (Zagreb:Katma, 2006), 237. Author Translated.

<sup>122</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 249. Author Translated.

Therefore, this means that Croatia and other states may find that their languages may be put at risk. Essentially, the EU's language principles are professed, but are never practiced.

The gap between the EU's language platform and its actions has prompted concerns regarding language sustainability within the organization. The EU's treatment of languages has continued to fuel fears regarding language preservation. Bošnjak points out the EU's discriminatory acts when he says, "There are three official languages of the European Commission, and the EU government which are English, French and German. These are the three arbitrators and the favored languages within the EU. There is not even Italian, Spanish, or Polish among them."<sup>123</sup> Through this example Bošnjak is illustrating that the EU does not practice what it preaches. While the EU officially recognizes a number of languages, it does not incorporate them within the organization. Essentially, the primary EU languages are those of the leading controllers within the institution which are the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. Therefore, there is clearly a favoritism regarding language that benefits Western European EU countries at the expense of other members. Since the EU does not utilize these other languages, states are forced to become more reliant on using English, French, and German, rather than their own native languages. As a result, this indicates states have a valid concern that their languages may become extinct. This is a theory which is explored by Letica when he comments, "When it comes to fear of Croats that there may be a loss of national and cultural identity in the European Union, it is by no means without merit, but it is not an exception to the rule when it comes to small European nations. Croatian people are meager, and the Croatian language and culture without much influence in Europe and the global scale."<sup>124</sup> In his statement, Letica is explaining that small countries, like Croatia, often end up having no power within large unions like the EU.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Letica, "Hrvatska identitetska politika u Europskoj uniji," 31. Author Translated.



This can be especially detrimental to the identity aspect of language, as it can become abandoned and lost when powerful actors or institutions, like the EU, desire a standardized language.

Basically, the treatment of languages within the EU is another area in which the organization has reduced itself to discrimination and double standards.

### **Croatian Language Values Against the EU's Need for Standardization**

While the EU has visible issues regarding the equality of languages within the institution, there is also disconnect between how Croatians and the EU perceive the Croatian language. For Croatians the language is more than a mere method of communication, it symbolizes Croatia's history, culture, and identity. This concept is put forth by Josip Pavičić who remarks, "For speakers of the Croatian language, language is a means and a goal which can be used defensively."<sup>125</sup> In this statement, Pavčić is showcasing the significance of the Croatian language. He is expressing that not only is the language part of Croatian culture, but it can be used to defend Croatian identity as well. Grubišić also highlights the importance of language when he says, "I left Croatia at 22, now I'm 70, spent most of life in Switzerland than Canada. Always felt Croatian, connected to culture by teaching language and culture. To be Croatian is to belong to culture and tradition and to like Croatia as a country."<sup>126</sup> In his personal statement Grubišić is noting that despite living the majority of his life within different countries, he retained his connection to Croatia, due to his cultural participation and the use of the Croatian language. This reveals that the language is also a unifying aspect for Croatians because by sharing a form of communication, Croats are able to maintain a bond no matter where they live in the world. In addition, his feelings illustrate the revered place the native language has within

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<sup>125</sup> Josip Pavičić, "Čuvarski Kompleks," *Globalizacija i Identitet*, ed. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, Ivan Bekavac (Zagreb: Katma, 2004), 295. Author Translated.

<sup>126</sup> Dr. Vinko Grubišić, author interviewed, June 28, 2013.

Croatian society. Yet the value of the Croatian language is not shared by the EU as Bošnjak points out, "Not only in the UK and France but also in Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands the mentioning of Croatian linguistic particularities are often portrayed as primitive, nationalist blasphemy."<sup>127</sup> This is evidence that some of the leading EU countries do not have any respect for the unique value of the Croatian language. The fact that these countries insinuate that the Croatian form of communication is primitive or a negative form of nationalism is pure discrimination against the Croatian state and its people. As a result, since the languages are depicted in such a light, it begs the question of whether the language will survive within the EU? Essentially, Croatians value their language as an expressive act of their identity, while the EU perceives the language to be nothing more than an inferior form of communication.

The fear of the status of the Croatian language within the EU is an ongoing issue. There is concern that the EU does not view the Croatian language as equal within the organization, and retains a desire to minimize its role within Croatian society. This is touched upon by Letica who comments, "In addition, it is now quite clear that within the European Union will be promoted European identity that will reflect the tradition of great European nations. This fact does not have to worry about the English, Italian, German, French, Spanish and Polish, but must worry about small European nations, particularly those in the European periphery."<sup>128</sup> In his analysis, Letica is noting that the powerful and influential countries forming leadership will not worry about their respective language preservation. His argument is that these countries either control or have a large influence within the institution, which will guarantee that preference will be given to their languages. As for small periphery countries, like Croatia, the fear is that the native language will be seen as unnecessary and become obsolete. Letica's views provide

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<sup>127</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 254. Author Translated.

<sup>128</sup> Letica, "Hrvatska identitetska politika u Europskoj uniji," 31. Author Translated.

additional support to the theory that the EU does not respect nor have a use for the Croatian language. The realities of this fear are explored by Bošnjak who asserts, "When the Director of the European Language Service publicly questions the distinctiveness of the Croatian language, and Croatia has not yet acceded to the European Union, it is a clear sign of what the leading bodies within the European Union are thinking."<sup>129</sup> Through his comments Bošnjak provides concrete examples where the Croatian language has not been respected within the EU. In this case, he is citing the fact that the director of the EU questioned whether the Croatian people could claim that their language was a distinct language. By the director openly expressing his doubt regarding the language, it can be seen as an act against Croatian identity and culture. Bošnjak also makes a good point by acknowledging that the questioning of the Croatian language by the EU during the accession process possibly foreshadows the treatment it will receive within the organization. Overall, the EU shows disregard for the Croatian language, which puts its future preservation into question.

### **Serbo-Croatian or B.C.S. Code for an Attack on Croatian Identity**

The EU's treatment of the Croatian language has led Croatians to reflect on the larger ramifications the organization may have on the native language. One of the concerns is that Croatia will lose its language's uniqueness through its affiliation with the EU. Bošnjak delves into this topic when he says, "In the event that the Croatian language through reasoning is seen as 'politically sensitive' and is formally 'assigned' the status of official language, there is a danger that we later, in practice, however, will be imposed on a kind of hybrid of Serbo-Croatian."<sup>130</sup> Building on the EU's doubt of the distinctiveness of Croatian, this reveals that the

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<sup>129</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 254. Author Translated.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

institution may eventually declare that Croatian and Serbian are the same language. If the EU declares Serbian and Croatian one in the same, this would be detrimental for Croatian identity. Croats have always viewed their language as unique and independent, and if the EU were to remove this, it would be a direct attack on the Croatian belief system. In addition, the EU's argument that the similarities justify joint recognition of the language, is in effect just another double standard within the institution. If these language choices are based on similarities then why isn't Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish classified as P.I.S or Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish as N.S.D? Both sets of the previously mentioned languages share commonalities, but are not considered or discussed as the same language. This is evidence that the EU favors Western European countries at the expense of Central and Eastern European members. Miklenić postulates these concerns when he ponders, "From the 1st of July 2013, Croatian language is one of the official languages of the EU, so it remains Croatian citizen's responsibility to preserve and develop."<sup>131</sup> Essentially, Miklenić is arguing that even though Croatian is recognized as an official language by the EU, Croats must be prepared to defend it. Tuđman concurs this idea when asserts, "We have to protect national culture identity, threats are different today than 20 to 40 years ago. Economic or political problems we can solve, one way or another. Key values determine Croatian society if under attack or in danger we have to take care of to avoid not only for Croatia but other member states of EU vested differences."<sup>132</sup> Tuđman is claiming that political and economic issues can be handled, but cultural problems require Croats to be aware and ready to defend them. In addition, he expands on this idea of attentiveness when he explains that the issues facing culture are different today than they were a few decades ago. As a result, the experience the Croatian language will undergo within the EU will be new, which may result

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<sup>131</sup> Ivan Miklenić, author interviewed, July 7, 2013.

<sup>132</sup> Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, author interviewed, July 5, 2013.

in the state experiencing distinct problems regarding this aspect of identity. Therefore, the Croatian language has increasingly found itself the victim of the EU's double standards.

Not only does the EU's treatment of the Croatian language adversely affect the cultural aspect of Croatia, but the political one as well. The EU's intent to classify Croatian as Serbo-Croatian, or B.C.S.(Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian) has larger political consequences for Croatian identity. Bošnjak explores this claim when he argues, "If Serbs, Croats and 'Bosnians' all speak variants of the same language, what does that say about them and their claims that they are members of different Nations, if the language is the same, but do not share ideological and political reasons, are not then these nations actually the same, only they, like language, is also divided because of some ideological and political, rather than a scientific reason?"<sup>133</sup> In his analysis, Bošnjak is exploring a very sensitive and sacred topic for Croatia, which is their independence. Croats have struggled to regain their national sovereignty for years, and for the EU to insinuate that Croats are the same as other republics that had been part of the former Yugoslavia, attacks the very heart of Croatian identity. Therefore, if Croatian were to be recognized as Serbo-Croatian or B.C.S. within the EU it would not only be a move against Croatian culture, but their fight for independence, and their belief that they deserve the recognition and rights a sovereign country should receive. Bošnjak continues this exploration of discrimination and double standards when he remarks, "Unlike in Western Europe, some Eastern European countries, such as Ukraine and Poland, quite properly treated the Croatian language as a separate language. Even Russia's diplomatic school in Moscow, its diplomats teach Croatian and Serbian separately."<sup>134</sup> Bošnjak is illustrating that other countries recognize and respect Croatian as a separate and distinct language, yet the EU continues to insist otherwise. This also

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<sup>133</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 252. Author Translated.

<sup>134</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 255. Author Translated.

shows the division between the East and the West within the EU. It seems that Western EU countries are not willing to put in the effort to learn and acknowledge the cultures and values of its fellow Central and Eastern European members. Overall, the EU's ambition to classify Croatian as the same as other languages is an act of discrimination that puts Croatia's political identity at risk.

### **Conclusion: Dissolving Identity**

For Croatians the native language is much more than a form of communication. It is a part of identity that is found within the state's history, traditions, and culture. While Croatian is recognized as an official language within the EU, it does not receive this status without consequences. The EU has begun a legacy based upon Western European favoritism that has come at the cost of other nations, primarily Central and Eastern European, identities. As a result, Croatia is not excluded from this list, especially in the area of language. As the institution visibly shows its disregard for languages deemed unnecessary or even problematic, Croatians have found themselves fighting a battle to preserve their native language. The EU has an ambition to categorize Croatian as the same as other languages, which is not only an example of various forms of discrimination, but has negative political ramifications on Croatia as well. It seems that the more Croatia becomes enveloped within the EU, it has increasingly found itself holding the short end of the stick. In addition, there is an indication that the EU is attempting to slowly dissolve Croatian identity. This begs the question of whether Croatia could survive the perpetual attacks placed against Croatian beliefs and values?

## **Chapter 6: Identity and War**

Within Croatia the establishment and preservation of independence remains one of the most sacred values of Croatian identity. It is a component, which has formed a significant part of Croatian history, because it is a history of the struggle for freedom. The past of Croatia is one filled with interchanging oppressors, leaving the Croats to perpetually fight for independence. While an opportunity to obtain Croatia's freedom would present itself, unfortunately it would mean a trial by fire for the Croatian people. Upon the death of Tito, Serbian leadership within Yugoslavia, began an attempt to expand their power at the cost of the other republics. Unhappy and fearful regarding Serbia's ambitions, Croatia and Slovenia declared independence. The Serb dominated Yugoslav government not only denounced the acts of Croatia and Slovenia, but resorted to aggressive violence in an attempt to retain the republics. In the midst of waging their war for freedom, the Croatians found themselves virtually abandoned by everyone, including the EU. Although seemingly doomed to fail, the Croatian endurance prevailed; and like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the Croatians were able to win the war and finally secure their freedom. Yet, Croatia did not emerge unscathed from its dalliance with its adversary. The battle wound scars are symbolic reminders that have become a permanent and influential part of Croatian identity. As a result, this aspect of Croatian identity not only impacts the way Croatians view themselves, but others. In regards to the EU this subject remains a source of tension between the state and organization. This is illustrated through the position of the EU during the war, Croatia's perception and identity regarding the experience, and the consequences the state has had to endure at the hands of the EU as a result of its fight for freedom.

