# Continuity in times of change: The role of power, history and national identity in the process of supranational integration.

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*For my parents and sister.*

# Declaration

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I confirm that Chapter 5 was jointly co-authored with Dr. Caroline Howarth and I contributed 90% of this work.

I confirm that Chapter 6 was jointly co-authored with Dr. Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington and I contributed 75% of this work.

Sandra Obradović

# Abstract

Political change that moves a nation towards democratization, international integration and globalization, is often viewed as progressive and positive. Indeed, certain political changes are presented as *the only* viable trajectories towards democratic goals. A clear example of this is that of membership in the European Union (EU). While there is an extensive academic literature on the benefits of EU integration spanning disciplines including international relations, political science and economics, events across Europe, such as Brexit, have allowed for a more complex picture of supranational integration to emerge by considering the everyday, sociocultural elements that shape how citizens make sense of political phenomena. Focusing on a prospective EU member state, this PhD ask: how is collective continuity managed in times of socio-political change, and what are the implications for identity? The answer to this question is sought through a mixed-methods approach composed of three empirical papers. Study I examines the bottom-up construction of the EU and its relations to Serbia and its history, through a longitudinal study with qualitative data. Study II focuses on the top-down use of history and identity in elite discourses over time by analyzing political speeches over the past 20 years. Study III combines qualitative and quantitative data to explore and test how the relationship between power and social identity processes shape dual identification and support for EU accession. Study IV argues that historical continuity must be understood as constructed through self-other relations situated in contexts of power and history. As such, there are important limitations on the extent to which historical continuity becomes desired, and has positive outcomes for social identity. As a whole, the PhD illustrates how situating tensions between political change and historical continuity within a self-other context over time allows us to understand when and how seemingly progressive political change means improving 'us' or becoming less like 'us'.

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# PART I: CONTEXT, THEORY AND METHODS

# Chapter 1: Introduction to the PhD

*How do we in Serbia see the EU? The simple answer is 'about the same as we in Serbia are seen by the EU' - with lots of prejudice, without understanding the wider context, and framed with the perceptions and memories from the 1990s.*
*(Miščević, 2018, para.1)*

What is Serbia's place in Europe? The metaphor of a bridge, or being at a crossroads, has become a popular imagery through which Serbian national identity, and history, has been positioned within the larger, European context (Russell-Omaljev, 2016; Todorova, 1998; Živković, 2011). In a book published in 1973, Andrei Simić reflects on Belgrade, the capital of present-day Serbia, as a place where "[o]ne constantly encounters small, but telling reminders that this is not the West, but rather some half-way station between Europe and the East, between the past and the present." (Simić, 1973, p.70). Several years later, a book was published with the title 'Divided we Stand: Discourses on Identity in 'First' and 'Other' Serbia', where author Ana Russell-Omaljev argues that "Serbia has a difficult geopolitical position in the mental map of Europe: that it is neither here nor there, that it is East for the West, and West for the East."(p.7).

The root of this inbetweenness is often located in the history of the region and its geographical belonging to Europe alongside its affiliation to various European 'Others', such as Turkey (through Ottoman occupation) and Russia (through its religious ties). This sense of being in a state of transition, caught between East and West, has made the study of Serbian identity an interesting one for scholars of the region, and a particularly relevant one in the present, as the country moves towards a more 'Western' future through its prospective membership in the European Union (EU). As Neumann (1999) has argued, the ordering of 'self' as Western and 'other' as Eastern within the context of European identity formation has also had consequences for European politics, and who is seen as belonging, but also what is required to change in order to belong. This in turn makes Serbia a particularly interesting context to explore the question of continuity in times of change. Namely, if political change entails moving away from the crossroads, to potentially choosing West over East, then what does this mean for national identity?

Focusing on Serbia's accession into the European Union (EU) this PhD aims to explore how issues of historical continuity, such as continuity in the narrative of a

Serbian 'inbetweenness', become part of how current socio-political change is understood and pursued. By drawing on theories from social psychology, the thesis will illustrate how core processes of identification, meaning-making and complex intergroup dynamics can be applied to make sense of how both the citizens and politicians construct political change as either continous with, or a rupture from, the past. Hence, the central research question of the PhD is how collective continuity is managed in times of socio-political change, and the implications this has for national identity. Throughout the thesis, the tensions between continuity and change are discussed and illustrated through the data, but the findings will also show the limits of collective continuity in contexts where the past is seen as stigmatizing and a social and psychological burden.

The point of departure of this PhD is thus placing a seemingly political phenomenon within a social psychological framework, focusing in particular on how theories of identity and intergroup relations can explain international phenomena such as supranational integration. EU accession, as a form of supranational integration, is understood here as a political process shaped by important factors such as history, identity and power relations between, and within, the supranational group and its subgroups. The focus on Serbia, a prospective member of the EU (rather than an existing member), allows this PhD to take seriously the study of identities from a pespective of *becoming* rather than being, emphasizing in turn that political change, as a social psychological phenomenon, becomes negotiated and possible within the limits of a remembered past, constructed present and imagined future.

## 1.1. Research Problem

The starting-point for this PhD was an interest in trying to understand a seemingly contradictory phenomenon, perhaps best illustrated in the words of an interviewee; *"We are striving towards joining the EU and we're praying to God that we never join the EU"* (Participant 3, Vranje FG1). This invites further investigation into the contradictions between change and continuity – and demands an understanding of the connections between the psychological, social and political aspects of the dynamics of change and continuity. How can we make sense of this statement, which clearly illustrates the tension many nations, and individuals, experience when faced with socio-political change? In this thesis, I take a social psychological perspective on EU integration to answer the main research question; how is continuity managed in times

of socio-political change and what are the implications for national identity? This is examined in various different ways in the empirical papers of the PhD, to address the subquestions outlined in the table below.

**Table 1.1. Research Questions**

| Main Research Question: | |
|---|---|
| *How is collective continuity managed by politicians and the public in times of socio-political change and what are the implications for national identity.* | |
| Subquestion 1: Chapter 4 | *What role do social representations of history play in how citizens make sense of present socio-political change, and what are the implications of this for how they represent the future?* |
| Subquestion 2: Chapter 5 | *How is a sense of compatibility between Serbian identity and EU belonging constructed by entrepreneurs of identity to either promote or resist change? Which discursive strategies have become the most successful within political discourses?* |
| Subquestion(s) 3: Chapter 6 | *What are the lay understandings of supranational integration in the context of Serbia joining the EU, and how do these relate to identity and intergroup threat? (Study 1)* <br> *What is the underlying role of power dynamics in shaping 1) fears of the undermining of Serbian identity by EU accession, 2) perceptions of prototypicality of the category 'European', and 3) the perceived compatibility of national and supranational identification? What are the consequences of these processes for attitudes in favour of EU accession? (Study 2)* |
| Subquestion 4: Chapter 7 | *How is the desire for collective continuity reconciled with a stigmatizing past?* |

While there is a large body of literature that has explored EU integration and enlargement from various angles (such as nationalism, international organization theories, law, political science and international relations), this literature has tended to focus on the more 'technical' side of EU integration among already existing members. This literature has explored the conditionality placed on candidate nations, the reforms, laws and regulations being put in place, as well as the economic and political benefits of integrations in terms of trade, opening of borders and political cooperation. However, a growing literature has begun to take a more social approach to the study of

the EU by addressing what 'feeling European' actually means, and how integration, as a process, also related to sociocultural and psychological processes (Bruter, 2005; Chryssochoou, 2000a; 2000b; Herrman, Risse & Brewer, 2004; La Barbera, 2015; Nigbur & Cinnirella, 2007; Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl & Leibhart, 2009). The current thesis builds on this literature by asking what the lay understandings of supranational integration are in Serbia, and how these relate to identity and intergroup threat. For instance, Chapter 6 combines qualitative and quantitative data to explore both the social representations of EU integration and how issues of intergroup power dynmics shape perceptions of belonging, compatibility and identification with the European community.

Recent events have also highlighted the timeliness of this strand of research. For example, Brexit, the popular term for UKs vote to leave the EU in mid-2016, has illustrated the powerful role of psychosocial factors in contexts of EU belonging and membership. Brexit has also highlighted another gap in the literature on superordinate research in the context of Europe; namely the role of citizens and their everyday experiences in contexts of contentious international politics. Thus, to gain insight into the everyday experiences of citizens, Chapter 4 asks the question of how citizens in Serbia manage continuity alongside socio-political change, and what role social representations of history play in the process of maintaining a sense of ingroup continuity. Yet it is important to also consider the top-down communication of political change and how this has potentially framed the public discourse around EU integration. Therefore, another important subsidiary aim of this thesis is to explore how the discourse on EU integration as a source of potentially positive socio-political change has been communicated in Serbia by the political elite, Chapter 5 asks the question of how a sense of compatibility between Serbian identity and EU belonging has been constructed by entrepreneurs of identity attempting to either promote or resist political change. Chapter 6 focuses more on the identity-specific consequences of the tensions between continuity and change by exploring how fears of identity undermining emerge as a consequence of potential EU integration, and how these fears in turn result from a perceived powerlessness and incompatibility between Serbia and the rest of the EU. The chapter closely follows the work of Sindic and Reicher (2009) on Scottish attitudes towards Britain, but extends this research by exploring the explicit role of representation in shaping belonging and political attitudes.

A key theoretical contribution from this PhD emerges in Chapter 7. This chapter discusses the limits of the theoretical work on perceived collective continuity by arguing that ingroup continuity which is perceived as potentially negative and stigmatizing is not necessarily continuity which groups want to protect and maintain, thereby making collective discontinuity a potentially powerful change. This idea, in turn, which requires more theoretical development and empirical testing, highlights the importance of not only a contextualized approach to the study of social identities as temporal, but also to ways in which historical representations and political changes give meaning to these identities and their continuity over time.

## 1.2. Research Context

### 1.2.1 A brief overview of Serbia's recent history

For most of the 20$^{th}$ century, Serbia was part of another supranational union known as Yugoslavia, a multinational state that was broken apart by conflict and war, leaving Serbia in a state of isolation and perceived victimization from the larger European community (Subotic, 2010). Today, Serbia borders eight countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania), as well as the autonomous province of Kosovo (southern Serbia). Five of these countries and provinces (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo) were previously part of Yugoslavia and four countries are currently part of the EU (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Hungary).

*Figure 1.1:* Map of Serbia and neighboring countries.[1]

Serbian history dates back several centuries and it would be unwise to try to cover it all in detail in a few paragraphs. Rather, this section introduces the national and historical context of Serbia through its relevance to the present thesis, and does not attempt to offer a comprehensive reading of the literature (for this see Anzulovic, 1999; Ćirković, 2004; Cohen, 1996; Judah, 2009; Pavlowitch, 2002; Petrovich, 1976).

Mapping out a history of Serbia, or the 'Serbs' is quite challenging as the territory and the people have been shifting over time, taking various names, shapes and forms. Up until the twelfth century, a period of Christianization and Byzantine rule was in place in the territory known today as Serbia. After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire (1204 AD), the Balkan Slavs (as they were known at that time) entered a time of independence from the thirteenth to fifteenth century (Ćirković, 2004, p. xix). During this time, the Balkan Slavs were facing increased invasion by Ottoman Turks, and in 1389, a Turkish Sultan attacked Kosovo, an area of strategic importance due to its geographical placement and source of mineral wealth in the Balkans (Pavlowitch, 2002, p. 9). The battle that occurred, which was later to become an important building block of a modern Serbian identity, was a massacre of great proportion where both the

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[1] Taken from: http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-OPO6uWuASJY/VeSrlQuYR3I/AAAAAAAACiU/XqPnpS2mAYI/s640/Balkans-political-map.jpg. Retrieved 17th October, 2016.