### **Finding Silence In Croatia's Darkest Hour**

A significant source of tension regarding Croatian identity and the EU, is the position the organization took during the Croatian war for independence. The issues between the EU and Croatia started at the very beginning of the war, when the institution avoided intervention within the conflict. This is explored by Belloni who says, "European institutions lacked the political unity to address the crisis. Jacques de Poos, Foreign Minister of tiny Luxembourg and Council of Ministers President at the outset of the crisis in June 1991, optimistically announced Europe's readiness to tackle the Yugoslav problem. Europe, however, lacked the necessary unity and resolve to follow through on this."<sup>135</sup> This reveals that there was no sincere ambition on the EU's part to intervene or attempt to provide solutions for the conflict. As a result, Croatia was forcibly isolated by the EU's refusal to react, thus indicating that the fight for Croatian freedom would have to be fought by the Croats alone. The EU's aloofness during Croatia's time of need has greatly impacted Croatian identity. This is covered by Šeparović, who acted as foreign minister during the war, "My goals twofold, to stop the war against my country asking foreign countries and international organizations to help my country in defense of Serbian JNA forces and goal was please recognize my country, international recognition was needed and it was historically justified... EU hesitated, lasted long, but they have been among the first to recognize my country on January 15, 1992."<sup>136</sup> Through his statement Šeparović is noting that Croatians not only had to wage a physical war to preserve their nation, but a diplomatic one as well. The fact that the EU attempted to avoid the conflict, meant that Croatians had to fight for recognition and support. Therefore, the EU's silence continues to be a reminder for Croatians that the preservation of their identity had to be won without the assistance of the organization. Consequently, the EU's refusal to act influenced how Croatians view their relationship with the EU. This is illustrated by

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<sup>135</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 315.

<sup>136</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.



Kovačević who remarks, "Every birth is difficult. Some countries, such as the usual, guarded international order, and each new country has its emergence disturbance. Some countries have had a considerable share in the creation of Yugoslavia, so they defended until the last moment, and some again...watched the collapse of their own ability and the reluctance regarding Croatian independence to protect their own principles."<sup>137</sup> Kovačević explains that Croatia's struggle for self determination has become a permanent part of Croatian identity. Furthermore, the war is also a reminder that many states and institutions, like the EU, refused to acknowledge Croatia's right to freedom because it was of no benefit to them. This means that Croatia's relationship with the EU will always be defined by the organization's silence during the war for independence.

Not only did the EU fail to recognize Croatia's right to self-determination, but in the early days of the war, the organization insisted on the preservation of Yugoslavia. The fact that the EU ambitiously attempted to secure Yugoslavia is in direct contention with Croatia's validated need to be recognized as an independent country. This is illustrated through the EU foreign policy documents edited by Christopher Hill and Karen E. Smith which state, "In the view of the Twelve, a united and democratic Yugoslavia stands the best chance to integrate itself in the new Europe."<sup>138</sup> This demonstrates that the EU had no interest in supporting an independent Croatia, when war erupted within Yugoslavia. Lošo explores the damages incurred by this action when he says, "Secondly, Croatia, and not the international community saved and defended Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>139</sup> This points out that Croatians overwhelmingly acknowledge they were abandoned by the EU, and many others that were part of the international community during

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<sup>137</sup> Mate Kovačević, author interview, July 8, 2013.

<sup>138</sup> "Declaration by the Informal European Political Cooperation Ministerial Meeting on Yugoslavia, Chateau de Senningen, 26 March 1991," *European Foreign Policy Key Documents*, ed. Christopher Hill and Karen E. Smith (London: Routledge Publishing, 2000), 362.

<sup>139</sup> Davor Domazet Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 391. Author Translated.

their time of need. Naturally, this has led Croatians to be suspicious of the organization that essentially left them for dead. The proof of the EU's intentions can be seen when Christopher Booker and Richard North note, "As Poots himself put it, 'the idea of a national self-determination is dangerous as a basis for international order...It would release an explosive development.' He poured scorn on the idea of tiny Slovenia imagining it could survive on its own as a nation, even though its population was six times larger than that of Luxembourg."<sup>140</sup> Both Booker and North point out that the EU only viewed the concept of self-determination within Yugoslavia as a problem that had to be dealt with. In addition, the authors also examine the double standards of the EU's justification for its stance regarding the war, by acknowledging that Slovenia is significantly larger than Luxembourg. Although this analysis uses Slovenia as an example, it can also be applied to the Croatian case as well. By viewing self-determination as a challenge, the EU effectively launched an assault against Croatian identity. Basically, the EU had no intentions of supporting an independent Croatia, which continues to define Croatian identity and its relationship with the organization.

As if the EU's lack of recognition and abandonment of Croatia weren't enough, it continued to damage the state and its people, both during and after the war. The organization began this trend when it showed an utter disregard for the history of the republics constituting Yugoslavia. This is outlined by Booker and North who assert, "They demanded that Slovenia should revoke its declaration of independence as a condition of a ceasefire. So ill-informed were the *troika* ministers, they were not even aware that the Federation had already reconciled itself to Slovenia's secession."<sup>141</sup> Again although this example depicts Slovenia's journey to independence, it is very much reflective of the situation Croatia that found itself in during the

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<sup>140</sup> Christopher Booker and Richard North, *The Great Deception*, (London:Continum,2003),328.

<sup>141</sup> Booker and North, *The Great Deception*,328.

war. The EU's intentions to keep Yugoslavia together completely overrode the need to understand the situation, and the republics that wanted their freedom. As a result, everything that the EU wanted went against the desires and identity of the Croatian people. To make matters worse, the fact that the EU did not take any initiative to understand Croatia reveals that the organization had already classified the nation as inferior. Even after the war had ceased, and Croatia had won its independence the EU continued to commence strikes against Croatian identity. This is touched upon by Lošo who emphasizes, "...EU policy towards the region 'Western Balkans', therefore, to Croatia, for which the European deterministic compiled sequence of standards and procedures to all these countries lead to the same level of guilt, to make them 'all bundled', after 2010, it was brought in an associate position, but not a full member of the European Union."<sup>142</sup> Instead of attempting to rectify its failure to act by understanding Croatia, the EU decided to label everyone who had partaken in the war as equally guilty. This is a staggering concept for Croatians to reflect on, let alone accept. This is due to the fact that it had been the Serbian controlled leadership of Yugoslavia that had commenced the violence that engulfed Slovenia, Croatia, and later Bosnia and Herzegovina. For Croatians to be classified as a guilty party is to condemn Croatian identity and their right to independence. Lukšić further expands on the EU's goals regarding the equal guilt policy when he comments, "Some of them, who are at the highest political position in the country, are trying to implement a new Titoization, renewed cult of Tito, and to criminalize the Homeland War and its veterans, in order to become leaders of the new Yugoslavia, perhaps called the Western Balkans."<sup>143</sup> Lukšić is arguing that the EU's insistence that Croatia accept equal guilt for the war has been so pervasive and influential, that it has encouraged Croatian politicians to accept this categorization

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<sup>142</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 448. Author Translated.

<sup>143</sup> Lukšić, *Nedovršena Hrvatska*, 71. Author Translated.

as a form of appeasement. Lukšić reaffirms that this goes against every principle of Croatian values and identity. This may consequently lead to Croatia becoming part of an EU sanctioned region entitled the Western Balkans, a group Croatsians want to escape from. It seems that the EU has played a continuous and damaging role for Croatia throughout its war for independence, which continues to effect the Croatian people.

### **The EU's Lack of Empathy for the Croatian Experience**

Decades after the war, Croatia still finds itself at odds with the EU regarding its independence. Croats attribute these tensions to the fact that the EU has never attempted to understand the Croatian experience it had endured during its fight for self-determination. This is a way of thinking that began during the war, which Booker and North explore in the following, "The Council was simply unable to grasp why the peoples of Slovenia and Croatia would now do anything to break away from the tyranny of Belgrade which had held them in its grip since 1945."<sup>144</sup> This analysis explains that the EU is not interested in the experiences of small nations, but rather the cost benefit ratio of what independence may do for the organization as a whole. As a result, this has left Croatia to question whether the EU is actually invested in the well being of the Croatian state or its people? Ashbrook expands upon this idea when he remarks, "Many Croats regard Western criticism and the rejection of their reasons for not cooperating with former enemies and less developed regional neighbors as evidence of EU arrogance and prejudice."<sup>145</sup> This illustrates that the EU does not take the Croatian perspective or their identity seriously. Croatia suffered tremendously during the war, leaving the people and the state extremely conscious about their safety. By not extending understanding or support, the EU has

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<sup>144</sup> Booker and North, *The Great Deception*, 327-328.

<sup>145</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 31.

symbolically declared the perceived inferiority of the Croatian state. Therefore, Croatians find themselves having to defend their truth and experiences of war from an EU that could care less about the subject.

The EU's lack of empathy can also be viewed as an attack on the core identity values of Croatians. A specific area that has created challenges in Croatia's relationship with the EU is the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia (ICTY). The EU insisted that Croatia cooperate with the tribunal, which meant turning over Croatian citizens suspected of war crimes. While Croatia consented, it later found that many of those accused, were innocent men who had defended Croatia during the war. Although many of these individuals, including Generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač were later proven innocent and exonerated from the accused crimes, Croatia's defense of the men during their trial did not sit well with the EU. Therefore, it became a struggle between the EU's desires and Croatian identity. This area is investigated by Stojic who says, "The ICTY is a symbol of difficulties these countries are faced with on their road towards the European Union, and the main argument used by Euro-sceptics to show that their fears of the European Union are justified. They interpret indictments, which are individual, as a collective guilt that have to be rejected as a threat to national identity and pride."<sup>146</sup> This continues the idea that Croatians believe that they fought a defensive war, but that the EU insists that the country retains a guilty title. The EU's insistence on Croatia's cooperation with the ICTY, and the equally guilty categorization, implies that the Croatian experience isn't justified nor is the freedom and self-determination that the nation achieved. To force Croatia to accept these requirements, is essentially asking Croatians to deny their own identity. These thoughts are depicted when Grubišić says, "People forget, Gotovina and Markač were considered guilty while

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<sup>146</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia,"316.

innocent all during these years of EU agreements, painful for Croatia."<sup>147</sup> Grubišić is highlighting that even after surviving the horrendous experience of war, the EU continues to torment the country. He explains that the idea that two innocent Croats had to be considered criminals for crimes they did not commit, just so Croatia could continue the EU accession process is an atrocity. This shows that Croats are aware that the EU has consistently inflicted damage on this aspect of Croatian identity.

The EU's position regarding Croatia and the war has also turned into a form of punishment for the country. One way in which Croatia has found itself enduring the EU's ire is through its defense of its own identity in relation to the war. This subject is covered by Petra Roter and Ana Bojinovic who argue, "Loud voices are still to be heard in Croatia, including those by intellectuals and the informed public, arguing that Croatia should not surrender and let go of individuals who had helped to defend the country during the war...but that in comparison with other Central and East European states, the EU has set stricter criteria for Croatia."<sup>148</sup> This illustrates Croatia's commitment to its own identity and values, including its belief that their war for independence was justified. At the same time, however, it seems to indicate that the EU is intent on Croatia paying for its dedication through stricter criteria the state has to fulfill. In this case the EU's dislike for Croatia's stance, led to the organization ultimately using its power to punish the nation. These thoughts are expanded by Lošo who asserts, "... using 'soft power' (the media), the Croatian Army showed as criminals, and its generals, officers, NCOs and soldiers informed on as primitive, criminals, thugs, uneducated people and to the victorious army and its members as 'human dregs' were removed due to alleged harassment of civilized Croatian

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<sup>147</sup> Dr. Vinko Grubišić, author interviewed, June 28, 2013.

<sup>148</sup> Petra Roter and Ana Bojinovic, "Croatia and the European Union: A Troubled Relationship," *Mediterranean Politics* 10,no.3(2005):451.

citizens."<sup>149</sup> Lošo is explaining that instead of an attempt at understanding, Croatia suffered a character assassination through its portrayal within the media. The EU not only did not help Croatia to confute these reports, but arguably joined in on this depiction of the nation. Despite the fact that war was fought two decades ago, Croats must continue to defend their self determination, which is a punishment in and of itself. Essentially, the EU does not favor Croatia's stance regarding its own independence and attempts to punish the nation for it.

This EU's ill treatment of the Croatian state as a result of its past is also seen through the organization's attempt to regionalize the country. The EU's push to categorize Croatia as part of the Western Balkans, is also a plan that stems from the institution's position during the war for Croatian independence. This is touched upon by Bošnjak when analyzing the relationship between the freedom of Croatia and the EU when he says, "No they pay lip service to our culture, but no they don't, if they respected Croatian history wouldn't want us to accept blame for a purely defensive war, not the values the EU is built on it is a political project... EU does not see Croatia separate from Serbs and Bosnians which is why pushing Balkans history, culture, language, not respected as separate."<sup>150</sup> This reveals that despite Croatia achieving independence and formal recognition, the EU still does not believe it deserves it. The organization is purely interested in putting Croatia in a position, in which it can capitalize from the state. Therefore, Croatian identity does not fit within the EU's equation, but establishing the Western Balkan region within the EU does. Stančić continues this idea when he says, "When, however, it became increasingly clear that the international community supports the reconstruction of Yugoslavia, they hoped for greater Croatian autonomy within a democratic Yugoslavia."<sup>151</sup> In his statement,

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<sup>149</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 388-389. Author Translated.

<sup>150</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>151</sup> Stančić, *Dugo Putovanje Hrvatske U Europsku Uniju*, 77. Author Translated.

Stančić is noting the EU's goals to recreate Yugoslavia, is directly counter to the desires of the Croatian people. If the EU were to achieve such a feat, it would erase everything that Croatia had fought for. Therefore, the EU's desire to regionalize Croatia, can also be seen as an attack on the principles of independence found within Croatian identity.

### **The Continued Cost of Freedom**

The division between the EU and Croatia regarding Croatian freedom has developed consequences for the state. An issue that has arisen is that the EU qualifies Croatian cooperation with the ICTY and the acceptance of equal guilt as the only access for Croatia to be recognized as European. This theory is expanded upon by Geoffrey Pridham who claims, "This was regarded in EU circles as a symbolic as to the willingness of prospective candidate countries to move on in time and embrace a European future, and in particular as being relevant to respect for the rule of law. In doing so, the EU relied regularly on the activity and advice of the ICTY over its conditionality..."<sup>152</sup> This analysis indicates that although the ICTY is a separate body it has largely influenced the EU's conditionality requirements on Croatia. In addition, it shows that the EU has forced Croatia to decide between EU inclusion and their own identity. This concept is discussed by Dejan Jović who remarks, "Only extract from Croatian Yugoslav federation was motivated - at least in nominal terms - the idea of a 'return to Europe'...Croatian sovereign were not interested in joining the EU in the framework of Yugoslavia because they assumed - usually with good reason - that such entry into the EU decreased or completely destroyed the chances of creating an independent Croatian state."<sup>153</sup> Jović is asserting that acceptance within the EU as a European country continues to be a driving force for Croats, despite the fact that Croats want

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<sup>152</sup> Geoffrey Pridham, "Democratizing the Western Balkans: Challenges and Burdens for the European Union," *International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, 17 no.3(2008) 83.

<sup>153</sup> Dejan Jović, "Hrvatska Vanjska Politika Pred Izazovima članstva U Europskoj Uniji," *Politicka Misao* 48, no.2(2011) 10. Author Translated.



to avoid any affiliation with the Western Balkans or Yugoslavia. In addition, it shows that the EU has used the Croatian war of independence as a leverage tool against the state. As a result, this method forcibly pushes Croatia into categories and classifications it does not agree with. Essentially, the EU has manipulated Croatia's fight for freedom to its own advantage, that comes at the cost of the Croatian state and its people.

The Croatian war of independence has also been used by the EU as an intimidation approach against the state. For Croatians they unwillingly found themselves having to choose between defending the values they hold sacred and the EU's requirements. This is presented by Ashbrook who remarks, "After the Yugoslav wars of dissolution, an authoritarian government throughout the 1990s, international isolation and embargoes, and intense pressure from the EU to cooperate in the arrest and extradition of alleged Croatian war criminals, the more stringent criteria for inclusion are a bitter pill, given the inclusivist rhetoric emanating from Brussels."<sup>154</sup> This statement implies that Croatia finds itself dealing with an EU, that is quite different than the persona it markets itself as. The EU professes the idea that it is an organization that welcomes everyone equally, yet the reality is, as far as Croatia is concerned that couldn't be any further from the truth. The strict requirements placed on Croatia in regards to the aftermath of the war does not take into account the state's experiences, values, or beliefs. As a result, the EU has made Croatia's past a continual challenge for the country. This is reaffirmed by Miroslav Tuđman who asserts, "In the past decade Croatian public often indicates a message that is repeated in different forms due to the policies of President Tuđman Croatia was in isolation, if it did not meet the requirements of the Hague prosecution, Croatia will be in isolation, or, if you do

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<sup>154</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 24.

not meet the standards of the international community, it threatens you with insulation."<sup>155</sup>

Tuđman is explaining that Croats found themselves between a rock and a hard place. Croats are dedicated to their values and identity, but found that the EU and others within the international community insist that Croatia conform. If the state does not, then it faces isolation, which is a punishment that is far more difficult to overcome. Therefore, it seems the EU is punishing the Croatian state because it won its freedom.

### **Conclusion: The Rejection of Independence and the Croatian People**

Despite suffering a history under the control of various oppressors, Croats maintained their faith and perseverance that Croatia would eventually regain its independence. Unfortunately, it would take a defensive war against Serbian led aggression to achieve this feat. During the violence of war, Croats found themselves fighting the battles alone. It was a virtual abandonment by many, including the EU. Years later the endurance of the Croatian people during this tragic time had come to form a part of both Croatian identity and its relationship with the EU. While Croats want to savor their freedom and move forward as a recognized equal, the EU thinks otherwise. The EU's abandonment of Croatia has transitioned into the organization, essentially punishing the state for attaining its freedom. It refuses to invest time into understanding the experiences and position of the Croatian people, and it has forced the state into a classification of an equally guilty title, despite the fact that Serbian leadership commenced the war. Even Croatia's justification of its actions have become part of the EU's target, as the institution has isolated and virtually punished the state for its views. All of these actions reveal that the EU has in no way supported a free and independent Croatia, something

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<sup>155</sup> Miroslav Tuđman, "Suverenitet ili Izolacija," *Hrvatska i Zapadni Balkan*, ed. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, Dr. Mate Ljubičić, (Zagreb: Tisak, 2007), 57. Author Translated.

which is so integral to the Croatian identity. This means that Croatia has entered an institution that does not retain an ounce of respect for the nation and the experiences that have forged its identity.

For Croatians the EU represented the ideal dream. The Croatian desire to enter the EU was more than economic, it was a chance to escape the past. After years of being victimized by the brutality of various rulers whether it had been the Austro-Hungarian empire, Tito, or Serb aggression, EU accession became an opportunity for Croatia to be recognized as an equal and independent state. It began under the concept that Croatia would become part of an EU that had formed its foundation on the basis of inclusiveness, acceptance, and equality, no matter what part of Europe the state had originated from. Unfortunately, Croatia failed to see that by this time the EU's ideal principles hid the discrimination and double standards that lurked beneath the pretty illusion of equality and camaraderie. Since the beginning of its negotiations with the EU, Croatians have found their identity attacked by the organization from all sides. The EU began by blacklisting Croatia as a backward and Balkan country, despite the fact that core values of Croatian identity, history, and culture have no affiliation with the negative stereotypes that stand behind this title. If that weren't enough the EU began an assault on Croatian Christianity and its native language in an effort to mold the state according to the Western European based standards that have driven the organization for over a decade. Finally, the EU has even come to question and even punish Croatians for their independence. Therefore, the EU wants Croatia, but not the Croatian people. As an EU member, Croatia will have a future of battles as it must constantly decide between the preservation of Croatian identity and the appeasement of the EU.

## Chapter 7: The Fissures of Sovereignty Within the EU

When the EU began to expand from its economic foundation, to political aspirations, it claimed that the change would not only solidify the organization, but provide security and prosperity to its members. Arguably, this led to the EU becoming an example of Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. Within the idea of cultural hegemony, is the belief that society agrees to a form of consented coercion in regards to the ruling class. Similarly within the EU, states would agree to consign part of their sovereignty in return for the believed support the organization could provide. At the same time, states still felt that many of the Westphalian principles of sovereignty would remain intact. Some of these principles being the right to self determination, equality, and sole control over domestic affairs. These beliefs were reinforced by the EU marketing itself as an organization based on equality and mutual gains. Unfortunately, just like the institution's failures regarding identity, sovereignty is another area where the EU has been unable to meet its own standards. Behind the pretty facade of equality, is an organization that is very much guided by double standards and discrimination. The fissures within this area have led to tensions and issues that have become increasingly visible to member states and its citizens. One of most revealing double standards is the EU's stance regarding the ethnic Roma minority that resides throughout Europe. The EU has increasingly ordered member states, such as Romania, to provide more laws and benefits in favor of the Roma.<sup>156</sup> Yet, other EU member countries, like France, have been allowed to alienate and even deport the Roma from their

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<sup>156</sup> European Union, European Commission, *Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizen Belonging to the Roman Minority for the Period 2012-2020*.

states.<sup>157</sup> As a result, this incident shows that the EU is more than willing to dictate a member's domestic affairs, and foster inequality and double standards within the organization. Therefore, state sovereignty finds itself in a threatened position within the EU.

As for Croatia, part of its motivation to join the EU was the believed support the organization could give the country. Furthermore, it saw EU membership as a symbolic gesture that would recognize Croatia's sovereignty and its contributions to Europe. Yet, Croatia's valued independence has consistently found itself at odds with the EU. The institution only views Croatia's sovereignty as significant when it affects the EU. As a result, this creates tensions between the country and the organization. Croatia wants to be accepted within the EU, but retain the Westphalian principles of sovereignty. On the other hand, the EU would like Croatia to either surrender its political rights or have them conform to the institution's desires. This has led to Croatia struggling to preserve its political rights in the face of a highly powerful EU. The impact of the sovereignty issues within the EU can be seen through the organization's approach and limitations to this area, as well as its direct relationship with Croatia concerning its own sovereignty.

### **The Flawed Sovereignty Exchange**

The problematic environment regarding sovereignty within the EU can be observed through the theoretical framework that has built the organization's policy on this topic. The EU has based its ability to function politically around the concept of consigning state autonomy to the institution. This is an idea presented by Haddii M. Mamudu and Donley T. Studlar who argue, "Thus, shared sovereignty, which deals with how states willingly cede part of their

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<sup>157</sup> Steven Erlanger, "Treatment Still Harsh for Roma in France," *New York Times*, June 3, 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/04/world/europe/roma-still-shunned-in-france-ahead-of-eu-rules-change.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/04/world/europe/roma-still-shunned-in-france-ahead-of-eu-rules-change.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0) (accessed June 15, 2013).

sovereignty to intergovernmental organizations or supranational bodies to deal with issues that cannot be handled single-handedly, provides an important theoretical frame for understanding how the EU gained authority in this policy area within a system of multilevel governance."<sup>158</sup>This reveals that states agree to give up a portion of its own sovereignty in return for protection and assistance. At the same time, however, Mamudu and Studlar note that this action stems from the belief that sovereignty is shared. This means the states still desire to retain a large amount of its sovereignty, and in no way is its secession of autonomy a blank check to the EU. The issue that arises is when the EU clearly does not respect this agreement. Mamudu and Studlar expand on this idea when they remark, "Under this arrangement, state actors have the authority to enter into agreements that would compromise their Westphalian sovereignty, with the goal of improving domestic sovereignty...they cede their autonomy by pooling their resources into a multilateral organization or their commitments into an international treaty, which then become vehicles for international collective action."<sup>159</sup>This illustrates that the concept of shared sovereignty is supposed to benefit EU members long term within their own respective states. Yet, it begs of the question of how does an EU member contend with collective actions and agreements that hinders the state's national interests? Essentially, the EU began with ideal principles regarding sovereignty and its member states, however these plans leave ample room for discrimination and abuse.

While ideal in thought, the practice of shared sovereignty within the EU has led to some uncertainties that have adversely affected member states. A concern is the amount of power the EU receives through this approach to member political relations. This is touched upon by Booker

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<sup>158</sup> Hadii M. Mamudu, Donley T. Studlar, "Multilevel Governance and Shared Sovereignty: European Union, Member States, and the FCTC," *Governance* 22, no.1(2009),77.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

and North who assert, "... setting up an entirely new form of government: one which was 'supra-national,' beyond the control of national governments, politicians, or electorates. Nation states, governments and parliaments could be left in place: but only so that they could gradually become subordinated to new supranational government which was above them all."<sup>160</sup> This analysis illustrates the potential negative consequences this approach to sovereignty can have for states within the EU. If the state loses its ability to retain control over EU policies it does not agree with, than it has effectively surrendered its sovereignty to an organization that may or may not be working in its best interests. This approach is also addressed by Evelyn Eliis who says, "Of course, if the Member States possessed general powers to contradict EU law by means of their own national legislation, then all Member States would not be placed in the same position. The notion of reciprocity is central to the Union, and reciprocity would not exist without the doctrine of supremacy of EU law." From the point of Eliss the state's lack of rights helps achieve equality within the EU. Yet, the reality is that this statement illustrates that there are no checks and balances to control the EU and its decisions. As a result, states can find the EU supporting actions that are directly in contention with the national interests of a state. As Eliss points out, states within the EU have no ability to contradict EU law, which makes it a precarious situation for a country to find itself in. Belloni also explores this situation when he comments that, "The EU resembles a neo-medieval empire characterized by overlapping authorities and divided sovereignty, multiple identities, fuzzy borders and various forms of external power projection."<sup>161</sup> This statement is evidence that the EU has used state secession of sovereignty as an opportunity to function as an empire. In addition, it supports the idea that there is no concrete division separating the EU's power and the state's right to sovereignty. Consequently, a state can find itself working for the

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<sup>160</sup> Booker and North, *The Great Deception*, 2.