Serbia Prince Lazar and the Turkish Sultan Murad died. This battle would become a legend in Serbian history, after the Orthodox Church declared Prince Lazar as God's chosen successor (Pavlowitch, 2002, p. 10). The period following the battle was filled with turmoil and in an attempt to reinstate a sense of hope and possibility, the Orthodox Church linked the physical defeat and martyrdom of Lazar with a heavenly, spiritual victory for the nation, giving the battle a significant symbolic meaning. This story of the Kosovo battle as a spiritual victory gained significance as the foundational myth of a newly independent Serbian state in the late 1800s (Bieber, 2002). Its reproduction through cultural symbols, songs and religious holidays and celebrations has further solidified the image of Kosovo in Serbia, making it an everyday and banal reproduction of nationalism and national identity (Billig, 1995).

Despite being able to ward off Ottoman influences for some time, from the fifteenth century and onwards (until the 18th century) Serbia was nevertheless under Ottoman rule, a period known as the epoch of 'Turkish slavery' (Ćirković, 2004, p. xx). In early 18th century, Serbs rose up "becoming an autonomous principality in 1829, an independent principality in 1878 and a kingdom in 1882" (Petrovich, 1976, p.xiii). The kingdom would soon become the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, later known as Yugoslavia. This Kingdom "fulfilled an ideal that must have seemed unattainable only a few years earlier: for all Serbs to be in one state" (Ćirković, 2004, p.252).

Yugoslavia existed in two periods: 1918-1941, and then again 1945-1992. During World War II, the invasion of the Axis Powers in Yugoslavia led to its split, with the Independent State of Croatia becoming a Nazi satellite state and Germany occupying parts of Serbia, Slovenia and Bosnia. After a Yugoslav resistance movement developed, it expelled the Axis from Serbia and Yugoslavia between 1944 and 1945. In doing so, Josip Broz Tito, leader of the communist-led Partisans, was able to secure a position of power in Yugoslavia, creating an independently led communist state (Drapac, 2010). The story of Yugoslavia, particularly its second period of existence, is frequently narrated as a tragic attempt at overcoming ancient ethnic differences between the various nations of the superordinate Yugoslavia (Gagnon, 2004). It is a story that ended in a bitter series of wars in Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991-1995), Bosnia (1992-1995), Kosovo (1998-1999) and the NATO bombing of Serbia that subsequently ended the long period of conflict (1999). Serbia, emerging from the wars as a seemingly nationalistic and xenophobic nation, formed the Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia with Montenegro, a union that lasted only until 2006 when, following a referendum, Montenegro declared independence. In 2008, Serbia was renamed the Republic of Serbia and this is what it remains known as until this day.

Serbian history, filled with turmoil, conflict, instability, unification and division, is a complex history that becomes increasingly hard to unite under one narrative. Although the country has seen its share of post-communist historical revisionism, it has nevertheless remained a country with a troubled view of the past (Ramet, 2007). Further, it has become a nation whose history in the West has been portrayed as influenced by its Ottoman rule, culturally backwards and nationalistic (Billig, 1995; Ristić, 2007). It is also a history that tells the story of a country, and a nation, trying to find its place. The current political perspective in Serbia is one that portrays its place as within the EU, yet tensions from the recent, and distant, past have created visible obstacles on Serbia's EU integration path.

### 1.2.2. A brief overview of Serbia's EU integration history

On January 21st, 2014, official talks began concerning Serbia's admittance as the 29th member of the European Union. The declaration of the upcoming negotiations was marked as one of the most important social events of 2013 in Serbia (B92). According to the Prime Minister of Serbia, January 21st, 2014 was by all accounts significant:

> "This is a historic day that cannot be ignored […] this is in the historical sense, the most important event for Serbia after World War II. In strategic terms, this day determines the future path of Serbia and the values which it strives for and for which it stands." (Ivica Dačić, Blic Online)."

Yet in public opinion, the importance of this event seems to have faded over time, with a recent Barometer survey (2017; see Figure 1.2 below) illustrating that, compared to its neighboring countries, Serbia exhibits the highest level of pessimism and ambiguity towards the EU, with the majority in 2017 considering EU membership neither good nor bad (Figure 1.2; 37%) or a bad thing (Figure 1.2; 30%).

**Figure 19: Do you think that EU membership would be (is – for Croatia) a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?**

(All respondents - N=7026, share of total, %)

| | Good thing | Neither good nor bad | Bad thing | DK/refuse |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SEE | 42 | 36 | 19 | 4 |
| Kosovo* | 90 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Albania | 81 | 14 | 5 | 1 |
| The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | 54 | 33 | 11 | 1 |
| Montenegro | 44 | 29 | 22 | 6 |
| Croatia | 32 | 50 | 16 | 2 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 31 | 46 | 18 | 4 |
| Serbia | 26 | 37 | 30 | 6 |

⬆ Significantly higher than 2015
⬇ Significantly lower than 2015
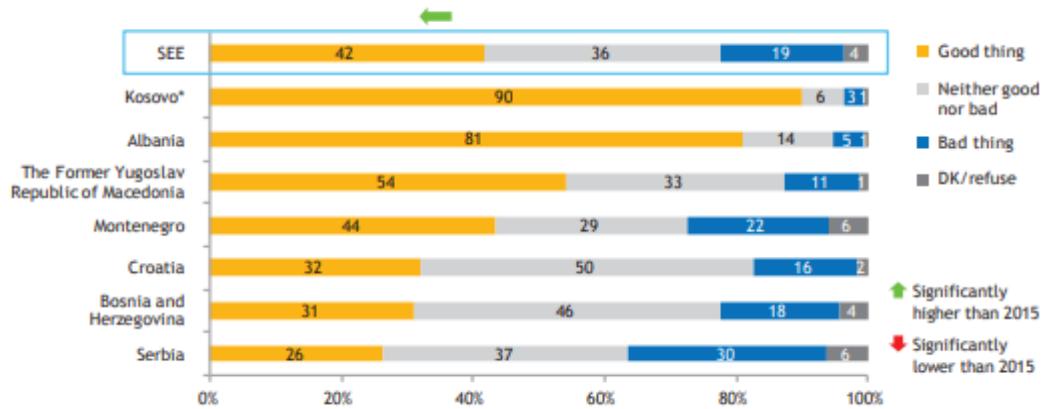
*Figure 1.2*: Attitudes towards EU membership. From "Balkan Barometer 2017: Public Opinion Survey." By the Regional Cooperation Secretariat, 2017.

The beginning of talks between Serbia and the EU was seen as a symbolic victory after many years of hard work to fulfil the requirements of the conditionality placed on Serbia as part of the application process. However, with an accession story that was initiated in 2000 through democratic reforms, and officially recognized at the Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003, Serbia's path towards the EU has not been without its complications, especially due to unresolved issues linked to the Yugoslav wars and foreign relations with neighboring countries. Three key issues which have marked the process of Serbia's EU are 1) its cooperation with the ICTY, 2) Serbia's close ties with Russia, and 3) Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. In this section, I consider each in turn and reflect on their consequences for public opinion about the EU and membership.

In the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars, the International Crime Tribunal of Yugoslavia (ICTY) was set up in Hague, Netherlands. The tribunal was met with criticism and resistance in most ex-Yugoslav countries, but particularly so in Serbia, as a disproportionate amount of Serbs were being prosecuted and convicted (Clark, 2011). In 2004, for example, 74% of Belgrade (the capital of Serbia) saw the ICTY as a conspiracy, which fed into the perception of Serbia as an international victim (Clark, 2008). In a 2007 survey, conducted by the Belgrade Center for Human Rights, only 7% of individuals believed that the ICTY was not biased when it tried Serbs in court (Klarin, 2009). This sense of unfairness and selective justice was further solidified

when NATO officials were not put on trial in Hague for violating the UN Charter when approving the bombing of Serbia (Clark, 2008). Politicians in Serbia tried to appease public disapproval of Serbia's cooperation with the court by framing the cooperation as a strategic choice in order to get financial aid and increased benefits from the EU and the US (Klarin, 2009). One such tangible benefit was the signing of a Stabilization and Accession Agreement (SAA) in April 2008. Shortly thereafter, on September 15th, 2008, the Netherlands froze the SAA, indicating that EU negotiations would be on hold until Serbia fully cooperated with the ICTY and located former army commander Ratko Mladić. According to the BBC, "the case of Ratko Mladić [was] especially sensitive for the Netherlands, as Dutch UN peacekeepers were overpowered by his Bosnian Serb forces in Srebrenica in 1995." ("Dutch Block EU-Serbia trade deal," 2008).  Srebrenica was the massacre of over 8,000 Bosnian Muslims, a war crime with which Mladić was charged (see also, Lasas, 2013). This perspective on post-Yugoslav Serbia as unfairly prosecuted by the international community through the work of the ICTY and the perceived attempts by countries, such as the Netherlands, to block their accession process has led to public perceptions of anti-Serb sentiment across the Western world, sentiments further solidified in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea.

In addition to Serbia's rocky relations with international organizations such as the ICTY, its steady relationship with Russia has proven another sore spot in its EU accession. In 2014, during the Ukrainian crisis, the EU implemented several rounds of sanctions against Russia in response to its annexation of Crimea, a territory under Ukrainian administration since 1954. During this time, Serbian media reported that "diplomatic pressures" were used to get Serbia to also implement sanctions against Russia, a demand that was met with resistance in the country (Economides & Ker-Lindsay, 2015). On the 22nd of August, 2014, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Ivica Dačić, stated that "Serbia will never join any sanctions against Russia because it is not just about a state that is friendly towards us, an economic and political partner, but also about a state that never introduced sanctions towards Serbia", alluding to the 1992 sanctions implemented by the UN against Yugoslavia ("Dačić: Never Sanctions against Russia," 2014). Russia has further been a close ally to Serbia within the UN, refusing to acknowledge the unilateral independence of Kosovo (see below). To many in Serbia, this has made Russia a more suitable political ally than the EU, and has led

to non-Serbian media questioning how long Serbia can maintain its "east-west balancing act" (Byrne, 2017, para. 3).