<sup>161</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 321.

EU's benefit, rather than its own. In many ways, the ambiguity of the EU's approach to sovereignty as given the organization an advantage, but at the expense of its members.

The EU's stance regarding sovereignty has created problems for member states. A concern is that through the EU, states have lost the ability to fully function in relation to their own domestic politics. This idea is presented by Alyson J.K. Bailes who asserts, "Moreover, the pattern of surrendering sovereignty together with centralized control has always been patchy, leading to the supranational treatment of some areas of governance, the prevalence of Westphalian-type intergovernmental bargaining in others, and every possible degree of mixed and blurred competences in between."<sup>162</sup> This illustrates that because there is no concrete agreement between the EU and states in relation to their autonomy, members must be focused on EU desires. As a result, this takes away the state ability to run its domestic politics the way it sees fit. This concept is expanded upon by Mamudu and Studlar who stress, "States become bound by adherence to international norms developed as a result of this collective action or cooperation. In this respect, the state does not have the sole authority over policy but is disaggregated..."<sup>163</sup> Mamudu and Studlar's statement reveals that once countries enter this agreement of shared sovereignty, the EU becomes an additional controller of member states. This leaves little room for states to vocalize their opinions regarding the collective decision of the organization, which could potentially be detrimental for the state in question if the EU supports an action or policy it doesn't agree with. Basically, the excessive amount of control the EU has could create issues that threaten the sovereignty of its member states.

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<sup>162</sup> Alyson J.K. Bailes, "National Power and Sovereignty: What is the Significance of the European Union's Example?" *American Foreign Policy Interests* 28,no.1(2006) 28.

<sup>163</sup> Mamudu, Studlar, "Multilevel Governance and Shared Sovereignty,"77.



## Croatia's Apprehensive Agreement

As for Croatia, while EU membership was an ambition, it still left the country concerned for its sovereignty. Despite Croatians acknowledging that it would have to surrender some sovereignty, there were still questions about how this would impact the state. Šeparović highlights these fears when he says, "Some are frightened, we are again in another common state... We as European are accepting of European rules, not happy to lose our sovereignty, but world has tendency to unify."<sup>164</sup> Šeparović presents the idea that Croatians understand that some sovereignty has to be given up, yet it does so with reservations. Again, this aspect of EU membership almost seems like a form of gambling, where the Croatian state does not know whether this action will bring benefits or problems for the country. This feeling is also concurred by Tuđman who asserts, "I do not idealize the EU, does not mean it will be rosy. A realistic approach to expect all difficulties, but I can live with that." Again, Tuđman expresses the belief that there could be issues awaiting Croatia within the EU by giving up its sovereignty, but that it is a chance the state should take. The problem with this approach is that it does not account for the worst case scenario, where Croatia may not be able to live and sustain through the potential challenges awaiting the country in the EU. Jelčić highlights an important concern about the EU and Croatian sovereignty when he remarks, "The doubt would be because Croatia had very bad experience living through multinational formations and especially for reason Croats small nation because of that can be problem. Second reason Croatia just started to be independent nation is that smart to lose some sovereignty after nation standing firm on their loss."<sup>165</sup> Jelčić brings up an important point by noting the parallels between the EU and the past organizations that Croatia had aligned itself with. The unfortunate trend is that for Croatia, all of the past insitutions that it

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<sup>164</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.

<sup>165</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

was a part of had oppressed the country. In addition, since Croatia has been recognized as an independent country for such a short time, is it wise for it to give away a valuable part of Croatian political rights and identity so quickly? This shows that while Croatians may want EU membership, there is a sense of hesitation that is based on legitimate concerns about the organization. Essentially, Croatians have agreed to give up their sovereignty, but they do so uneasily.

The apprehension of Croatians regarding the preservation of their sovereignty, has led to a reflection about their status within the EU. There is a concern that EU membership could mean benefits or the end of state autonomy. Lošo addresses this subject when remarks, "EU is not defined yet, in the future we are not sure one conglomerate of states united or kind of state controlling all of those because it is not defined I have questions about it...Normal that you join any federation or a kind of togetherness lose sovereignty, abolition of national identity not good. It would be wrong that the time of national states is over."<sup>166</sup> Lošo brings up a valid concern for Croatians, as there is an ambiguity about the EU's intentions regarding sovereignty. He also reaffirms the fact that Croatians would consider it a gross violation of the principles of independence if the EU assumes the role of a dictator and effectively abolishes the existence of nation states. Lukšić expands on this topic when he says, "The role of Croatia within the EU provided that the EU does not disintegrate in the very near future would be to defend the rights of small nations..."<sup>167</sup> Lukšić is showing that there is a valid concern that small nations may find their independence is at risk within the EU. Furthermore, Croatia will possibly have to defend itself, if it is to preserve the principles of sovereignty that it values. Ashbrook comments on this aspect when he asserts, "... Croats have a number of concerns, some very legitimate, about

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<sup>166</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>167</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.

joining the EU. Questions about transparency, equality among members, the uniform application of rules to candidates and members, lingering prejudices against the states and peoples of Central and Eastern Europe—all these are valid concerns for a candidate country."<sup>168</sup> Ashbrook notes that the concerns Croatsians have are not without merit. They could potentially find that their state is unequally treated within the EU. Therefore, Croatia has found that giving up its sovereignty also creates an environment where the state may be negatively impacted by this action.

Croatsians also fear that surrendering part of its independence will seal its fate as a servant to the EU, rather than state interests. There is a belief that the EU may decide to dictate its desires to Croatia, and the country will not be able to contest actions that go against the principles and values of the state. Bošnjak touches upon this topic when he stresses, "Primarily I feel the EU is a loss of Croatian independence. I wish the EU well, but without Croatia. No animosity to EU as such, once Croatia becomes a member I will feel hostility towards EU, view it as a colonial power."<sup>169</sup> Bošnjak is stating that Croatia may end up merely being a colonial outpost for the EU, and the state will no longer be independent and able to control its domestic affairs. It will have to worry about fulfilling EU desires and needs, rather than what is beneficial for the country. Jelčić reaffirms Bošnjak's point when he says, "Croatia's sovereignty, that would be what EU will impose on us."<sup>170</sup> In his analysis, Jelčić is arguing that Croatian decisions will be decided by the EU, thus the state would lose its decision making capabilities. Basically, Croatsians view the possibility that the EU may become a dictatorship, which costs the Croatian state its autonomy.

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<sup>168</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 36.

<sup>169</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>170</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

There is also the belief that by consigning part of its sovereignty to the EU, Croatia will become a victim of double standards and discrimination. Croatians perceive that a loss of independence would allow others to take advantage and capitalize off the country. This idea is presented by Caratan who emphasizes, "This fact, as well as the estimation that some of the new members have fared worse than Croatia, not only in terms of their economic indicators, causes a sense among the citizens that the country has waited unjustifiably long to be admitted to the EU. Such sentiment has reinforced Euroscepticism, given support to the nationalist arguments about the EU posing a threat to sovereignty..."<sup>171</sup> This shows that Croatia retains the view that the EU does not respect the nation's sovereignty. Consequently, the state could find itself receiving adverse treatment within the organization. Bošnjak also addresses this perspective when he remarks, "Publicly stated goal of the European campaign to convince the Croatian people to give up their independent and sovereign state...the EU is directly intervening in the internal affairs of another state-which is unacceptable in classic international relations."<sup>172</sup> Bošnjak is exposing the fact that the EU's goal for Croatia to surrender its sovereignty works against every principle regarding independence within the practice of international relations. Therefore, by performing this action, Croatia would effectively be entering an organization that does not retain the same respect for its political rights and values. As a result, Croatians may find that the EU is not interested in the preservation of Croatia's independence.

Croatians also sense that the state could be put in a dangerous position, by giving its political power to the EU. There is a feeling that Croatia could be facing more challenges, rather than benefits by signing over its sovereignty. Kovačević highlights this perspective when he says, "... increasingly intensive relativizing role of nation states, there is a real danger that the

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<sup>171</sup> Caratan, "The European Union, South-Eastern Europe and the Europeanization of Croatia," 176.

<sup>172</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 66. Author Translated.

federal authorities, EU, will turn into a powerful, centralist institution, which erodes collective national and individual rights."<sup>173</sup> Kovačević is arguing that the power of nations states may deteriorate within the EU, and as a result this will affect not only member countries, but their citizens. This seems to be a legitimate fear that Croatians are preparing for in regards to their own membership within the organization. Bošnjak expands on this validation when he comments, "Croatian sovereignty in the EU, none 1% of population less than 1% of political power. What sovereignty? Lose 100% of sovereignty by going to EU especially with the changes by April 2017...Croatian votes meaningless."<sup>174</sup> The statement Bošnjak provides explains that the reality is that despite what is professed officially, Croatia will not be able to impact any of the EU's chose decisions and policies. Without this capability, Croatains are forced to live under EU jurisdiction, rather than being an equal contributor to the organization. Lošo mentions the lack of sovereignty as well when he states, "When it is question of sovereignty need to define which one territory, cultural, economic, information distribution, etc. All those sovereignties in smaller or bigger sense will be in danger. That will again depend on direction EU will go as either conglomerate of states or a controller."<sup>175</sup> Lošo is emphasizing that if the EU becomes a dictated empire, all aspects of sovereignty will be put at risk. As a result, this will be especially dangerous for Croatia as it will open up the country to a host of issues. Basically, Croatia's lack of control within the EU, puts the country's political sustainability in a negative position.

### **Conclusion: The Possible Reappearance of the Multinational Curse**

Overall, Croatia has found itself at odds with the EU regarding the issue of sovereignty. The EU would like every state, including Croatia, to surrender part of its political rights in return

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<sup>173</sup> Mate Kovačević, author interview, July 8, 2013.

<sup>174</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>175</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

for security and prosperity. Yet, the reality is that the EU's approach to this matter has left the organization without checks and balances. As a result, member states could find they have no ability to counter EU policies it does not agree with, which may have a negative impact on the state. The Croatian state, which is dedicated to the Westphalian ideals of sovereignty, understand the EU's requirement regarding the consignment of political power. At the same time, while Croatsians have decided to follow through with their side of the agreement, they do so with reservations. This is due to the fact that there are numerous and valid concerns that Croatia's political preservation could be at risk. If the Croatian fears become a reality, than the tragedy would be that Croatia has found itself part of an oppressive organization again, thus continuing the curse of the state's tragic history as a victim of persecution.

## **Chapter 8: The Political Price of War**

While the Croatian war of independence holds a special place within Croatian identity, it is also politically important for the state as well. Through the tragedy of war, Croatians were able to prove to the international community that their right to self-determination was justified. As a result, Croatians were able to be recognized as a sovereign nation state, eligible for all of the benefits and responsibilities that come attached to the title. Although this provided an opportunity for Croatians to be acknowledged for their contributions to Europe, the nation state continues to fight for acceptance as a sovereign nation. This is due to the fact that while Croatia is officially recognized as an independent country, there are still states and institutions that refuse to treat it as such. One of these entities is the EU, who continues to challenge Croatia's sovereignty, which has led to problems for the state and its people. By having to consistently defend its rights as a country, Croatia is unable to achieve stability and its full potential within its domestic affairs and relations within the international community. The EU's negative influence within this area can be seen through the intrusive conditionality requirements placed on Croatia, and the relations between the Croatian state and the Western European EU members regarding the Croatian war of independence.

### **Diminishing Croatia's Sovereignty**

The conditionality requirements that the EU has placed on Croatia has hindered its ability to function as a sovereign state. The EU's treatment of Croatia in this way began at the beginning of the war, when it attempted to use its power to sway the Croatian people. This is addressed by Booker and North who assert, "As news of the fighting in Slovenia reached the Council meeting, it was greeted as an almost heaven-sent opportunity. Here was a crisis at the heart of Europe

which would give the Community an opportunity to intervene as the continent's 'superpower,' demonstrating the 'common foreign policy' in action."<sup>176</sup> While this depicts the EU's stance at the beginning of the war, it also illustrates how the organization related to the countries vying for independence. This shows that the EU's goal was to use the Slovenian and Croatian nations as examples, where the organization could demonstrate its power. Therefore, the EU's desired outcome would be that Slovenia and Croatia would conduct itself according to its will, which was early on the retention of Yugoslavia. The key component of this analysis is the EU's intent to suppress the will of nation states and control the ability to access the right of self-determination. Furthermore, as was mentioned previously, the EU refused to acknowledge Croatia as an independent state during the war, despite the fact that it met all of the criteria for recognition. This reveals that even before the war had been won by the Croatians, the EU had begun to intrusively insert itself within the politics of Croatia, which prevented the state from attaining its sovereignty at that time. Lošo expands on this theory by noting the EU's transition from preventing self-determination to using the ICTY as leverage against the country when he says, "When you closely examine the specific 'Western' targets by the European Union to Croatia, contained in the formulation of the 'functioning of the rule of law', the apparent high degree of conformity between the political process in Croatia and the occurrence in the Hague."<sup>177</sup> Lošo's analysis reveals that even when Croatia became recognized as an independent country, the EU began to attempt to politically influence Croatia by using the ICTY as a tool. As a functioning body within the United Nations, the ICTY has not affiliation with the EU. Yet the organization continues to use it to its advantage in regards to its relations with Croatia. While it can be argued that as an institution, the EU has a right to take into account all of the experiences

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<sup>176</sup> Booker and North, *The Great Deception*, 327.

<sup>177</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 448. Author Translated.



and situations regarding a member or candidate state, its insistence that Croatia surrender to all ICTY principles removes the state's ability to make its own decisions. As a result, Croatia is forced to hand over its decision making to the EU in order to be considered viable by the institution. Essentially, from the beginning of the war the EU has actively attempted to minimize Croatia's sovereignty.

In addition, the EU has used its conditionality requirements to extort the country of its sovereignty. By combining Croatia's relationship with the ICTY, along with its desire to be an accepted member of the EU, the organization has taken an aggressive role within the formulation of Croatian international politics. This is a concept that is explored by Belloni who remarks, "The issue of conditionality, is the most powerful tool available to the EU... conditionality towards the region involves the requirement of 'full cooperation' with the ICTY. In practice, this request meant that the Tribunal and its chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte became the main gatekeepers in the process of European integration."<sup>178</sup> This effectively shows that Croatia's sovereign principle, that no entity may justifiably infringe upon another state's domestic politics has been broken. As a result, Croatia could not have the freedom to negotiate with the ICTY according to its own terms, because it had to focus on appeasing the EU. While it is respected that every supranational institution requires members to consign some of its sovereignty, the EU's involvement with Croatia's ICTY situation has completely stripped the state of its sovereignty rights. Thus, Croatia has been reduced to being the EU's puppet, instead of a state that could justifiably defend its position and make choices that are in the benefit of its citizens. This is touched upon by Hursoy who explains, "As it is mentioned above, the cooperation with the ICTY is a precondition for any progresses in the negotiations of the SAA. Despite the EU

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<sup>178</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 326.

accession negotiations started swiftly with Croatia in October 2005, there are significant ambiguities about judicial and economic reforms..."<sup>179</sup> Not only does Hursoy reaffirm the EU's use of the ICTY as a leverage tool, but he acknowledges the vagueness of the institution's desired reforms. This implies that the EU's influence has meant that there is no longer a clear separation between the institution and the sovereignty of the state. As a result, Croatia finds itself entering an EU that attacks the very core values behind political independence.

Furthermore, the EU's requirements, regarding Croatia's war for independence, discriminate against Croatia's ability to function as an autonomous state. One of the concerns is that the EU has asked Croatia to surrender an enormous amount of sovereignty in relation to the war. This idea is presented by Pridham who explains, "In short, the domestic environment for EU-committed leaders in the Balkans is decidedly more difficult than was the case with their predecessors in the 2004 enlargement process... It has at times been highlighted by the new conditionality issue of handing over alleged war criminals who, like Ante Gotovina in Croatia and Ratko Mladić in Serbia, have enjoyed a measurable degree of support as national heroes in patriotic circles in these countries."<sup>180</sup> Pridham's analysis reveals that Croatia must undergo more reforms and conditionality requirements than any other state that had previously conducted EU accession negotiations. This indicates that the EU's relationship with Croatia is based on how much political power the organization can influence the state to give up. Stojic also explores this concept when he comments, "Among these extra demands, the full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is the most important. As a result, resistance to the EU, and a feeling of injustice, is stronger in both countries because of the perceived double standards in EU policy – in Croatia especially, this has strengthened Euro-

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<sup>179</sup> Hursoy, "The European Union Foreign and Security Actions and the Western Balkans," 101.

<sup>180</sup> Pridham, "Democratizing the Western Balkans: Challenges and Burdens for the European Union," 84.

sceptic attitudes."<sup>181</sup> This illustrates that the EU's involvement within Croatian politics is a discriminatory action, that results in Croatia losing a good deal of its political power. Since other EU candidates and members are not required to conform to the same standards, Croatia has entered the EU in an unequal position. Basically, the EU's ICTY conditionality requirements reflect an organization that is looking to assert its dominance, at the expense of Croatia's political power.

The EU's political influence regarding the ICTY, had resulted in Croatia struggling to preserve its sovereignty. Croatia's dedication to its political independence has created tensions between the state and organization. This is touched upon by Roter and Bojinovic who comment, "The stumbling block, and the reason for the Commission's unhappiness about Croatia's compliance with the membership requirements, has been centered on the issue of Croatia's cooperation, or rather the lack of it, with The Hague-based International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)."<sup>182</sup> Again, this demonstrates that the EU has insisted that its own views regarding Croatia's situation with the ICTY be accepted by the state. Yet, Croatia has attempted to exert its right to disagree with certain accusations and conclusions the tribunal has presented. By the organization expressing that EU accession negotiations would be halted by Croatia's disagreement with the ICTY, reveals that the state has been robbed of its ability to formulate and stand by its own opinions and beliefs. Bošnjak expands on these thoughts when he argues, "...Croatian accession to the EU is the largest national and strategic priority, which unfortunately must submit to sundry other national interests, such as the extradition of Croatian generals to the Hague, bargaining of Croatian state-owned enterprises, and even the withdrawal

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<sup>181</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia," 316.

<sup>182</sup> Roter and Ana Bojinovic, "Croatia and the European Union: A Troubled Relationship," 447.

from the economic zone, all of which is not discussed."<sup>183</sup> Through Bošnjak's statement, it is clearly shown that the EU's desired reforms work directly against the national political interests of the state. This means that the accession process has costed Croatia the political rights that are important to the Croatian people. Therefore, Croatia cannot adequately fulfill its own political principles if it is counter to the EU's desires.

These developments regarding the EU and its intrusion within Croatian national politics, has elicited concern about the future political sustainability of the state. A major concern is the lack of equality that the Croatian state has had to endure, due to the EU's forced role within Croatian politics. This is addressed by Bošnjak who remarks, "They made us do things no one else has had to do. We had to surrender our generals, long list of things, politically embrace Serbs forgive them for aggression, pressured to drop genocide case against them in ICJ, and spend big reparation money on Serbs."<sup>184</sup> Bošnjak's analysis reveals threatening implications for the preservation of a politically autonomous Croatia. The fact that the EU has used its power to not only force Croatia to accept ICTY assertions it did not agree with, but to encourage them to drop its claim against Serbia is a vicious attack against Croatian sovereignty. As a recognized and independent country, Croatia is entitled to voice any concerns and opinions it may have. Furthermore, it should have the ability to freely use the United Nations judiciary system without the fear of punishment. Yet, the EU has violated these principles by essentially blackmailing Croatia to give up its political sovereignty in this area. This idea is expanded upon by Lošo who says, "... using the Hague war crimes trials to prove that all the polities were equally to blame, other than those provided for, again it is no coincidence that the terms of the Croatian accession

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<sup>183</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 30. Author Translated.

<sup>184</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

to the European Union overlap with deadlines of the Hague Tribunal."<sup>185</sup> Lošo is arguing that the EU has made it clear that Croats need to decide whether its political beliefs were worth its accession to the EU. This indicates that instead of becoming an equal within a supranational organization, Croatia has allowed itself to be dictated by the EU. Jelčić reaffirms this theory when he remarks, "All depends on interests of states towards the EU and the EU's interests towards the states, sometimes those two things are different."<sup>186</sup> Jelčić is arguing that sometimes the desires of the state and the EU are different, which is exactly true in the case of Croatia. The Croatians look for political equality within the organization, while the EU is intent on removing its sovereignty. Essentially, the ICTY conditionality requirements stemming from the EU have only worked to compromise Croatian political sustainability.

### **Contending With Ulterior Motives**

Not only is Croatia's sovereignty threatened by EU conditionality, but by the specific intentions of the leading Western European EU members within the organization. The EU's refusal to recognize Croatia during the war was directly influenced by Western European members such as France and Great Britain. As a result, this has adversely affected Croatia's sovereignty. This subject is explored by Lošo who stresses, "Entire area, inefficiency of the international community, primarily the European duo of Great Britain and France, allowed the Serbian politicians to conduct continuous' creeping occupation in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina..."<sup>187</sup> This is evidence that Great Britain and France did not support the establishment of an independent and sovereign Croatia. In addition, Lošo indicates that the two countries were aware of Serbia's aggressive tactics, but chose not to act, resulting in Croatia

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<sup>185</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 449. Author Translated.

<sup>186</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

<sup>187</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 449. Author Translated.

having to endure a violent war alone. The Croatian political problems associated with the choices of Great Britain and France are expressed by Dr. Đuro Njavro and Dr. Zoran Stiperski who emphasize, "...in British newspapers and books it is often stated that the war started because of the premature recognition of Croatia and Slovenia from Germany and the Vatican. In this way the fault transferred to Germans, while hiding that Serbia had begun aggressive wars in the former Yugoslavia."<sup>188</sup> This statement reveals that Western EU member states, like Great Britain, continue to negatively acknowledge Croatia's achievement of independence. To label Croatia as a prematurely recognized country, is to effectively denounce its sovereignty. Šeparović highlights the impact of these EU member state positions by stressing, "On the other side enemies, our enemies those who had been supporting Serbia, Milosevic, and former Yugoslavia those have been countries that had a socialist party in government and or were Orthodox religion countries, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, France supporters of Serbia."<sup>189</sup> Šeparović explains that the Croatian war of independence was more than a defensive fight opposing Serbian aggression, but a battle against states that refused to recognize Croatia's right to autonomy. As a result, this begs the question of where does Croatia stand within an EU, where many of its members denied and continue to negatively acknowledge Croatia's sovereignty? Therefore, there has been an active resistance from multiple EU member countries against Croatian sovereignty from the beginning.

As Croatia had to fight for its recognition, its experience with EU members opposed to Croatian sovereignty, has made the issue of trust a vital concern for the Croatian state. The motivations behind the choice not to recognize Croatia's sovereignty during the war, has

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<sup>188</sup> Dr. Đuro Njavro, Dr. Zoran Stiperski, "Hrvatski i Zapadni Balkan, Raspad," *Hrvatska i Zapadni Balkan*, ed. Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, Dr. Mate Ljubičić (Zagreb: Tiskara, 2007), 176. Author Translated.

<sup>189</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.

remained a challenge for Croatia to overcome in regards to its political sustainability. This problem is addressed by Lukšić who says, "Some EU members, especially Great Britain, were very hostile towards Croatia's entrance to the EU because Great Britain was and is a traditional ally of the Serbian dynasty of Serbia."<sup>190</sup> This statement reveals the sincere complexity that is found within the EU. The organization is comprised of members that each have their own values, thoughts, and motives that form the foundation of their states. Problems arise when these motives come into conflict with or at the expense of another member. In this case, the victim is Croatia. Since Great Britain has an immense amount of loyalty to Serbia, it means that Britain will be more willing to support actions that are in the benefit of the Serbian state. The British desire to support Serbia may be to such an extent that it will come at the expense of another, such as Croatia's right to sovereignty. In addition, this means that Croatia can never be sure that the requirements it must undergo or the treatment it receives within the EU isn't influenced by the ulterior motives of the other member states. This is further expressed by Stančić who comments, "Of course, in doing so it will not be forgotten who caused the bloody chaos, but if it is a common European future, the trauma of the past will be treated in accordance with the standards of European criteria."<sup>191</sup> Stančić is explaining that Croatians will move forward as a recognized European country, but will never forget those that had commenced and contributed to the war that had adversely affected Croatia. This is important from a political standpoint as Croatians will be concerned about the trust it can or cannot put in other member states regarding the respect and preservation of Croatian autonomy. Stojic emphasizes these beliefs when he asserts, "As a consequence of the wars, an overall distrust among the Balkans nations, and a suspicious of the intention of others, the anti-Yugoslav legacy feeds anti-EU sentiments, taking into

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<sup>190</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.

<sup>191</sup> Stančić, *Dugo Putovanje Hrvatske U Europsku Uniju*, 192. Author Translated.

consideration that the EU insists on regional co-operation."<sup>192</sup>The traumatic experience of war and the failure of many states and organizations within the international community to recognize Croatia's right to self-determination in its time of need as forever defined the country. The past proves that Croatia will always have to be aware and wary of the intentions of other states, particularly the Western European countries that are leading EU policy, as its decisions may negatively impact the sovereignty of the Croatian state. Therefore, the motivations of other EU members has made it clear that the political independence of Croatia must constantly be protected.