The issue of Kosovo is perhaps the biggest bump on the road towards better Serbia-EU relations. As discussed briefly in the previous section, Kosovo holds a prominent identity position among Serbs through the significance of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, which has become the 'chosen trauma' of the nation, justifying a sense of international victimhood (Volkan, 1997). This battle has become the core identity symbol built on two opposites – victimhood and strength/persistence (Pantelić, 2007). Although the EU is said to hold no position towards the independence issue, a majority of its members have recognized Kosovo and the province is listed as a prospective EU member on its website. Further, the signing of the SAA between Serbia and the EU, mentioned above, came shortly after Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008, despite Serbia's failure at the time to comply with the demands of the ICTY. To some, this signaled a strategic concession to Serbia in order to pressure the government to recognize Kosovo, thereby trading one for the other (Subotic, 2010). More directly, the EU as placed pressure on Serbia to normalize relations with Kosovo, another conditionality demand that is considered a threat to Serbia's sovereignty (Obradovic-Wochnik & Wochnik, 2012). The position of the EU in regards to Kosovo can perhaps better be understood when considering its past accession of a divided Cyprus in 2004. This decision led to worsening relations with Turkey (which was facing tensions with the Greek Cypriots) and consequently "many European leaders had signaled their determination not to import any more border disputes into the future" (Ker-Lindsay, 2009, p.6). This in turn has made people in Serbia wonder; will giving up Kosovo become the final condition placed on Serbia before it is accepted into the EU? The intersection between psychological attachment and geopolitical tension is exemplified in the context of Serbia's relations to Kosovo and becomes evident in the most recent Balkan Barometer (2017) on the attitudes towards EU in South-Eastern Europe (Figures 1.2-1.4). For example, alongside being generally pessimistic about EU integration, Serbs express the highest level of concern for a loss of sovereignty (Figure 1.3; 15% compared to second highest, Croatia, with 12%) as a consequence of EU membership.

Figure 21: What would EU membership mean to you personally?
(All respondents - N=7026, maximum two answers, share of total, %)
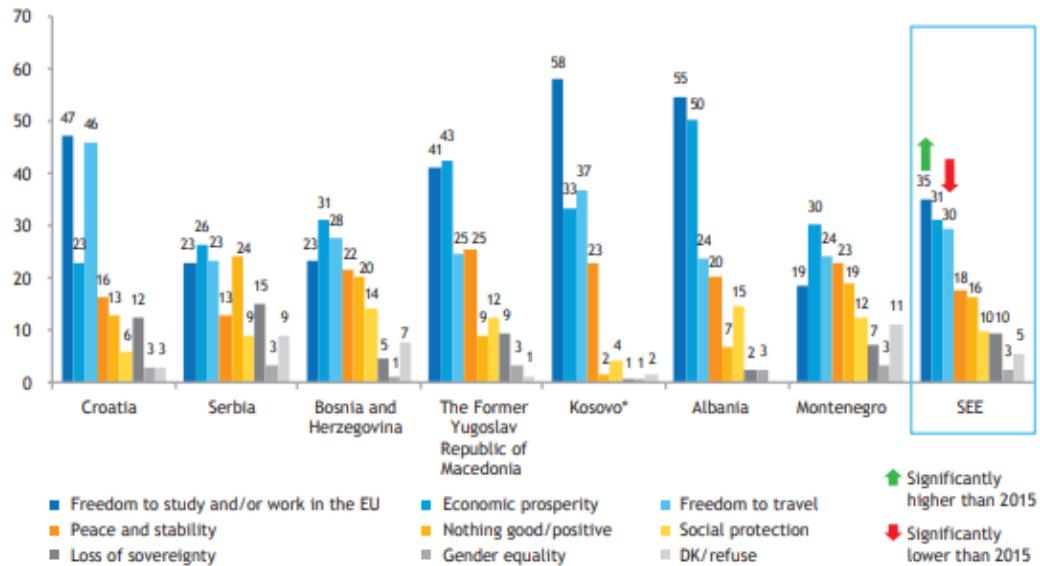
*Figure 1.3:* Meaning of EU membership. From "Balkan Barometer 2017: Public Opinion Survey." By the Regional Cooperation Secretariat, 2017.

In addition, this pessimism extends to the future as well, with Serbia exhibiting the highest number of respondents who never expect Serbia's EU accession to happen (Figure 1.4; 38% compared to second-highest, 33% in Bosnia and Hercegovina).



Figure 20: In general, when do you expect the accession to EU to happen?
(All respondents - N=7026, share of total, %)
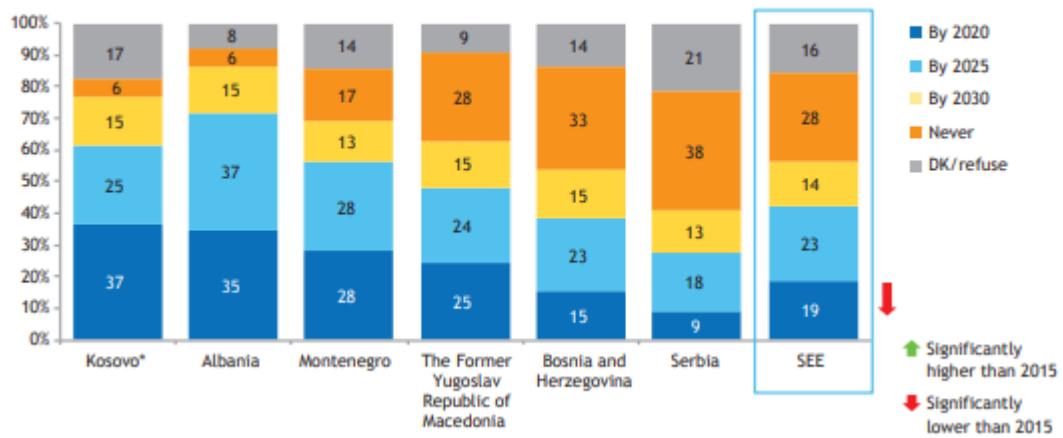
*Figure 1.4:* Expectations for EU accession. From "Balkan Barometer 2017: Public Opinion Survey." By the Regional Cooperation Secretariat, 2017.

**1.3. Conclusion**

In this brief, and somewhat simplified, summary of some of the key political issues facing Serbia's EU accession we can see that a common thread across them all is an illustration of how closely interlinked politics, both domestic and foreign, are to issues of history, international relations, culture and identity. Serbia's relationship with the larger European community through organizations such as the UN, ICTY and the EU has tended to position Europe as 'Other' in relation to Serbia. The isolation of Serbia from the West and Europe is not only visible in the internal context of the nation, but is also reflected in the images of the Balkans in the West (Todorova, 1997). During the Yugoslav wars, media reports in the Western world highlighted the role of ancient ethnic hatred and 'hot' nationalism in the Balkans, which became a source of contrast for the West to compare itself with (Billig, 1995; Hatzopoulos, 2003; Gagnon, 2004). This in turn has influenced the image of Serbia in the eyes of both EU politicians and the public. In a 1996 Eurobarometer survey, EU citizens were asked to rank which countries they felt should be part of the EU by 2000. In the ranking, Serbia came in third to last (of 28 countries). The results from this survey, though conducted more than 20 years ago, speak for the "many ethnic, religious and historical factors at work in molding the image which people have of the future development of the Community, and, presumably, as a corollary of its identity" (Breakwell, 1996, p.23).

On a larger scale, these examples highlight not only Serbia's relations to the EU, but more importantly they illustrate the crucial processes, which underpin the history of the emergence of a European community, and, some would argue, identity. Namely, as with any social identity, a European identity developed in the context of an 'Other'. As Neumann (1999) has illustrated, in the context of international relations, "the ordering of self as 'Western' and other as 'Eastern' in European identity formation is one way of organizing European politics." (p. 210) and thus we need to understand self-other relations in their historicity. This political tension between 'East' and 'West' is also a historical, ideological and psychological tension which relates back to the fundamental 'inbetweeness' that has been seen as characteristic of a modern Serbian national identity (Russell-Omaljev, 2016; Todorova, 1997; Živković, 2011). It is from this perspective then that Serbia offers an interesting context in which to explore the question of how collective continuity is managed in times of socio-political change and the implications this has for identity. Particularly when the starting-point is an identity that has been built on, and is experienced as, in-between two ideological, historical and

political 'camps'.

In order to answer the question of how continuity is managed in times of socio-political change, and what the implications are for identity, we need to examine the social psychology of national and superordinate identities, the role of history in contexts of socio-political change and the importance of power dynamics and recognition in shaping elite and public attitudes towards supranational membership (Chapter 2). Further, we need to consider what methods are required in order to answer these questions (Chapter 3) before turning to the empirical studies exploring how social representations of the past are utilized in public discourses to make sense of the present (Chapter 4), elite discourses on political change and Serbia's relations to Europe over time (Chapter 5), the ways in which power relations shape national-supranational identity processes and attitudes towards political integration (Chapter 6) and lastly whether the complex relationship between collective continuity and identity have been adequately theorized (Chapter 7). The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) offers a starting-point for a social psychology of supranational identity in contexts of political change and multinational integration. It does so by firstly highlighting how self-other relations permeate not only the construction of a supranational identity, but also the negotiation of collective continuity as part of that identity, and its consequences for the nation. In tying the empirical chapters together, Chapter 8 introduces the concept of insecure nationalism, as a theoretical concept which allows us to consider how supranational identification and integration brings about questions of whether change means improving 'us' or becoming less like 'us'.

# Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In chapter 1, the context of this research project was outlined, showing the importance of developing a social psychological account of the ways in which the relationship between Serbia and the EU has changed over time. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the key concepts and phenomena relevant to this research, and to propose a theoretical framework emphasizing a social psychology of supranational identity which places self-other relations across time at the core.

It does so by first introducing the key theories of the PhD; social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT) and their relevance for the present thesis (2.1). This shows the breadth of the existing literature on social identities in Social Psychology, and highlights what we need to examine in further detail. Section 2.1 is followed by an examination of how social representation theory can come to inform the analysis of the identity by providing a deeper understanding of the meaning given to social categories and its dissemination and management through communication and social practice (2.2). In this section I also introduce the social representations approach, discussing the particularly important, and less explored, area of overlap between social identity theory and social representation theory. Section 2.3 then considers how this theoretical framework applies more specifically to the context of national identities by discussing the role that social representations of history come to play in shaping the meaning given to nationhood and national identity (2.2). The following two sections (2.4 and 2.5) move us from national identities to consider their existence in a larger supranational context. Namely, the sections discuss some of the recent theoretical models informed by SIT and SCT which become suitable to apply when exploring the role of supranational membership, dual identification and how understanding EU integration from a social identity theory perspective can offer us interesting insights into discussions of belonging, boundaries and recognition. These issues are taken up in the section that follows (2.6), to bring to light the neglected role of identity recognition in contexts of macro-level social identity processes. The concluding section (2.7) summarizes the theoretical framework and its significance to the study of socio-political phenomena, and introduces the research questions of the project, providing an overview of the chapters and empirical studies to follow.

## 2.1 Social Identity: Self and Other in Context

In 1960, historian Rupert Emerson published *From Empire to Nation.* In the book, Emerson argues that "the simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation" (1960, p. 102). In his definition of the nation, Emerson emphasized a key component in the creation of a nation-state. That is, the nation as a group becomes real when the people who are part of the nation *feel* part of it as well. In other words, when they identify with the nation. Considering that it was this definition of the nation which Tajfel drew on when conceptualizing and defining a 'social group', it is of little surprise that literature within social psychology has tended to explore nationalism and national identity as a form of social identity (Li & Brewer, 2004; Nigbur & Cinnirella, 2007; Reicher, Cassidy, Wolpert, Hopkins & Levine, 2006; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Verkuyten, 2014). Before considering the application of the theory to the context of nations and national identities, it is first necessary to ouline the key tenants of social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory (SCT), particularly highlighting how both theories place emphasis on the role of self and other in identity, the importance of contextual sensitivity and the importance of hierarchies of status and power which shape ingroup processes and intergroup relations.