The issues Croatia has faced in regards to its sovereignty has caused reflection about the state's future sustainability within the EU. One fear is the EU's insistence that Croatia accept relations it is uncomfortable with, may ultimately cost the state its political values and independence. This is an idea presented by Lošo when he expresses that, "... the Foreign Office to Zagreb, everything breaks down, and recommendations to show the Croatian determination and seriousness of the strong partnership not only with Britain but also to other EU Member States' and the conclusion that behind this are political losers, but they are, of course not appointed, and for their own interests willing the fate of the whole country."<sup>193</sup> Lošo is showing that the determination to have Croatia foster these relationships, merely because the EU desires it, may cost the country its valuable political principles in the near future. As a result, this push on part of the EU removes Croatia's right to conduct its international relations the way it desires to do so. Lošo expands upon these ideas when he says, "President Josipović agreed also that Croatia will support Great Britain's political views on EU which is in many sense against other members, that way Croatia would be against members who were on Croatia's side. Even worse

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<sup>192</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia," 316.

<sup>193</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 468. Author Translated.



support of Great Britain's view of uniting countries of ex-Yugoslavia."<sup>194</sup> Lošo is illustrating that leading Western EU members are only using Croatian sovereignty to their advantage. In addition, these actions that it desires Croatia to perform are in direct contention with the international relations and domestic values that have benefitted the Croatian people. Consequently, Croatia finds itself in a situation where its political independence has been put in a precarious position.

### **Conclusion: Sovereignty on Paper**

Overall, the Croatian war of independence has led the nation to finally being accepted as a sovereign state within the international community. Despite its official recognition on paper, some states and institutions still do not treat Croatia as an independent country. This is particularly true in regards to Croatia's relationship with the EU. The organization has consistently used the ICTY as part of its conditionality requirements for Croatia, which has essentially stripped the state of its rights regarding this situation. In addition, Croatia has also found its sovereignty to be questioned and threatened by other EU members that have visibly indicated their lack of support for an independent Croatia or their loyalties to other states that would like to capitalize on Croatia. Unfortunately, these issues regarding Croatia's sovereignty leave the country in a very unequal position within the EU. The situation means that Croatia can continue to expect that its rights will be questioned and threatened. It also incites reflection about other areas in which Croatia may find itself manipulated for the EU's benefit.

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<sup>194</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

## **Chapter 9: Geopolitical Strain and Conflicts of Interest**

For many states, the concept of sovereignty indicates that a country is given the right to control its own defined territory, while conducting domestic and international affairs according to its own principles. These values not only define the stability and sustainability of a state, but its relations with other countries and organizations. In the case of Croatia, its recognized sovereignty has helped the state prosper and form meaningful relations with other countries. Yet, this positive progress has been diminished and hindered by Croatia's affiliation with the EU. From the beginning of its accession process, Croatia has found itself dealing with an increasing amount of geopolitical issues, primarily regarding its relations with states that border the country. This stems from the fact that Croatia's accession process has given other EU members and candidates an opportunity to capitalize off the country at the expense of the Croatian state. Consequently, this has created and exasperated tensions between Croatia, other countries, and the EU. The issues that the EU has initiated can be seen through Croatia's strained relations with Slovenia and Italy.

### **The Slovenian Extortion Plot**

As Croatia began accession negotiations, it found its previously benign relationship with Slovenia had transformed into a source of tension. By the time Croatia had begun mediations with the EU, Slovenia was already an official member within the organization. Due to the positive nature of Croatian Slovenian relations, it was thought that Slovenia would fully support Croatia in its accession process. Unfortunately, the reality was that Slovenia viewed this situation as an opportunity for the country to use its position within the EU as a leverage device against Croatia. By doing this Slovenia would be able to attain its desired goals at the expense of Croatia

and the Croatian people. As a result, this triggered a variety of incidents in which Croatia found that in order to placate the EU, it would have to appease Slovenia, even when its desires unjustifiably infringed on Croatia's political rights and sovereignty.

One of the most vivid examples of this regards Piran Bay. Located in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea, Slovenia proposed that it had rights to the bay, despite it historically and legitimately belonging to Croatia. Naturally, Croatians contended Slovenia's claim, only to find that the Slovenians had decided to use their EU membership as a sanction tool against the Croatian state. This issue is addressed by Jović who says, "Relations with Slovenia, which at one time plagued the Croatian path towards the European Union, are relieved when Jadranka Kosor took over the position of Prime Minister (July 1, 2009), followed by a bilateral agreement on international arbitration in connection with a boundary in the Bay of Piran."<sup>195</sup> This statement reveals that when Croatia refused to consider Slovenia's demands, it threatened to veto Croatia's accession to the EU. Allowing the Slovenians to extort the country, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor agreed to an arbitrage, instead of using the international court of justice to present Croatia's rightful claim. Therefore, Kosor had provided an opportunity for Slovenia to obtain this part of Croatian territory. Lukšić expresses Croatian disappointment on this matter when he asserts, "Slovenia got the impression that by exerting adequate pressure on Croatia, the Croatian government would agree to a blackmail."<sup>196</sup> Lukšić is showing that instead of receiving benefits and support, Croatia has found itself victimized by an EU member. Furthermore, he clearly indicates that the right to veto within the EU, has been used by opportunistic states attempting to take advantage of others. Tuđman reaffirms this idea when he remarks on Piran Bay in the following, "At that time that was a pre-condition to continue to finish conditions to join EU

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<sup>195</sup> Jović, "Hrvatska Vanjska Politika Pred Izazovima članstva U Europskoj Uniji,"13.

<sup>196</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.

because of that only one thing that can be done...Slovenians are Slovenian oriented having in mind only their interests, they are following and taking care for only their, not mutual interests."<sup>197</sup> Tuđman is revealing that this situation is in direct connection with the values that the EU has professed regarding equality and sovereignty. By the organization allowing Slovenia to use its membership as an extortive tool, results in Croatia losing parts of its territory and political rights. Essentially, EU membership has fostered political tensions between Croatia and Slovenia, as the Slovenes has used its place within the organization as leverage against the Croatian state.

The unfairness of this situation can be seen through Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor's choice to handle the issue through arbitration, rather than the international judiciary court. One of the concerns is that by refusing to use the international court to settle the matter, it removes Croatia's chance to prove that the bay solely belongs to the state. This is confirmed by Lukšić who explains, "I'm a member, at that time, of national arbitration for maritime law in Monte Carlo Monaco. What Kosor did was against the existing law, the only authority to interpret legal regulations is the court and not an arbitration...Kosor by this act inflicted great damage to Croatia and ignored international law."<sup>198</sup> Lukšić is illustrating that by not using the court system, Kosor has put Croatia's sovereignty at risk. The agreement to undergo arbitration is merely an act to appease the Slovenians. Consequently, Croatia is left without the proper legal authority that could assess and rule on the situation. Bošnjak comments on Kosor's choice in the following, "She accepted a kangaroo arbitration. Slovenia did not want to go to court, kept insisting on arbitration instead of insisting on ICJ, Kosor simply accepted some wild ad hoc arbitration, result of this run the risk of losing territory. We wouldn't lose if we went to court only reason she did that because

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<sup>197</sup> Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, author interviewed, July 5, 2013.

<sup>198</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.

Slovenia vetoed Croatia into EU, irony double betrayal."<sup>199</sup>Bošnjak is pointing out the irony that the EU is supposed to provide benefits and support for its members, and Croatia has found itself struggling to preserve many aspects of its sovereignty due to the accession process. Furthermore, Kosor's actions reveal that these choices were made to please another country and organization, rather than the national interests of the Croatian state and its people. Jelčić summarizes Croatian feelings on this matter when he says, "Everything that would not be in favor of international law wouldn't be accepting for Croatia."<sup>200</sup>Through his statement, Jelčić is arguing that Croatians do not believe the state should be undertaking actions, which unfairly compromise the nation's sovereignty. Yet, the EU seems to be pushing Croatia in the direction of lost political rights. Basically, nothing about the Piran Bay arbitration is in the benefit of the Croatian state and its people, and its origins can be traced to the EU's lack of support or respect for Croatia's sovereignty.

The Croatian Slovenian struggle for Piran Bay is also an example of EU discrimination and double standards. Croatians view the geopolitical strain with Slovenia regarding the bay, as one guided by the personal motivations and loyalties of other EU member states. This is touched upon by Lošo who emphasizes, "Over Slovenia, the major players, in this case the United Kingdom and Italy, against Croatia perform on two fronts political and territorial. On one side and on the other threats to Croatian sovereignty, that is, its existence in the northern part of the first door of Eurasia."<sup>201</sup>Lošo argues that certain EU members such as those mentioned above do not have Croatia's best interests at heart. In fact, they are more than willing to diminish Croatia's autonomy whether it be politically or territorially. In addition, if Croatia is not able to withstand

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<sup>199</sup> Marijan Bošnjak, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>200</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

<sup>201</sup> Lošo, *Klonovi Nastupaju*, 418. Author Translated.

these discriminating assaults, its sovereignty could be put at risk. Višnja Starešina expands on this subject when she says, "The same day, the European official Olli Rehn, Commissioner for the expansion, he returned from a visit to Zagreb and Ljubljana with a proposal that gives Slovenia extra time to block Croatian accession negotiations with the EU. Olli Rehn has accepted the idea of a new Slovenian mediation mission."<sup>202</sup> Starešina is illustrating the fact that the EU has double standards regarding Piran Bay. The organization had been more than willing to support Slovenia's veto of Croatian accession, even though it was a conflict of interest. Therefore, Croatia's dispute with Slovenia only opens the country to further victimization by the double standards and discrimination that occurs within the EU.

The Piran Bay conflict also poses large ramifications for Croatia. There is a belief that this incident could cost Croatia much of its territory and sovereignty. This idea is explored by Lošo who explains, "Here is no question of what would be better, arbitration is bad for Croatia definitely, that is the blackmailing of Croatia. To give something that definitely belonged to you for nothing, I am an Admiral and know importance of the sea... In this case if that happened with the arbitration so that Slovenia has a way to open sea that means Croatia does no longer have border between Italy and Croatia."<sup>203</sup> Lošo is arguing that Piran Bay represents a geopolitical strategic point, and to lose that would put Croatian political rights in danger. He explains that if Slovenia were to gain the bay, Croatia would no longer have a fixed border between the country and Italy. As a result, Croatia would no longer have a defined border for protection, and fishing rights within the Adriatic could be exploited by Slovenians and Italians. Grubišić expands on this concept when he emphasizes, "Croatia shouldn't give freely. Good fences make good neighbors, think good fences should be established. Throughout history Croatia and Slovenia never had

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<sup>202</sup> Višnja Starešina, *EU U 100 Koraka*, (Zagreb:Lipanj, 2013), 139. Author Translated.

<sup>203</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

problems, but problems arose when Slovenia thought Croatia was in trouble and thought it could get something for nothing."<sup>204</sup> Grubišić is acknowledging that to lose Piran Bay would be a travesty for Croatian sovereignty, and that the only way to prevent this is to preserve defined borders. More importantly, Grubišić notes that Croatia and Slovenia had a positive relationship until the EU got involved. This shows that as an organization the EU has actually created tensions, rather than solve them. Šeparović provides insight to this situation when he says, "Jadranka Kosor and recently Vesna Pusić, have been permissive in giving up what Slovenians wanted... So I wouldn't be so permissive as they have been with problems on Slovenia, which has to be blamed on neighboring blackmailer country."<sup>205</sup> This analysis reveals that the willingness of Croatian leaders to appease Slovenia, does nothing beneficial for Croatian autonomy and sustainability. It also reaffirms the dissatisfaction with the realities of the EU accession process, as Croatia has been forced to make decisions it most likely would not have done if the EU hadn't been involved. As a result, Croatia's affiliation with the EU has led to geopolitical strain with Slovenia, that threatens to compromise the state's sovereignty.

Ultimately, the EU's role within the Piran Bay situation has damaged Croatian Slovenian relations. The dispute between the two countries has eroded the positive nature that had once formed the foundation of the relationship between Croatia and Slovenia. This concept is addressed by Lošo who says, "Slovenia won't give up from their blackmailing of Croatia and Slovenia does not have any other foreign policies except to blackmail Croatia only neighbor they can get something from... There is no guilt of Slovenia that they do that, but it is Croatia government that allowed that. I don't think Croatian Slovenian relations will be better."<sup>206</sup> Lošo is

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<sup>204</sup> Dr. Vinko Grubišić, author interviewed, June 28, 2013.

<sup>205</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.

<sup>206</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

arguing that Slovenia's use of its EU membership as leverage against Croatia, has caused significant damage to the state's values regarding sovereignty. Furthermore, he asserts that it does not seem likely that the Croatian Slovenian relationship will be a positive one in the future. As a result, this is evidence that the EU in its support of Slovenia has created numerous issues between the two countries. Tuđman concurs this idea when he reflects on Croatian Slovenian relations in the following, "It's a question of confidence in the certain future relations that is a heritage. Probably both sides a lack of openness."<sup>207</sup> This illustrates that a distrust has formed between the two countries. Consequently, the relationship has become based on doubt and uncertainty, which will have an adverse influence on any negotiations the countries may have to undergo in the future. Essentially, instead of fostering relations, the EU has negatively influenced Croatia's diplomatic ties with Slovenia.

### **EU Supported Italian Ambitions**

While the EU arguably created tensions between Slovenia and Croatia, it has negatively exasperated Croatian Italian relations. As Croats began EU negotiations, it quickly found itself embroiled in disputes, primarily regarding the Adriatic Sea, with Italy. One of the conflicts arose as Croatia attempted to instill an ecological law, that would help preserve the health of the sea. Italians quickly countered Croatia's claim, by arguing that this law would adversely affect their fishing industry. Roter and Bojinovic explore this issue when they say, "The proclamation of the zone was to come into force a year later. With the ecological part addressing the danger of the pollution...it was the proclamation of the fishing zone that particularly upset Italy, for such a zone would significantly reduce the possibilities for Italian fishermen to fish in the

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<sup>207</sup> Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, author interviewed, July 5, 2013.



Adriatic."<sup>208</sup> While the proclamation dealt with Croatia's part of Adriatic territory, Italy like Slovenia, was quick to use its own EU membership against Croatia regarding this policy. The EU pressured Croatia to rethink its position or to modify its claim, so that it would be satisfactory to the Italians. These actions are not only a form of extortion, but they violate Croatia's autonomous rights to make decisions regarding its territory. Thus, it has also aroused tensions between Croats and Italians. This is touched upon by Lukšić who asserts, "Traditional Italian imperialism always wanted to annex and integrate the Croatian coast into Italy. We have good relations with the present Italian government, but we know that one of our traditional enemies are those in Italy which think that the Croatian coast should be redeemed, integrated into Italy..."<sup>209</sup> Lukšić is pointing out that while Croatian Italian relations had been positive in recent years, there has been a history of Italian conquest on the Croatian coast. As a result, it seems that EU membership has allowed certain Italian factions interested in capitalizing off of Croatian territory, a chance to renew its historical aims. Bošnjak expands on this idea when he stresses, "Given the systemic Italian conquering Croatian policy towards countries over many centuries, such statements are adjacent political elite concern for Croatia as a sovereign state...within a common European government internal limits, requiring even greater caution, because in the same state much more numerous Italians have again the possibility to colonize Croatian land."<sup>210</sup> Bošnjak is noting that the fishing dispute could symbolize a possible re-emergence of Italy's bid to extend its territory and power to the Croatian controlled Adriatic coast. Furthermore, he cites this conflict as an example of Croatia losing its political rights through its affiliation with the EU and its members anxious to take advantage of the Croatian state and its people. Consequently,

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<sup>208</sup> Roter and Ana Bojinovic, "Croatia and the European Union: A Troubled Relationship," 452.

<sup>209</sup> Branimir Lukšić, author interview, July 12, 2013.

<sup>210</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 204. Author Translated.

the EU has become a manipulative tool for states like Italy to gain benefits and advantages at the expense of Croatian sovereignty.

The conflicts regarding the Adriatic Sea have significant implications on Croatian sovereignty. A concern is that Croatian Italian disputes endanger the autonomous rights of Croatia. This concept is expanded upon by Lošo who explains, "Italy has defined their position on the Adriatic a long time ago, and all their options of what they want on Adriatic they get already. Their aim is to make it Italian lake, Croats were talking about Adriatic as sea. Different rules apply to sea and lake, so that in that way Italy makes pretention on the eastern coast of Adriatic Sea... Croatia interests is to protect their part of the sea and to be sea oriented country."<sup>211</sup> Lošo is revealing that the Italians claims could eventually ignite a campaign that the EU recognize the Adriatic as a lake, rather than a sea. If that belief would come into fruition, Croats would lose a large amount of territory and sovereignty. Šeparović emphasizes the struggle and implications of this matter when he remarks, "Italy blackmailing Croatia is another case. At that time Italy high position in EU they themselves decided to have Italian border in the middle of Adriatic. When Croatia was trying to accept its own right on the sea, Italians were strongly against it."<sup>212</sup> In his analysis, Šeparović is highlighting another example of conflict of interests and double standards occurring within the EU. Since Italians already retained official EU membership, it was able to use its status to influence the outcome of policies that only the Italian state could benefit from. As in the case of Slovenia, the EU as an institution stood behind the Italian country. Furthermore, when Croats attempted to lay claim to their justifiable rights, it was met with tensions coming from Italy and the EU itself. Miklenić summarizes Croatian feelings regarding this situation when he says, "Croats have a love for the sea and nobody will

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<sup>211</sup> Admiral Davor Domazet Lošo, author interviewed, July 6, 2013.

<sup>212</sup> Zvonimir Šeparović, author interview, June 24, 2013.

ever be able to take that away. Competition in the exploitation of the sea will not be to the liking of our fishermen..."<sup>213</sup> Miklenić is arguing that the Adriatic Sea is ingrained within Croatian history, culture, and territory. Therefore, any policy or move from the EU to diminish this would not be in the interests of the Croatian people, particularly the fisherman who live off this industry. As a result, the Croatian Italian dispute regarding the Adriatic is a vivid example of another assault on Croatia's sovereignty.

The Croatian Italian conflict has led Croatians to reflect further on their autonomy, particularly regarding domestic affairs and territory, within the EU. Croatians maintain a fear that the EU is consistently asking the state to surrender more of its rights, especially concerning the Italian Croatian dispute. This issue is explored by Tuđman who comments, "One of those things Croatia was forced to accept from EU. EU is a cooperation with economic interests, forced Croatia to widen its borders on the sea... Italy with support of EU, Croatia not allowed to enter negotiations for EU to certain extent not fair. That means Croatia has a difficult request to join, fulfill."<sup>214</sup> Tuđman's statement indicates that through Croatia's affiliation with the EU the state has been pressured to fulfill an increasing amount of demands, some which clearly infringe on Croatia's political rights. In addition, Tuđman notes the double standards that have occurred in this situation, such as the EU's favoritism regarding other members. It illustrates the unequal position, Croatia has been put in within the EU. Jelčić touches upon these concerns when he says, "Adriatic Sea will always stay as Croatian sea, even in former Yugoslavia it was Croatian, but couldn't call it that. Those from the East called it our sea. If EU wants to change that than we will have same experience as former Yugoslavia."<sup>215</sup> Jelčić is arguing that Croatian Adriatic

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<sup>213</sup> Ivan Miklenić, author interviewed, July 7, 2013.

<sup>214</sup> Dr. Miroslav Tuđman, author interviewed, July 5, 2013.

<sup>215</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

territory is a historical and recognized fact. Therefore, if the EU attempts to change this, Croatia would find itself yet again part of an oppressive institution. Essentially, the Croatian Italian situation has only alerted Croatians to the possibility that their autonomy may be at risk within the EU.

### **Conclusion: An Exploited Croatia**

Overall, the EU's involvement within Croatian domestic and international affairs has only created and exasperated tension in regards to Croatia's diplomatic ties. This has been vividly exemplified through Croatia's disputes with Slovenia and Italy. Both these latter countries have used their respective positions within the EU to capitalize off of Croatia's accession process. As a result, Croatia has found itself a repeated victim of double standards, discrimination, and even conflicts of interest. Unfortunately, the challenges regarding Piran Bay and Italian fishing rights are one of many disputes Croatia has been facing. Croatia's involvement with the EU has opened it up to even more obstacles regarding political rights from other countries, like Serbia who have also laid claims to Croatian territory. As the EU has allowed Croatia to be exploited by other members, it leaves the question of whether Croatia is a legitimate equal within the EU? It seems that the institution has consistently encouraged Croatians to give up their sovereignty, instead of supporting it. Therefore, Croatia's losses greatly outweigh its gains.

## **Chapter 10: The Trials and Tribulations of Croatian Conditionality**

While sovereignty remains a sacred value for the Croatian people, the state agreed to undergo changes in order to be accepted by the EU. Unfortunately, what seemed like small adjustments transformed into a long list of requirements from the organization. As Croatia began the negotiation process, the state began to find itself agreeing to policies and modifications that went against Croatian political rights and national interests. One of the most discouraging requirements from the EU was the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), that Croatia had to undergo so that it could become an official EU member. It became a complicated task for Croatia as the EU consistently began to add layers and layers of demands for the state to fulfill. Furthermore, not only was the sheer amount a challenge for Croatians, but the double standards and discrimination that seemed to pervade every aspect of the requirements. The SAP'S threat to Croatian sovereignty can be seen through both the conditionality process, as well as the goals of the EU's demands.

### **Endless Conditions Against National Interests**

For Croatia the conditionality process had a large impact on the country's sovereignty. One of the disappointments for Croatians was the magnitude of never ending changes the state was forced to make. This issue is highlighted by Caratan who says, "These conditions have often been general and unspecified – they have been interpreted by the EU. They have proven to be moving targets. One difficulty also lies in the fact that, over time, the EU has added new policy areas: home affairs, justice, the Schengen area, a common foreign and security policy, and a common currency."<sup>216</sup> Caratan is expressing the fact that despite Croatia attempting to conform to

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<sup>216</sup> Caratan, "The European Union, South-Eastern Europe and the Europeanization of Croatia," 171.

the EU's standards, it consistently found the demands vague and difficult to attain. In addition, Cartan notes that as Croatia began fulfilling the requirements, the institution began to add other areas and specifications to this process. As a result, Croatia found itself constrained by the EU's desires, which meant the country had to be focused on the EU, rather than national interests. Ashbrook expands on this issue when he remarks, "Croatia must adopt more laws and regulations than countries of the Fifth Enlargement. And unlike current member states, as a candidate it is held to higher standards for compliance... noncompliance or non-implementation, however, is dangerous for acceding countries and is to be avoided at all costs."<sup>217</sup> In his analysis, Ashbrook reveals multiple negative aspects of Croatia's conditionality process. To begin with, he highlights the double standards as Croatia must undergo more requirements and under stricter criteria than other countries. Furthermore, he argues that a candidate country, like Croatia, virtually has no choice but to comply to EU standards if it is to continue negotiations with the organization. This means that the stabilization process has left Croatia in an unequal position within the EU. In addition, it loses a good deal of its sovereignty as it is intimidated not to contend EU requirements it does not agree with, for fear that the institution would retaliate against the country. Basically, the EU demands have forced Croatia to undergo a complicated and long list of requirements that restrained sovereignty, and reflected the double standards within the organization.

The conditionality requirements also proved to be against Croatia's national interests. One of the concerns was that the EU's desires meant that Croatia had to modify aspects of the state that were considered important by the Croatian people. This is touched upon by Belloni who comments, "EU soft power tends to be exercised through the gravitational force it projects

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<sup>217</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 28.

towards its neighboring states, in particular through its promise of association, and potentially accession, to European institutions... As a 'process,' the SAP is designed to give interim rewards to those local politicians willing to embrace necessary but politically sensitive reforms."<sup>218</sup> This reveals that the EU uses its stabilization demands to exert power over a state. Furthermore, as in the case of Croatia, the desired reforms often deal with sensitive issues for the country.

Therefore, the Croatian state finds itself making compromises that are not in the best interests of the people. This is reaffirmed by Jelčić who stresses, "In those negotiations before Croatia joined EU so many factors Croatia had to fill out that was against their interests."<sup>219</sup> Jelčić is summarizing the fact that none of the modifications Croatia agreed to was in the best interests of the state. Therefore, this indicates that Croatia is losing more political rights than gaining benefits from its affiliation with the EU. Essentially, the conditionality requirements placed on Croatia has only helped to deteriorate Croatian sovereignty.

### **The Regionalization Nightmare**

Another danger for Croatia regarding the conditionality process has been the EU's goal to eventually have Croatia be accepted as part of the Western Balkan region within the organization. Regionalization is a big concern for Croatians, as the state and people want to be recognized as separate and independent from other candidate and member countries. Bošnjak addresses the EU's plans when he says, "In fact, the leading architects of the European Union's long-term creation of a new state is not seen as a union state but as a Union of Regions."<sup>220</sup> Bošnjak is explaining that with the expansion of the EU, members and candidates will eventually be recognized as part of regions, rather than independent countries. Therefore, this is a transition

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<sup>218</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 318.

<sup>219</sup> Antun Dubravko Jelčić, author interviewed, July 3, 2013.