### 2.1.1 The Social Identity Approach

The social identity approach (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010) refers to the ideas, concepts and theoretical assumptions of both Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Wetherell & Reicher, 1987). While there is much overlap between the two theories, there are also crucial distinctions that need to be acknowledged in order to understand the distinctive contributions of each theory to social psychology, and how these can be used to inform this study. The first, and most important difference from which the remaining distinctions of the theories emerge, comes from the different foci of Tajfel and Turner. Namely, while Tajfel (alongside his then-student Turner) was primarily interested in understanding intergroup discrimination and developing a theory of intergroup behaviour, Turner's later focus in the development of SCT was more on intra-group processes and how individuals come to see themselves as part of a group to begin with. In a sense, the processes explored in SCT precede and inform the processes of social identification and intergroup relations outlined in SIT. Due to the

significance of both in providing a holistic perspective of both intra- and inter-group processes, each theory, and its key concepts are discussed separately below.


*Social Identity Theory*

According to Tajfel (1978, p.63) a social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significane attached to that membership". The theory can be summarized by the 'social categorization-social identity-social comparison-positive distictiveness' sequence as outlined by Tajfel (1974).

To begin with, it is important to clarify that there is a distinction between the concepts 'social category' and 'social group'. A social category is a "cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40) while a social group can be understood as a collective of individuals "who have internalized the same social category membership as a component of their self-concept" (Turner, 1982, p.36). This internalization, in turn, becomes what we consider a 'social identity'.

Among the basic assumptions of the theory is the claim that individuals strive to maintain a sense of positive self-concept and that, as part of our self is informed by our social group memberships, it is through comparison with others that we manage to attain, and maintain, a positive distinctiveness for our groups. Thus, inherent in SIT, is the role of 'Other' in the process of constructing an ingroup identity. In other words, to the extent that individuals identify with the groups to which they belong, a positive self-esteem can be attained through favorable social comparison with other groups. However, Tajfel was far from unaware of the reality of the social world, and acknowledged that different groups held different status and power positions in society. Tajfel's primary interest was in understanding how groups of seemingly low social status and power managed a sense of positive self-esteem, and how intergroup behaviour was in turn driven by this desire to create social change. Social identity theory is therefore at the core a theory about social change and the ability of individuals, as part of groups, to imagine and work towards alternatives to their existing social realities.

Tajfel & Turner (1979) proposed three strategies that groups can use to deal with and challenge threatened (or stigmatized) identities. Depending on the

permeability of the group boundaries, an individual may choose to leave their existing group and join a more positively evaluated group. If the boundaries are deemed impermeable, two strategies become possible; social creativity or social change. Social creativity refers to changing social comparison dimensions in order to achieve a sense of positive self. This can occur by changing the relevant out-group of comparison, changing the evaluative dimension or simply re-interpreting the dimension of comparison from something negative into something positive. Studies manipulating aspects of national identification through type of comparison show the ways in which this occurs (Nigbur & Cinnirella, 2007). The second more collective strategy is to mobilize for social change to either challenge or maintain the current social order. For example, in context where changing intergroup relations threaten to change the position of the ingroup in the larger social context, resistance becomes a justified measure (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011). It will be argued below (see section 2.3) that these processes of resistance, particularly the socio-psychological resistance evident in social creativity, can further be understood by applying the Social Representation Theory (SRT) to explore the micro-expressions of re-negotiation through communication.

It is important to stress here, however, that both SIT (and as will be discussed, SCT) are context-dependent theories shaped by the many cognitive, social and historical factors that shape ingroup and intergroup processes (Reicher, 2004; Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). Firstly, value is a function of culture (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, p.34) and also, I would argue, history, as valued dimensions develop over time (see section 2.3). In the context of national identity, we frequently see value as something that becomes historicized, where current intergroup relations, mediated by group-based emotions, become rooted in the past (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Lasas, 2013; Greenwood, 2015). In addition, a growing body of literature has illustrated how history, through its attachment to national identity, imbues identity with values, norms and meanings rooted in the past, which has consequences for the extent to which 'new' citizens are able to identify with a national ingroup (Andreouli & Chryssochoou, 2015; Clary-Lemon, 2014; Mols & Jetten, 2014). Secondly, social comparison becomes meaningful when it occurs with relevant out-groups. As Nigbur & Cinnirella, (2007) show, priming different out-group comparisons will shape the ways in which the ingroup constructs its identity, as the shift in relevant out-groups also shifts the valued dimensions of comparison.

*Self-Categorization Theory*

Turner conceptualized SCT as "a set of related assumptions and hypotheses about the functioning of the social self-concept (the concept of self based on comparison with other people and relevant social interaction)" (Turner et al., 1987, p. 42). While Tajfel focused on developing a model of intergroup behavior, Turner's interest was more focused on refining the cognitive dimensions of social identity theory. Namely, SCT provides a deeper understanding how how individuals are able to see themselves as part of a group, and what determined which type of identity becomes salient in a given context (Halsam & Reicher, 2015).

According to the theory, the self is seen as part of a particular category of stimuli and is thus perceived as similar to other members of that category and different from members belonging to other categories. The theory distinguishes between three levels of self-categorization which range from superordinate (human level), to intermediate (social level) and subordinate (personal level). No level of categorization is more or less fundamental to a self than another, but rather, the theory argues that what makes a given self-category more relevant in a particular context than another is based on the accessibility and fit of the category in that particular context (Oakes, 1987). More specifically, accessibility refers to an person's 'readiness' to use categories in particular contexts. This readiness is based on past experiences and present expectations, values and norms, which make certain categories more or less accessible and useful in making sense of social interactions. Fit has two components; comparative fit and normative fit. Comparative fit is a function of the metacontrast ratio. The metacontrast ratio refers to the idea that, all things being equal, the categories which maximize the differences between categories compared to within categories will become the most salient. Normative fit, in turn, refers to the meaning given to these differences and whether they are in line with the stereotypical expectations associated with the categories.

As individuals define themselves, and others, as part of particular groups, they also tend to seem themselves less as different individuals, and more as representatives of that shared group (similarly to the argument of SIT about moving from a personal to social level of identification). This process is known as depersonalization. The specific content of a self-category will determine who is seen as more or less representative of the category, or in the words of SCT, who is more or less 'prototypical' of the category.  The concept of prototypicality will become important later on in section 2.4,

when we discuss subgroup-superordinate group dynamics, and the consequences of prototypicality for belonging and recognition. Considering the metacontrast principle, it can be concluded that who is seen as a prototype of a given category, is a function of the comparative context and the meaning given to a social encounter.

As Turner (1999) argues, "[p]rocess theories such as social identity and self-categorization require the incorporation of specific content into their analyses before they can make predictions either in the laboratory or in the field and are designed to require such an incorporation" (p.34). Considering this we further draw on social representation theory to compliment and extend the theoretical power of the social identity approach by combining it with a theory focused on the social production of knowledge and how this informs and shapes expressions of identities and perceptions of intergroup relations.

## 2.2. Connecting Identities and Representations: Social Representations Approach

According to Elcheroth, Doise and Reicher (2011), the Social Representations Approach, marrying Social Identity Theory and Social Representations Theory, can provide new insights into exploring phenomena at the intersection of psychology and politics. Following their argument, this section introduces the theory of social representations and then goes on to explore how this integrated approach can be useful in considering the role of history and identity in contexts of socio-political change.

*Social Representation Theory*

At the core of Social Representation Theory is an emphasis on how we make sense of the world and thus how knowledge is socially created and managed. It is a theory of meaning-making, power and social change (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; Howarth, 2006; Moscovici, 2000). Interested in how the unfamiliar becomes familiar, the theory of Social Representations developed from Moscovici's seminal study exploring the ways in which psychoanalysis was made sense of in three different social groups in France (Moscovici, 1976). Drawing on Durkheim's concept of collective representations, Moscovici criticized the concept for its static nature, arguing that it did not represent how knowledge was constructed and contested in modern societies (Moscovici, 1976). Instead, Moscovici developed the concept of 'social' representations, highlighting the shared, dynamic and at times contradictory nature of socially shared knowledge. By defining social representations as systems of values,

ideas and practices, Moscovici argued that they function to both establish social order as well as enable communication within it, and about it (1973).

Growing numbers of scholars are advocating the theoretical and practical benefits of integrating Social Identity Theory and Social Representation Theory (Breakwell & Lyons, 1996; Condor, 1996; Reicher, 2004; Howarth, 2002). The distinction made in this chapter between representations and identity is to consider representations as part of the meaning given to identities while identities are seen as the processes through which group membership and group boundaries are created. In other words, social representations and identities play crucial roles in defining both the boundaries of groups as well as their meaning. Thus, this approach overcomes a common critique of the SIA for its emphasis on process and context but lack of conceptualization of the meanings of identities (Deaux, 1993; Huddy, 2001). Namely,by considering the content of identities as developed through processes of shared meaning-making, we explicitly consider how identification and intergroup dynamics become contextually embedded and shaped by social created knowledge (Reicher, 2004). In doing so, we reiterate the original premises of both Tajfel and Turner in emphasizing the need to incorporate both content and context into the study of social identity processes.

*Social Representation Approach*

Social identities influence exposure, acceptance and use of social representations, which can in turn shape the representations and their development (Breakwell, 1993). Exposure to representations in this framework does not mean automatic acceptance and reproduction, but rather it is through our membership in different groups that we consider some representations as more legitimate and 'real' than others. This leads us to an important criticism of SRT. Discursive psychologists consider the centrality given to history in shaping representations a limitation to the ways in which the theory can account for social change, making it somewhat deterministic in nature (McKinlay & Potter, 1987). By coupling SRT with the SIA we see how adapting and incorporating representations into one's identity is a process bound up with the group memberships we hold and the values and norms within those groups. Therefore, by considering history as part of both the content of identities (that is representations) and the process of identifying, we can conceive of a space where individuals are able to contest, resist and re-shape identities, imagined futures and

existing realities. As social representations are transmitted in both communication and practice and become attached to identities, individuals will actively "translate (drop, transfer, corrupt, modify, add to or appropriate) these practices in the course of taking them up and passing them on" (Condor, 1996, p.291). Thus, as Billig (1991) argues, the process of anchoring, a fundamental concept of SRT in explaining how the unfamiliar becomes familiar, also leaves possibility for the anchor to be hauled up and dropped again (p. 72; Lowe, 2012). Therefore, emphasizing history in relation to representations does not entail a loss of agency on the part of individuals; rather it allows us to go beyond the descriptive power of SRT to explore what representations *do* for people in groups (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). In doing so we can speak both of identities and identifying, as well as representations and representing.

An interesting point of connection, which remains less developed in relation to the two theories, is the overlap between the process of social creativity in overcoming negative self-images and the process of socially re-presenting identity. To clarify, we consider these two processes an area where the theoretical overlap sought in the Social Representations Approach can be more clearly conceptualized. Specifically, in larger contexts of socio-political change, such as that of a nation, due to the several limiting factors (restrictions on movement, visas, financial instability etc.), individual mobility is a strategy few individuals are afforded the luxury of choosing. Further, with limited knowledge as to what political change might entail, lack of trust in politicians and general political apathy, mobilizing for social change is further restricted (Greenberg, 2010). Thus, in many contexts, creatively re-presenting the status quo and what political change might mean for the people becomes the preferred choice of action, and a potential first step in either seeking individual or collective change. Literature building on this idea in contexts ranging from racial, religious, gendered and migrant identities has shown the creative processes through which minority groups can reclaim, reinterpret and resist stigmatizing identities (Duveen, 2001; Howarth, 2002; Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Rasmussen, 2013). This body of literature highlights how groups can cope with and challenge the power hierarchies that are part of their social realities.