<sup>220</sup> Bošnjak, *EU-Ne Hvala*, 271. Author Translated.

that is very much in contention with the desires of the Croatian state and its people. Bošnjak's idea is reinforced by Belloni who argues, "In fact, the answer to the problem of borders is not to redraw them, but to make them increasingly irrelevant by recognizing allegiances to overlapping polities and thus de-politicizing the significance of (hard) borders. By supporting functional rather than geographical assertion of authority..."<sup>221</sup> Belloni is claiming that the EU will move towards eliminating traditional borders, with the goal of achieving structured regionalization. Again, the EU's plan works directly against Croatia, which desires to retain defined and separate borders. Ashbrook expands on the Croatian sentiment when he remarks, "Many Croats feared that closer relations with their neighbors would lead to the reemergence of a regional identity [that would] hold back [the country's] ambitions for [rapid] European integration. In its annual reports the European Commission severely criticized Croatia for its reluctance to accept this condition."<sup>222</sup> This supports the idea that Croats do not want to be recognized as a part of a regional entity. In addition, Ashbrook reveals that the EU has pressured Croats to abandon their concerns and fully embrace the EU's plans, despite it being counter to Croatian national interests. Basically, the EU's conditionality requirements for Croatia has forced a regionalization, that goes against the state's interests.

The EU's goal to regionalize Croatia has far reaching implications for the state. An important concern for Croats is that the EU could become a new form of Yugoslavia for Croatia. This is touched upon by Jajčinović who says, "By contrast, the first Croatian Yugoslav Yugoslavia was seen as a unitary community in which Croatian identity disappeared. Similarly today, Croatian stateless and mental Yugoslavs look to the European Union. For them the EU is

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<sup>221</sup> Belloni, "European Integration and the Western Balkans: Lessons, Prospects and Obstacles," 325.

<sup>222</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 31.



actually Euroslavia, a replacement for the failed Yugoslavia."<sup>223</sup> Jajčinović is noting the disturbing parallels between the former Yugoslavia and the EU. He argues that for Croatia to progress in this direction, the state would find itself in the same adverse predicament it had within Yugoslavia. Ashbrook expands on this concept when he explains, "According to most Croats, this lumping policy, beyond cultural misperceptions, presents two problems. First, it forced Croatia into a group of states with at least one perceived aggressor (Serbia and later Montenegro)."<sup>224</sup> If the EU would continue to insist that Croatia be regionalized, the state could find itself forcibly integrated with the other former republics of Yugoslavia, thus recreating the exact same environment Croatians had worked hard to escape from. In addition, this action would greatly impair Croatian sovereignty as it would force the country to undergo a fusion it does not believe is in the national interests of the country. Stojic reaffirms this idea when he emphasizes, "The main characteristics of anti-EU stances in Croatia is the fear of the restoration of new Yugoslavia, this time within the EU, where Croatia would be in the same position as it was before it got the independence in the early 1990s."<sup>225</sup> This shows that for Croatians regionalization would be the realization of long held fears. Essentially, the EU conditionality have pushed Croatia in a direction of regionalization that it has no desire to undergo.

### **Conclusion: An End to Croatian Sovereignty**

Overall, Croatian conditionality requirements have marked the country's accession negotiations with a series of unwanted concessions. These modifications visually exemplify the double standards within the EU. In addition, the EU desired aims for Croatia have proven to be counter to the state's national interests and future goals within Europe and the EU. It seems that

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<sup>223</sup> Jajčinović, *Od Jugoslavije Do Euroslavije*, 200. Author Translated.

<sup>224</sup> Ashbrook, "Croatia, Euroskepticism," 33.

<sup>225</sup> Stojic, "Between Europhobia and Europhilia," 327.

every time Croatia appeases the EU, the institution continues to add outrageous requirements for the country to achieve. Since conditionality has marked Croatia's largely unfair accession process, it begs the question if this will define its status as an official EU member?

For Croatians, the EU meant fulfilling a dream of recognition and respect as an independent country, that has and continues to contribute to the well-being of Europe. Unfortunately, like the EU's dalliance with identity, sovereignty within the EU is merely a set of empty promises. Therefore, Croatia has come to find that the institution has no interest in the preservation of its sovereignty. In fact, like a parasite, the EU has steadily eaten away at Croatian political rights and autonomy. As Croatia's political power has diminished, it leaves the question of how this will affect the country's sustainability within the future? Controlled by an institution that does not support Croatian independence, the justified experience of war, and that has created geopolitical strain for the Croats, it reveals that Croatians have already lost more than they have gained by its entrance into the EU. This foreshadows an EU Croatia without the ability to control even its most basic political values and needs, as it will be bound by its servitude to the organization.

## **Conclusion: Croatia's Future & The Pattern of Discrimination Within the EU**

### **The Findings**

In the wake of visualized issues and tensions plaguing the EU, this research was conducted in order to answer the question of what forms EU opposition within Croatia? Upon completion of this investigation, it has been concluded that the EU is not beneficial for the Croatian state or its people. While there are arguably some economic gains the country will achieve through its affiliation with the organization, they do not outweigh the price paid through Croatian identity and sovereignty. In the analysis of Croatia's relationship with the EU, it has been found that the organization has marketed around itself around idealistic ideas, rather than truthful realities. To begin with, the EU has unsuccessfully attempted to create an EU identity based around multiculturalism. Instead of searching for alternative solutions, the institution resorted to Europeanization. This tactic has been created with the goal of Europeanizing member and candidate states according to what the EU considers as European. The issue that has arisen regarding this approach is that the EU is a Western European led organization. As a result, this has reduced the EU to a supranational partnership based on an East West divide, double standards, and discrimination. Unfortunately, this tactic means Central and Eastern European candidate and member states suffer at the hands of their Western European counterparts. The discrimination and double standards have influenced and dictated EU policy, which have resulted in Central and Eastern European states receiving the brunt of these goals. Whether it be the French xenophobia of Polish plumbers that influenced EU policy to postpone Polish migration or the double standards of the EU Roma policy between Romania and France, it reveals that the organization is very much West against East.

As for Croatia it has found its identity considered an unwelcome guest by the EU. Croatians were driven to enter the organization by more than potential economic gains, it was a chance to be recognized as an independent nation, without the attachment to Yugoslavia. Tragically, the EU continues to identify Croatia, as a Balkan country. To be considered Balkan is more than an inaccurate geographical term for Croatians, but an attachment to negative stereotypes and beliefs regarding the country and its people. While the EU has professed equality and acceptance of different cultures, the reality couldn't be further from the truth, especially in regards to Croatia. The EU has used the perceptions forming the Balkan term to define its policy on the Croatian state. As a result, Croatians not only have forcibly been classified as Balkan, but has had to whether a storm of assaults against the founding aspects of Croatian identity, Christianity, language, and the war of independence. Therefore, the EU desires Croatia the country, but not the Croatian people.

In a similar fashion, the EU has also been unsuccessful in the area of sovereignty. The institution argued that by members agreeing to surrender some political rights, the EU would be able to provide better assistance and security for the states. In practice, however, it has created an environment that supports the abuse of power. As states have given up their rights, they have no chance to contend EU policies that it does not agree with, due to the fact that there are no checks and balances regarding the organization's leadership. Consequently, the Westphalian principles of sovereignty including state domestic control, self determination, and equality have been marginalized and dictated by EU desires. This leaves the question of whether a surrendering of sovereignty is in the best interest of the states or the organization?

Croatia, like many other states, has faced issues regarding its sovereignty within the EU. The Croatian people have found that despite being officially recognized as an independent

country, many members within the EU, as well the organization itself refuse to treat it as such. In addition, it has found its national interests compromised by the EU's endless conditionality requirements, which promote double standards, and unwanted regionalization. Furthermore, the Croatian state's autonomy and political rights have been victimized by an EU that allows conflicts of interest and discrimination to influence Croatia's geopolitics. This has been clearly demonstrated by the strained diplomatic ties Croatia has with Slovenia, Italy, and other countries that have used their membership against the Croatian state and its people. If Croatia continues down this path it will lose everything and gain nothing by its affiliation with the EU.

### **Limitations**

While this research was meant to cover issues regarding Croatia's accession process, there are limitations to this investigation. All of the themes, problems, and policies mentioned within this piece, could be expanded. The previously mentioned aspects cover a wide range of information that would add further depth to this research if capitalized on. In addition, Croatia's relationship with the EU is always changing, with new issues emerging constantly, especially since the state's induction as an official member within the organization. Arguably more time spent in Croatia would uncover an increasing amount of print evidence, respondents, and perspective regarding the country's stability and sustainability within the EU and the future.

In addition, it has been noted that Croatia's struggles with the EU, represents a larger pattern of discrimination against Central and Eastern states occurring within the organization. If given a significant amount of time and access to evidence, this research could be expanded to better account for these problems occurring within the EU. By doing this it would establish and visually exemplify a major flaw within the institution, that comes at the expense of Central and

Eastern European member and candidate states. As a result, the research could assist in providing solutions for countries that have been adversely affected by this issue.

### **Recommendations**

This investigation was conducted in order to benefit Croatia and the Croatian people. Croatians have fought hard for independence and recognition. Yet, as this research shows, the state's relationship with the EU threatens the very heart of Croatian identity and sovereignty. The issues covered within this piece painstakingly reveal that Croatia is on the way to repeating history. It is aligning itself with an institution that does not respect Croatian values and independence. To acknowledge this is a chance for Croatia to avoid a tragic outcome, by demanding the equality and respect the state and people deserve. It is time for Croatians to believe in themselves, the country, and the fact that it does not have to risk oppression in order to sustain. In many ways, these recommendations could apply to any Central and Eastern European EU candidate or member that has found its principles assaulted and compromised by the organization. Croatia and these other states should begin to openly assert their beliefs and intentions to preserve them. Otherwise Croatia, and other states, may end up like lions in a circus, obeying the crack of the EU ringmaster's whip.

## Appendix

### English and Croatian Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about the European Union?

Ko je je Vaše mišljenje o Europskoj Uniji?

2. Why do you think there is support for Croatia to join the European Union?

Ko ji su Vaši razlozi za podršku ulazku Hrvatski u Europsku Uniji? ili

Koji su Vaši razlozi protiv ulazka Hrvatske u Europsku Uniju?

3. Do you have any concerns about Croatia becoming an EU member?

Imate li neke zadržke kada je u pitanju ulazak Hrvatske u EU?

4. Do you agree with the sentiment that Croatia is an Eastern European country?

Imate li neke zadržke po pitanju svrstavanju Hrvatske u područje Zapadne Balkan od strane EU?

5. What would you say are the most important aspects of Croatian culture and or identity?

Što bi bila Vama definicija Hrvatske u EU?

6. How do you feel Croatia's identity will be impacted by its integration into the EU?

Kakva će uticaja imate članstvo Hrvatske u EU na hrvatski identitet?

7. What do you think of the EU's conditionality requirements that were placed on Croatia?

Što je Vaše mišljenje o preduvjetima ko je je Hrvatska morala ispunjavati u predstupnim pregovorima? Jesu li oni bili fer?

8. Did you feel personally affected by any of the changes that have taken place as a result of the European Union?

Hoće li ulazak u EU napraviti određene promjerne u Vašem osobnom životu ?

9. In 2009 Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor agreed to arbitrage regarding Piran Bay and Slovenia, in favor for EU accession. How do you feel about that?

U 2009 god. predsnica Vlade RH je potpisala ugovor o arbitraži sa Slovenijom umjesto međunarodnog suda u Haagu vezano uz Piranski zaljev-koja bi forma po Vašem mišljenju bila bolja?

10. How do you perceive Slovenian-Croatian relations?

Mislite li da će se odnosi sa Slovenijom poslije ulazka Hrvatske u EU poboljšati ili pogoršati?

11. Recently the EU has halted Croatia's right to distribute prosek, until the name has been changed. What do you think of that development?

EU nije dozvolila Hrvatskoj distribuciju prošeka bez promjene imena-mislite li da će biti još mnogo sličnih slučajeva?

12. What role do you see Croatia's sovereignty playing within the EU?

Koliko će se od hrvatskog suverenita održati u EU?

13. Do you think the EU understands and or respects Croatian history or culture?

Hoće li EU razumjeti i poštivati hrvatsku povjest i kulturu?

14. How do you view the EU in regards to Croatian independence? Have your feelings changed?

Mnoge države članice EU u prošlosti nisu davale podršku hrvatskoj neovisnosti, mislite li da će se to promijeniti kada Hrvatska postane članicom EU?

15. How do you think EU has affected Croatia's stability (Immigrant issues & increased rights for minorities)?

Koliko će članstvo Hrvatske u EU utjecati na stabilnost Hrvatske vezano uz pitanje imigracija, emigracija, i prava manjina?

16. Have you followed any of the EU opposition movements in other countries such as Poland?

Koje je Vaše misljenje o opoziciji prema EU danas u mnogim zemljama članicama EU: Grčka, Cipar, Španjolska, Portugal, Italija... koliko će biti sličnost Hrvatske u EU sa navedenim zemljama?

17. How do you feel about Italy? Adriatic Sea?

Koje Vaše misljenje o Jadransku moru kao europskom moru a ne više mare nostrum Croatorum?

18. Since other countries from former Yugoslavia are joining the EU does it mean that Croatia will be in worse situation than it was in Yugoslavia?

Neće li budući ulazak zemalja bivše Jugoslavija u EU odvesti ponovo Hrvatsku u neku novu Balkansku zajednicu?



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