By taking a social representations approach to identity it becomes possible to explore the meanings of identities and how representations are drawn on to politicize collective identities and support or resist specific political projects (Klandermans, 2014). A good example illustrating this comes from research by Sindic & Reicher (2009) on Scottish people's attitudes towards being a part of Britain. Based on the

findings of their research, the authors conclude that "political attitudes towards supra-national bodies […] are moderated by the extent to which the expression of ingroup identity is seen as being undermined within the large entity" (p.114). In other words, resistance to supranational bodies can be linked to one of the basic premises of SIT – the need for people to feel a simultaneous sense of sameness and distinctiveness. It is a fear of one's subgroup identity being undermined, Sindic and Reicher argue, that makes groups less likely to support a political unity under a supranational body.

In the case of Serbia and the EU, the documented incompatibility and the fear of losing distinct features of identity by giving in to the demands of the EU can both help to explain why there might be resistance to join the supranational organization (Ristić, 2007; Subotic, 2010). This tells us that there is something more at stake than economics and politics in processes of nation-based political change. We move to the next section to consider in particular how history, and social representations of history, play a crucial role in giving meaning to national identities, in turn shaping which political changes become seen as aligned with, or threatening to, a continuity with the past.

## 2.3. National Identity and Historical Continuity

History is intimately linked with the formation and meaning of a national identity, because it tells a story of where a nation and its people come from, as well as its place and role in relation to other nations (Anderson, 1983; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Malinowski, 1926). Therefore, a key function of history is to provide nations with a ingroup foundation and origin. In this sense, perceptions of historical continuity become crucial in maintaining a sense of stability to ingroup belonging and meaning. Historical continuity can be understood as a sense of perceived continuity between the past and present of a nation, particularly in terms of maintaining continuity to key values, norms and traditions.

Considering history as a resource for national identities entails understanding how history functions to inform the meaning of a group's identity and to root this meaning in the past, linking it to the present and projecting it onto the future. Scholars interested in how history informs social identities have explored the importance of perceived collective continuity (PCC; Sani et al., 2007) or social representations of history provide individuals, as group members, with a sense of positive social esteem and ingroup attachment. The idea of 'perceived collective continuity' (Sani, Bowe, Herrera, Manna,

Cossa, Miao & Zhou, 2007) conceptualizes the ways in which we see our social groups and consequently social identities, as stable constructs moving through time. The concept of perceived collective continuity has further been divided into two sub-dimensions: essentialism and narrativism. The former is a version of continuity achieved through an emphasis on the stability of an ingroups 'essence', core features such as values, norms and other cultural markers that define and identity, while the latter is a version of continuity achieved through interlinking historical events to create a consistent narrative of a group's history. As Reicher (2008) argues, "continuity is a necessary element in the psychological underpinning of practice. It gives meaning to action and empowers us to transform the world." (p.154). As was discussed in the section on the social identity approach, because groups provide individuals with the existential foundation on which their social selves develop and stand, ingroup members can become affected in important ways when they perceive that foundation to be shifting, or cracking. For example, perceptions of discontinuity have been found to cause collective angst over the potential loss of a group's values, norms and traditions (Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Wohl, Branscombe & Reysen, 2010). These findings are not limited to national groups facing threats to continuity, but have also been supported in studies on mergers and schisms (Sani, 2008; Sani & Reicher, 2000; Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, Monden & de Lima; 2002). Research on group mergers has illustrated how manipulating the perception of continuity in times of change can increase (or decrease) resistance to change (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011).

Yet a recent strand of research has criticized this distinction between continuity as positive and discontinuity as negative by arguing that the importance of continuity to the past depends on the valence of the past (Roth, Huber, Juenger & Liu, 2017). Namely, if the history of an ingroup is seen as negative, then historical continuity becomes increasingly threatening to an ingroup's identity and historical discontinuity becomes preferred in order to relieve people in the present from the burden of a negative past. In other words, depending on how the past is remembered, whether positively or negatively, perceived continuity could either become a source of positive identification or a threat to the seemingly positive ingroup identity of the present. This more critical perspective on historical continuity echoes the distinction made between essentialist and narrativist continuity, where the former has been found to be more likely to satisfy an individual's

need for self-continuity and therefore more likely to enhance ingroup identification, or protect it when threatened (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014).

If history is such a powerful resource for giving meaning and continuity to an ingroup identity then we must also acknowledge that those who can shape and re-write history will be in a position of power to not only shape who 'we' are, but also what we should remember of the past and the consequences this has for how we relate to others in the present. In contexts of public uncertainty or resistance to political change, elites can come to act as 'entrepreneurs of identity', shaping what is remembered and how, in order to align it with, and thus create resonance for, their political projects (Klein & Licata, 2003; Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; Olick, 2007; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). The concept of "entrepreneurs of identity" originates from the SIT literature on leadership and refers to those individuals who seek to shape the actions of a group. As Reicher and Hopkins (2001) explain, "their skill lies both in defining categories as such that they entail the form of mobilization necessary to realizing the desired future and in making these definitions seems so self-evident that they are immune to counter positions" (p.49; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). These entrepreneurs are often political leaders, their affiliates or activists who wish to promote specific political agendas or political figures and do so by drawing on identity-related arguments (Gleibs, Hendricks & Kurz, 2017; Klein & Licata, 2003; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; see Chapter 5). Entrepreneurs of identity are successful to the extent that their proposed projects are seen as ensuring, rather than deviating from, a sense of national continuity. These constructions of the nation "essentially air-brush out individual and temporal variation in order to achieve a picture of a homogenous 'us, now'" (Condor, 1996, p.299). Thus, while change inevitably occurs in all societies, it is those who propose change that face the task of making it appear natural and continuous with a group's identity. We now turn to the specific socio-political change focused on in this thesis, namely EU integration, to discuss how EU accession can be understood as a larger, abstracted expression of the processes described within the social identity approach.

## 2.4. The Nation and the Supranational

The previous sections have discussed identity processes and representations of history, accumulating in a proposed theoretical framework to address identity, history and political change. I now move to examine this in the particular context of this research more precisely, looking first at the relevant supranational group – the European Union.

Literature on international organization theory has explored the development of the EU as a neofunctionalist strategy intended to promote identities beyond the nation-state and to limit the possibility of conflict (Haas, 1964). Here I explore the EU as a social construct, considering how the image of the EU has been shaped in various public and elite discourses, as well as the extent to which an EU identity exists, and what it may means. I do so by applying theoretical insights from the social identity approach, focusing on particular developments of the theory that extend to more complex, dual-identification and nation-level processes.

### 2.4.1 Dual Identities: Subgroups and Superordinate Groups

In relation to national identity, the SIA allows us to explore the ways in which processes of intergroup comparison and differentiation allow nations to achieve, and maintain, a sense of positive distinctiveness vis-à-vis other nations. However, as individuals belong to several social groups, and as supranational unions are increasingly emerging, the search for an optimal balance between unification and diversification, similarity and difference, is a struggle that individuals often face when attempting to accommodate several, at times conflicting identities into their sense of selves (Brewer, 1991; Hopkins, 2011; Tajfel, 1978). Some resolve this conflict by compartmentalizing identities (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013) while others discursively separate conflicting identity narratives (Cieslik & Verkuyten, 2006). These struggles between similarity and difference are not only limited to intra- or inter-personal situations, but are frequently found in contexts of intergroup and inter-national changes, where previous out-groups are united within a common ingroup, such as in context of mergers or multinational unions (Gleibs, Noack & Mummendey, 2010; Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; Sindic & Reicher, 2009).

Two key models within social psychology that have been informative for our understanding of subgroup-superordinate group dynamics are the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM, see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; 2012) and Ingroup Projection Model (IPM, see Wenzel, Mummendey & Waldzus, 2007). Both models are rooted in the work of Turner (1987) and self-categorization theory, but rely on different mediating processes in explaining when, and how, superordinate identities have positive or negative effects on outgroup attitudes and superordinate belonging.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) draws on the concept of 'depersonalization' to argue that the introduction of a

superordinate group evokes a process of re-categorization among members of a subgroup. As a consequence of this process, perceived out-group members are categorized as members of the common ingroup, and thus positively perceived. This new identity however, does not overtake the importance of the subgroup identity, but rather they co-exist, in an overlapping manner. The model frequently draws on the metaphor of a 'team' to conceptualize the unique contributions of each subgroup to the larger superordinate group and its goals. This approach to superordinate groups has been taken when considering the ways in which minorities identify both with their subgroups (ethnic/religious) and superordinate groups (national) (Hopkins, 2011; Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011) and has been successfully supported in studies of acculturation and migration (Berry, 2006; 2011). This literature has shown the complex ways in which individuals negotiate and manage inclusiveness and distinctiveness by re-categorizing the superordinate group through its commonalities with the subgroup. It therefore emphasizes the importance of perceived compatibility between subgroups in the context of a new common ingroup (Gleibs et al., 2010). However, it also speaks to the role of social recognition and power in allowing such re-negotiations to be validated and legitimized. Namely, recognition is intimately linked with identity and so becomes crucial in informing it. As Taylor (1992, p.25) argues;

> *Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.*

Thus, while there might be benefits to common categorization, these can become threatened when the subgroup's identity and diversity is not given recognition in the wider social context or superordinate group, but rather subgroups (particularly minorities) are accepted to the extent that they conform, or assimilate, to the dominant subgroups values, norms and traditions (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Misrecognition, or non-recognition can cause a threat to subgroups by potentially undermining their ability to practically exercise their identities. This can in turn cause reluctance to, and

distancing from, the superordinate group altogether (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; Sindic & Reicher, 2009). Recognition therefore becomes important in contexts of superordinate group belonging where the co-existence of different groups within a larger, common ingroup can create tensions around who is more or less a member, and the consequential access to rights and resources this entails.

It is this latter, more conflictual side to subgroup-superordinate group dynamics that the Ingroup Projection Model (IPM) has theorized in detail. IPM suggests that the creation of a common ingroup can have negative consequences as subgroups tend to project the image of their subgroup onto the common group, thereby limiting the extent to which other subgroups are considered as equally embodying the groups beliefs, norms and values (Wenzel, Mummendey & Waldzus, 2007). This literature draws on an important concept of prototypicality, discussed in section 2.1. A 'prototype' can be defined as that person within a group that best represents its goals, values and norms, and is thus seen as an ideal-type member of that category in a given context and frame of reference (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1998). According to SCT, through the specific content of a self-category will determine who is more or less prototypical, and this will also shift with the comparative context. Although prototypicality was originally developed to conceptualize how individuals become 'ideal-type' members of an ingroup, the present model on superordinate identity has extended this work by applying the concept to the ways in which one group, among many, perceives itself as the prototype of the common ingroup (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Wenzel, Mummendey & Waldzus, 2007).

The Ingroup Projection Model posits that subgroups project their group's characteristics as the prototype of the superordinate group, and the degree to which this is done will determine the degree to which status inequality between different groups is perceived as legitimate (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999). Research on superordinate identity within this framework has shown that even on the level of the most abstract ingroup, humanity, individuals belonging to western, industrialized nations tend to consider themselves more prototypical of the world's population than less developed countries (Reese, Berthold & Steffens, 2012). Similarly, on a national level, Devos and Banaji (2005) found that White Americans implicitly considered their subgroup as more prototypical of an American identity (superordinate) than African Americans or Asian Americans. Interestingly enough, in the case of Asian Americans, White Americans were *also* seen as more prototypical of the superordinate group than their

own subgroup, speaking to the importance of history and power relations in constraining our identification with, and belonging to, superordinate groups. Equally important, these results have real implications. Increased perceptions of prototypicality of the common ingroup can function to perpetuate inequality by legitimizing social hierarchies and thereby justifying the superiority of some groups over others (Reese et al., 2012).

Anticipated superordinate (or supranational) membership, such as EU membership, therefore has consequences for intergroup relations, but also for the positioning of the subgroup within a hierarchical structure that grants some members more power than others. These changes arising from membership thus bring socio-psychological consequences with them, particularly for lower-status members who are attempting to integrate. Thus it is important to emphasize that these processes play out differently among different types of subgroups. Namely, as Joyce, Stevenson & Muldoon (2013) have argued "dominant groups, being seen as more prototypical of the superordinate category, experience less discrepancy between subgroup and superordinate identities, while for minority group members, inclusion in a higher order category tends to accentuate the discrepancy and exacerbate their peripherality." (p. 452). Here power relations play a key role in shaping how subgroup – superordinate group dynamics emerge and are managed, and the consequences they have not only for superordinate identification, but also for the psychological well-being of the individuals experiencing the change (Iyer, Jetten & Tsivrikos, 2008). In the next section we explore how issues of identity undermining shaping the extent to which supranational belonging is seen as beneficial or threatening.


### 2.4.2 Supranational Membership and Identity Undermining

The concept of 'identity undermining' was coined to consider the practical identity consequences of a common ingroup membership rather than a focus on only distinctiveness threat, which refers to the more cognitive process of conceptualizing the ingroup (and its identity) as distinct and positive (Sindic & Reicher, 2009). In the context of nations, identity undermining can refer both to the loss of sovereignty, but also to the limit or constraint on more banal practices of nationalism, such as everyday symbols and expressions of a national culture (Billig, 1995). Identity undermining is derived from a sense of incompatibility with other subgroups and the practical implications of this, as well as the power(lessness) of the subgroup in relation to other

subgroups. Thus, both factors influencing identity undermining have implications for the practical ability with which individuals can exercise their 'way of life' (Sindic & Reicher, 2009). This concept highlights that social identities are social psychological phenomena, where the cognitive processes becomes intertwined with the behavior and practices of social groups.

In working towards EU integration, candidate nations are expected to fulfill a series of conditions before becoming eligible for consideration. This entails a transformation of laws and institutional regulations and can often be a lengthy process. It is also a psychologically relevant process as the conditions placed on a candidate communicate a position of subordinate power. Within international political economy, the concept of 'asymmetric interdependence' is frequently applied to trade, but can also be applied to the context of the EU (Bechev, 2011). The concept lets us explore how, in a mutually beneficial relationship, the costs of disruption or loss of partnership are much higher for one party than the other (Nye & Keohan, 1977). Thus, there is a power-asymmetry, which lends the more powerful partner (EU) a bargaining position. This has been the case with Serbia, where the process of making a mends for the past has become part of the conditionality placed on the nation. As a consequence, Serbia-EU negotiations were frozen (2006-2007) due to Serbia's lack of compliance with the International Crime Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY; Stahl, 2013). Therefore, EU integration is not only politically significant, but also socio-psychologically so, as it communicates not only who is in a position of power to make demands, but also the values that candidate nations are expected to embody or develop in order to be considered fully European. Thus, while it might be hard to speak of a distinctly 'EU' identity, there are certainly norms, values and expectations of what an EU member is. This can perhaps shed light on why a nation like Turkey has been unable to integration in spite of a lengthy democratization process, and why public support for its integration in EU member states remains low (Gerhards & Hans, 2011).

Consequently, in promoting positive attitudes towards the EU it becomes important to construct national identity and supranational identity as compatible. According to the Ingroup Projection Model, this would be possible as ingroups claim prototypicality of the superordinate group through the process of projection. However, less has been said about the extent to which contextual factors actually explicitly shape the prototypicality of the superordinate category and in turn create barriers for some, and bridges for others, between subgroup and superordinate identity (Mummendey &

Wenzel, 1999). In light of this, it becomes important to consider two key factors when providing a social psychological approach to the study of supranational identity in contexts of political change and integration; 1) the origins of the social category of 'European' and its social identity, and 2) the role of recognition in the process of identification, providing either a barrier or a bridge towards inclusion and dual identification. These two key factors are addressed in the following two sections.

**2.5. European Identity: Connecting the Political and the Cultural**

To begin with, it is important to clarify whether we are talking about a European identity in the context of the EU, or whether there is a distinct EU identity, separate from a European identity. While scholars have disagreed on this, there seems to be a commonly accepted distinction between the EU (as a political category) and Europe (as a cultural / historical category). For example, Flockhart (2010) argues that "'EU-ization' is different from 'Europeanization' because of its focus on the EU and because it is predominantly concerned with 'political encounters' […] EU-ization is a small, but important part of a much broader and long term process of Europeanization, which is predominantly concerned with 'cultural encounters'" (p.790-791). While this distinction is theoretically useful, it begs the question of whether the processes can be equally distinguished in real socio-political events. The position taken in this PhD is that, while there is a clear distinction between the EU, as a political project, and Europe, as a geographical territory with a unique history, these distinctions cannot be divided into separate identities. For the most part in everyday debates it is difficult to separate out representations of the EU and representations of Europe, and so distinguish identities that relate to EU or Europe but not both. Consequently, it is perhaps more useful to discuss the EU in terms of its entitativity (Campbell, 1958) and its links to a European identity project. To do so, we must first understand the historical construction of the social category 'Europe' and its boundaries, before we can explore how this has influenced current conceptualizations of what it means to be more or less European.

### 2.5.1. Europe and its 'Other'

In 1999, Iver B. Neumann wrote that "'The East' is indeed Europe's other, and it is continuously being recycled in order to represent European identities." (p. 207). In 2016, Katarina Kinnvall argued that colonialism is still part of European reality today

and that understanding Europe and European integration from a postcolonial lens allows us to more seriously consider the challenges involved in asserting both national and European belonging. What both of these authors argue (and many in between their times of writing) is that a reading of Europe from an identity-focused perspective illustrates that the construction of a European community and identity has occurred in the context of self-other relations. Who is then the 'Other' against which a European self has been constructed?

Scholars answering this question have tended to position self as based on 'Western' European values and Other as non-Western (Carrier, 1995; Flockhart, 2010; Kinnvall, 2016; Neumann, 1999; Todorova, 1997). Flockhart (2010) for example, identifies several different 'Others', which have emerged through the history of Europeanization; the geographical 'Other' (Africa and the Orient), the religious 'Other' (Islam), and the civilizational 'Other' (inferior savages). He argues that "just as the introduction of a long term historical perspective revealed that the 'historical content' of Europeanization has changed fundamentally on different occasions, the use of SIT clearly reveals that Europe's 'Other' and 'Significant We' have also changed on several occasions." (Flockhart, 2010, p.797). In other words, while the process of differentiating self from other has remained continuous over time, the meaning given to these two categories, and the valued dimension on which European distinctiveness and superiority has been maintained, has differed and changed over time. Drawing the link between a European community and the emergence of the European Union, it could be argued that, while a European identity extends beyond the context of the EU, the EU has functioned as an entrepreneur of identity, closely aligning the values of a European identity with the politicization of those values as part of an EU agenda.

Consequently, it is the leaders of this agenda who have managed to shape the prototypicality of what it means to be European, with EU members seen as closer to that prototype than non-member states. This argument can be by supported by the fact that candidate nations are expected to conform to the basic norms outlined in the *Charter of Paris for a New Europe* (1990) and *Copenhagen Criteria* (1993), documents that emphasize the importance of liberal democracy, rule of law, human rights and peace, all dimensions which are seen as stable in Western countries (Flockhart, 2010). Considering this, we can potentially extend the work of Billig (1995) on banal nationalism to consider the idea of 'banal supranationalism'. Namely, whereas Billig argues that banal nationalism functions to cover the ideological habits

which enable established nations, such as those in the West, to appear natural and invisible, so we could argue that those countries driving supranational integration are also those who have the power to construct 'their' values as universal and the only, possible and natural way of existing. In other words, what it means to be part of a supranational group is not only reproduced and constructed on an elite level, but perhaps more importantly on an everyday level, in the 'invisible' actions and practices which come to shape what it means to be 'European'. If we follow this kind of logic, we must ask what the implications of this are for those countries that have found themselves categorized as 'Other' in European history.

For countries like Turkey, it could be argued that its slow integration process and bleak prospective of future membership is due to it being a religious 'Other' and incompatible with a predominantly Christian Europe. In the words of SIT, Turkey would thus pose a threat to the positive distinctiveness of a European identity, potentially undermining it. Attitude surveys such as the Eurobarometer support this argument, finding that some countries are seen as more favorable prospective members of the EU than others, with Turkey at the bottom of this list, a finding that cannot be explain solely by economic and political factors (Gerhards & Hans, 2011). For countries such as Serbia, which have a history of 'inbetweenness' in regards to a European 'Self' and 'Other', this question becomes harder to answer.

A glance at Serbian history, as presented in Chapter 1, shows a past filled with conflict, instability, supranational unification in Yugoslavia and its ultimate disintegration (Anzulovic, 1999; Ćirković, 2004; Cohen, 1996; Judah, 2009; Pavlowitch, 2002). An important element that has emerged from this history, is a sort of identity 'inbetweenness' (Russell-Omaljev, 2016; Todorova, 1996; Živković, 2011), which refers to a Serbian identity built on both Eastern and Western influences, combining tradition and modernity, communism and capitalism, religious similarity to 'Europe' yet also difference (as Orthodox with Ottoman influences) and political allegiance to both Russia and the EU. This inbetweenness has also been found in discourses about Serbia outside of Serbia, particularly coming to a peak during the 1990s and the Yugoslav war, when much media portrayal of Serbia tended to be negative. As Todorova (1997) and others have argued, "all Balkan nations are intensely conscious of their outside image." (p. 60). In Serbia, in particular, this outside image became increasingly stigmatizing after the Yugoslav war, leading to perceptions of Serbia as being unjustly 'vilified' internationally (David, 2014; Subotic,

2011). Yet since the 2000s, the political goal in Serbia has been to "reintegrate into the international community" and "make up for lost times" (see Chapter 5). This discourse of re-aligning Serbia with European values and norms speaks to the perceived importance of not only politically join the EU, but also psychosocially by constructing a sense of compatibility and belonging. Yet, as mentioned previously, identification is not a one-way process, but a joint negotiation between self and other. Therefore, it becomes important to consider *being identified* as playing a crucial role in the process of identification with a supranational identity.

## 2.6. Meta-Representations and Identity Negotiation

Meta-representations are an essential part of identity construction and negotiation as they becomes part of one of the two simultaneous processes at play; self-identifying and *being identified* (Duveen, 2001; Mead, 1934). Elcheroth & Reicher (2017) explain that "who we are, what we think and what we do is as much a matter of what we think others are thinking of what we think ourselves, and also of what we think others will allow us to do." (p. vii). However, as the literature on minority identities shows, these two processes do not always align in their representational work (Howarth, 2002). Knowledge that is considered in opposition to our own has been discussed in terms of 'alternative representations', meaning "the representations of other people's representations" (Gillespie, 2008, p.376). As we interact with others, there is an encounter between the knowledges we hold and, at times, an unwillingness to accept or acknowledge the representations held by others (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Frequently this unwillingness can manifest itself in discourse, where semantic barriers are put in place to discredit the knowledge of an 'other'. In doing so, the other becomes stigmatized and the representations they hold become foreign (Gillespie, 2008). Thus, in many social interactions, representations are denied social recognition and legitimacy.

The ability to reject alternative representations is closely linked to the power an individual (or group) holds as part of dominant social groups in society. As Duveen (2001) argues, identification is also a form of positioning which locates us in a complex hierarchy of social relations, with some identities positioned as higher than others. It is in contexts where individuals are positioned lower on the social hierarchy that representational and identity work becomes the most visible, as individuals are made aware of their 'inferiority' through interactions with others (Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson & Sammut, 2014). For these stigmatized groups, there is a painful

awareness of the negative representations attached to their ingroups, and the maintenance of a positive sense of self becomes increasingly challenging (Howarth, 2002). However, it is here that we see the true uniqueness of humans' in their capabilities to re-present, re-create and resist representations of their selves, thereby re-constructing social reality to fit their needs. In some context, this becomes a collective effort, and identities become mobilized and politicized for purposes of social change (Klandermans, 2014).

In this PhD, I take this theoretical conceptualization one step further, to consider how recognition becomes part of shaping identity on a macro-level. More specifically, in the context of this PhD, I consider what the prototypicality of a European identity is, and what the socio-psychological and political consequences are of perceived low-prototypicality in a superordinate context. It is here that a contextualized approach to supranational identity becomes crucial, as in contexts of politics "superordinate identities cannot be divorced from the political settings and objectives within given contexts." (Moss, 2017, p.14). In other words, we focus here not only on resistance as an outcome of stigmatized subgroup identities (national identities) but also on the role of social perceptions of recognition in providing either a bridge or a barrier to dual identification. This is something we frequently see in qualitative research where individuals who identify with two groups (i.e., Muslim and British) are forced to renegotiate a distinct way in which these can co-exist, a process brought on by the initial lack of recognition of the two identities as compatible (Hopkins, 2011). As Fleischmann and Phalet (2016) argue, this lack of compatibility is "limited by exclusionist majority definitions of national belonging and by the lack of public recognition of these multiple identities." (p. 450). Similarly, if exclusionist definitions of supranational belonging are constructed by entrepreneurs of a European identity, how does this influence identification and consequently willingness to be part of a supranational group such as the EU?

## 2.7. Conclusion: A Self-Other Framework of Supranational Identity

By conceptualizing identities as in a constant state of 'becoming' (Hall, 1997), we must acknowledge a few key tenants; 1) self-other relations are inseparable in the process of identity construction and negotiation, whether this occurs in micro-level or macro-level contexts, 2) identification as a process therefore entails a continuous dialogue (real or imagined) between self and other, where the mere perceived ideas

and thoughts of others (meta-representations) are consequential in providing either a recognition or lack thereof, of individual belonging to chosen superordinate groups, 3) the everyday lived experiences of individuals become crucial in managing these self-other relations as well as reproducing national identity and the development of a supranational belonging, and lastly, 4) perceived collective continuity, or in the context of national identities, historical continuity, becomes a source through which meaning is given to social groups, linking their past with the present. To return back to Emerson's quote from the beginning of this chapter, we have to ask whether this definition of a nation (and subsequently 'social group' by Tajfel) needs revising. Namely, if "the simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation" then what happens if a body of people who feel part of a nation (or supranational group) do not equally recognize each other as such?

### 2.8. Research Questions

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the socio-political and historical context of Serbia and its relations to the EU, showing that this relationship has been complicated by events of the past. The seeming incompatibilities between Serbia and the EU, and the belief that Serbian identity has developed in isolation from its larger European context becomes important to understand when exploring this seemingly political phenomenon. The present chapter (2) has explored the social psychological literature on history, identity, group dynamics and processes of meaning-making to offer some theoretical insights into the relationship between the nation and the supranational group. Introducing a framework that situates self-other dynamics across time at the heart of the Social Representations Approach, I considered how processes of meaning-making in times of change are situated in larger discourses on history, nationhood and politics.

As a whole, this thesis will focuses on how political projects become constructed in both elite and everyday contexts, exploring how historical continuity, shapes these discourses. As has been discussed above, tensions between continuity and change, unification and diversification, and the past and the future are inherently part of any social psychological process, especially when the outcomes have real-world and political consequences. To explore this in more detail, the present thesis is guided by the following questions, first outlined in section 1.1 (page 16);

1) *What role do social representations of history play in how citizens make sense of present socio-political change, and what are the implications of this for how they represent the future?(Chapter 4)*

2) *How is a sense of compatibility between Serbian identity and EU belonging constructed by entrepreneurs of identity to either promote or resist change? Which discursive strategies have become the most successful within political discourses? (Chapter 5)*

3) *What are the lay understandings of supranational integration in the context of Serbia joining the EU, and how do these relate to identity and intergroup threat? (Chapter 6, Study 1)*

4) *What is the underlying role of power dynamics in shaping 1) fears of the undermining of Serbian identity by EU accession, 2) perceptions of prototypicality of the category 'European', and 3) the perceived compatibility of national and supranational identification? What are the consequences of these processes for attitudes in favour of EU accession? (Chapter 6, Study 2)*

5) *How is the desire for collective continuity reconciled with a stigmatizing past? (Chapter 7)*

The methodological design of the project is outlined in Chapter 3, discussing the benefits of using a mixed-methods approach to exploring political phenomena. Then we turn to the empirical papers that address specific research questions. Chapter 4 addresses the public perceptions of Serbia's EU integration processes, discussing how the past and the future are drawn on to support political arguments. By repeated focus groups in five cities in Serbia, this data provides a rich understanding of the interplay between history, identity, and continuity and change in shaping how the EU is constructed in the public sphere and how this in turn influences political attitudes. Chapter 5 details how Serbia's relationship with the EU has been managed through political discourse, exploring how changes in political agendas have shaped discourses on identity and continuity. Chapter 6 uses a mixed-methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative data to develop further a novel approach towards exploring the conditions under which identification with one's national and supranational groups become either compatible or incompatible, particularly focusing on the role of recognition in providing either a bridge or a barrier towards inclusion. Chapter 7 ties the previous three empirical chapters together through a discursive analysis of how

collective continuity becomes embeddes within self-other relations, and in turn the consequences of this for whether continuity becomes enhancing or undermining of national identity. Lastly, chapter 8 concludes the PhD by outlining the contributions of this research, both empirically and theoretically, providing an innovative theoretical argument for the importance of 'insecure' social categories and the implications this has for identity continuity, but also attitudes towards change.

# Chapter 3: Methodological Design[2]

This chapter outlines the rationale of the methodological framework of this PhD. The emphasis on exploring and connecting the micro-level processes of meaning-making and belonging with macro-level political phenomena demands a methodological approach that emphasizes both the range and diversity of the issue but also its depth and specificity. To tackle this, a mixed-methods approach was deemed most suitable, which is discussed after an overview of the research design has been outlined.

## 3.1 Research Design

Serbia was chosen as the empirical setting for this project because it is in a process of change – which has clear political and psychological dimensions. It has been working towards becoming a member of the EU for over the last 15 years. In addition to this, and as discussed in chapter 1, it provides a rich example of a nation striving towards a future which continues to clash with important markers and symbols of the nation's past (e.g., Kosovo). Thus, the clash between the past and the future as it occurs in the present makes Serbia an ideal context in which to explore the role of history and identity in shaping meanings of socio-political change and their compatibility with the image of the nation. The questions guiding this research project are summarize in the table below. A mixed methods design was considered most appropriate for this project in order to comprehensively explore both the representations of everyday citizens (Chapter 4) and elites (Chapter 5), as well as the extent to which these are part of a larger populations perception of Serbia's relations with the EU (Chapter 6). This enabled both depth and breadth of analysis.

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[2] Because of the nature of the format of this thesis (paper-based) empirical chapters are stand-alone, which means that the following methodology chapter will include a high degree of repetition. However, the chapter allows for a deeper insight into the methodological procedures than the empirical chapters themselves could offer.

**Table 3.1** *Research Design*

| Research Question | Method | Analysis | Paper |
|---|---|---|---|
| *What role do social representations of history play in how citizens make sense of present socio-political change, and what are the implications of this for how they represent the future?* | 12 Focus Groups (4 groups over 3 time-series; N =32) | Thematic Analysis | *Published in Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science (2018)* |
| *How is a sense of compatibility between Serbian identity and EU belonging constructed by entrepreneurs of identity to either promote or resist change? - Which discursive strategies have become the most successful within political discourses?* | Survey (N= 467)  17 political speeches | Critical Discourse Analysis | *Published in European Journal of Social Psychology (2017)* |
| *What are the lay understandings of supranational integration in the context of Serbia joining the EU, and how do these relate to identity and intergroup threat?*  *What is the underlying role of power dynamics in shaping a) fears of the undermining of Serbian identity by EU accession, b) perceptions of prototypicality of the category 'European', and c) the perceived compatibility of national and supranational identification? - What are the consequences of these processes for attitudes in favour of EU accession?* | 9 Focus Groups (N=67)   Survey data (N=1192) | Thematic Analysis   Correlational analyses; moderation & mediation analyses (Hayes, 2018) | *In preparation (Intended submission, 2018)* |

### 3.1.1 Mixed-Methods Design

The research design of this PhD included both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the overall research question. A mixed-methods design for the thesis, and requires a brief overview of both qualitative and quantitative methods making the differences necessarily over-stated, before moving on to discussing their relationship within a mixed-methods design project.

Qualitative research refers to approaches that analyse so-called 'naturally occuring' data, such as words, interactions or visuals. It has its philosophical roots in the naturalistic philosophies, challenging the idea of 'objective' knowledge and instead emphasizing a perspective on knowledge and reality that is constructivist, mediated by the socio-cultural experiences and contexts in which we develop and live. The methods

range from ethnographic fieldwork, to structured or semi-structured interviews and morerecently, various forms of micro-linguistic analysis (i.e., conversation analysis) as well as grounded theory and feminist methodology (Todd, Nerlich, McKeown & Clarke, 2004, p. 3). Qualitative data is rich, detailed and context-dependent, and becomes appropriate for research aiming to give voice to underrepresented populations within the research literature, to address contradictory research findings or literatures, and to shed light and understanding on phenomena in less explored contexts (Creswell, 2014).

Quantitative research, in turn, is rooted in a 'positivist' approach which dominates much of psychology, albeit a less so social psychology. The positivist approach often assumes a common objective reality across individuals, groups and societies, which can be discovered through rigorous testing of theories. The approach, unlike qualitative methods, is predominantly deductive. Quantitative methods tend to used controlled environments (lab experiments) and precise measures to ensure the most accurate possible observations of a phenomenon are reached, and to limit the 'noise' of the social world. Quantitative methods focus on determining the relationship between two variables within a population, and can either be designed to be descriptive, establishing associations, or experimental, establishing causality. Popular types of quantitative research methods include surveys and experiments (both quasi-experiments and 'true' experiments).

While there are many differences between the two, there are also several important similarities, which make mixed-methods research appear less contradictory and more complementary (see Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Firstly, both methods use empirical observations to address their research questions. Whether it is the use of interviews or experiments, all research in the social sciences draws on some form of observable behaviour. Secondly, both methods have measures in place which function to address and restrict confirmation bias and other forms of invalidity. Within qualitative research, the transparency regarding sampling, researcher subjectivities, the presentation of larger parts of qualitative data in reports on findings, members check, data triangulation and respondent validation are some of the important ways in which the credibility and reliability of qualitative data is reported. In turn, in quantitative research, measures are put in place to test the reliability of measures used (i.e., test-retest, inter-rate reliability and Cronbach's alpha), the validity of a research design

(i.e., pilot testing), and the generalizability of the instruments and findings (i.e., through the use of a different sample or replication).

Mixed methods research (MMR) is often utilized by researchers who see the merits of both qualitative and quantitative research, and consider a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide additional insights which could not have been gained from either method individually (Tashakorri & Teddlie, 2009). While not dismissing the uniqueness of each method or their philosophical roots, MMR instead takes a pragmatic approach towards science. MMR advocates a 'compatibility' thesis and discusses methods and paradigms through their placement on a continuum, rather than as sets of dichotomies (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This approach emphasizes 'methodological eclecticism', which sees qualitative and quantitative methods as equally valuable but suitable of different types of research questions and purposes (Todd et al., 2004). The emphasis here is on allowing the research question to guide which method is most suitable for how to answer the question. Namely, the 'what' should preceed the 'how'. An additional benefit to MMR is the ability for researchers to draw on the strengths of different methods while addressing their weaknesses through complimentary methods. For example, whereas quantitative research is often criticized for imposing categories on participants which might not reflect the local meanings of those same categories, the use of qualitative methods to complement this weakness can allow for the meaning of various concepts to be more fully understood, and potentially improved. If the goal of research within the social sciences, and social psychology in particular, is to understand, address and provide solutions for social problems then the use of a pragmatic approach towards the study of social phenomena must be given preference. In doing so, we break free from the constraints of methodological paradigms and open up an avenue for methodological creativity and the improvement of methods in the social sciences.

Considering the above, the adoption of a mixed methods approach within psychology is significantly underdeveloped compared to other social science disciplines (Alsie & Teddlie, 2010; Roberts & Pove, 2014). Alise and Teddlie (2010) show that the proportion of MMR publications in 'pure' social sciences (such as psychology) is two to three times *lower* than in applied social sciences. Despite this lack of progress towards MMR within psychology, this PhD is an attempt to move away from this perspective of incompatibilities to acknowledge the role of methodological and pragmatic pluralism in answering complex, socio-political

questions. As such, due to the prevalence of qualitative methods within the thesis, there is an underlying social constructivist tone to much to the thesis, yet this can be seen as a reflection of the pragmatist approach of mixed-methods research, where the starting-point of this PhD has focused on shedding light on EU integration in an underexplored context such as Serbia, to moving towards exploring how meaning-making has consequences for identification and political attitudes in that particular context. The below sections outline the methods of each study in detail.

## 3.2. Study I: Iterative Focus Groups

**Research Question***: How is continuity managed by citizens in contexts of socio-political change? What role do social representations of history play in maintaining ingroup continuity?*

The first study conducted for the research project was intended as a longitudinal qualitative project with data collection occurring in three separate phases with the same participants over a one-year time frame. However, as one group of participants could not continue beyond the first interview it was decided to instead split the study into two data-sets; 1) a data-set including iterative focus groups with the same 4 core-groups over a year's time (Chapter 4), and 2) a data-set included 9 different focus groups with the same topic-guide in 7 different cities (Chapter 6, alongside quantitative data). The overlap between the data sets occurred in the initial 4 focus groups of both studies.

Both studies intended to explore the ways in which everyday people discuss Serbia's EU integration, national politics and expectations for the future, with the former focusing on gaining in-depth insights and exploring regional (north/south) differences, and the latter focusing on gaining a broader spectrum of views by interviewing people in more cities.

### 3.2.1. Rationale for focus groups

While most scholars within social and political psychology would recognize that concepts such as identity are complex, dynamic and situated in larger socio-historical and political contexts, less progress has been made in the development, and utilization, of methods to reflect this (Condor, 2011). Thus, in order to emphasize the social nature of meaning-making and to allow for a method that would accommodate the

exploratory nature of this study, it was considered most productive to use a qualitative methodology (Krueger, 1988). More specifically, as the Social Representations Approach emphasizes the social dimensions of knowledge, research on social representations is best explored within contexts of communication and interaction. It was therefore decided that focus groups would serve as the most suitable site through which to explore and develop a nuanced analysis of public understandings of identity, history and political change. Power, Single and Lloyd (1996) define a focus group as "a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research." (p. 499). Thus, a focus group is similar to everyday conversations as it places social interaction in the construction and contestations of social meanings at the core (Markova, Linell, Grossen & Orvig, 2007; Howarth, 2002).

Besides being a suitable method for the exploration of social representations and social identities, focus groups further entail a space where knowledge can be debated, resisted and even renegotiated. As Howarth (2002) argues, within this kind of setting, "conflict and differences of opinion within the group force[s] participants to clarify their position, expose their attachment to particular representations, and admit weaknesses in their own position." (p.3). In contexts of contested socio-political change, the importance of understanding the nuances and tensions that arise for citizens becomes crucial in exploring the ways in which psychology, history and politics intersect in everyday life.

While both data sets within the present and third study (chapter 6) drew on focus group data, the corpus construction, procedure and analysis differed slightly for each, and will therefore be discussed separately (for second focus group data-set, see section 3.4.1 in this chapter and empirical chapter 6).

### 3.2.2. Rationale behind separate time-frame analysis

At the beginning of this PhD, the idea of longitudinal qualitative data collection was entertained as a possible way of methodologically incorporating time into the project. The centrality of understanding the intersections of history, psychology and politics placed time at the center of the PhD through the focus on processes, such as identification, as constantly in state of 'becoming' rather than 'being'. Therefore it was considered important to incorporate this aspect methodologically as well. We developed a study design that entailed repeat group interviews with the same

participants over a one-year time frame, which would allow the data collection to be iterative and situated within current events taking place at the time. While the initial hope was to be able to track changes in opinions and attitudes over time, it became clear as the time passed that not much changed in the more 'core' arguments of participants, while perhaps the references they drew on became more localized in current events that were salient in their frame of reference. This realization provided support for the importance of understanding that, while context matters, many identities and attitudes which are strongly held and internalized, will continue to be manifested in a similar manner across time (see Huddy, 2001).

Therefore, the six-month periods planned as points for track changing representations and identities, were simply not long enough to document significant changes. Instead, the iterative focus group design was seen as providing another opportunity related to temporality, which was to focus on going in-depth into specific topics and unpacking them over several sessions with the same group. Thus, while the starting-point for this study was one where time was methodologically central, it progressed into a project where time became theoretically significant instead, with an emphasis on how participants drew temporal links between the past, present and future, but also how they saw their identities, cultures and national narratives as continuous and stable over time.

### 3.2.3 Corpus Construction

As the aim of this study was to explore the ways in which lay representations of history became part of understanding the present and (a potentially different) future, this type of question was best explored "in the in-between space we create in dialogue and negotiation with others" (Howarth, 2006, p.68). Considering this, focus groups, rather than one-on-one interviews, were seen as more comparable to ordinary talk (Marková, 2007). A focus group can be defined as "a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research." (Powell, Single & Lloyd, 1996, p.499). The use of focus groups is ideal at the preliminary or exploratory stages of a study and can help to generate hypotheses and develop questions for surveys (see Chapter 6 methodology for an example).

With this in mind, 12 focus groups (FGs) were conducted between April 2015 and April 2016 in four cities in Serbia, two in the North and two in the South of the

country. While we did conduct 12 focus groups, we did so by meeting the same 4 groups (one from each city) at three different time-points (April 2015, September 2015 and April 2016). The rationale behind this design was that we wanted to go in-depth into the tensions that arose within the initial session, thereby allowing the second and third sessions to function as spaces to explore any unresolved or conflicting perspectives that emerged in the original focus group.  Furthermore, the selection of cities in the north and south reflected an interest in exploring the importance of physical proximity to Kosovo in shaping opinions, and understandings, of the importance of the region for Serbian identity, and subsequently collective continuity in the future. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee at the Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science, at the LSE.

32 individuals participated in this study, 11 of which were female and 22 male (see table 3.2 for demographics). Participants ranged in age from 19 to 55, with median age 31 (at time of first focus group). A central question when designing the interviews was whether to choose homogenous (according to some 'a prior' criteria) or heterogeneous groups. To allow for diversity in opinions and experiences to become part of the group dynamics, heterogeneous groups were chosen, and participants were recruited via snowballing, while ensuring that within each group one person knew at least another person, but that not all participants knew each other prior to the session.

Due to the nature of the study design, with time-series focus groups, many participants were recruited for the first session but on average 2 participants were missing from each focus group at the second and third sessions. Each group was composed of 4-9 participants with no invited participants dropping out; instead, in some instances certain individuals brought a friend, co-worker or family member (particularly if they did not know any of the prior invited participants). In order to maintain a good rapport with the participants, these additional individuals were included as well. All focus groups took place in 'natural' settings such as cafes, participants' homes or reserved rooms in local libraries.

**Table 3.2** *Participant Demographics for Study I*

| Participant | Gender | Age | Occupation | City |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | Male | 55 | Business owner | Belgrade |
| 2 | Female | 28 | Student (PhD) | Belgrade |

| 3 | Male | 27 | Insurance Agent | Belgrade |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Female | 28 | NGO Employee | Belgrade |
| 5 | Male | 25 | Engineer | Belgrade |
| 6 | Male | 29 | Student | Belgrade |
| 7 | Male | 26 | Engineer | Belgrade |
| 8 | Male | 27 | Journalist | Belgrade |
| 9 | Male | 28 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 10 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 11 | Female | 27 | Retail Worker | Niš |
| 12 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 13 | Female | 27 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 14 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 15 | Male | 28 | Electrical Engineer | Niš |
| 16 | Male | 26 | Medical Technician | Niš |
| 17 | Female | 50 | Office clerk | Niš |
| 18 | Male | 31 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 19 | Female | 35 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 20 | Male | 31 | Accountant | Novi Sad |
| 21 | Male | 31 | Taxi Driver | Novi Sad |
| 22 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Novi Sad |
| 23 | Male | 28 | Lawyer | Novi Sad |
| 24 | Male | 34 | Waiter | Novi Sad |
| 25 | Male | 30 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 26 | Female | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 27 | Male | 36 | Unemployed | Vranje |
| 28 | Male | 57 | Self-employed farmer | Vranje |
| 29 | Female | 55 | Casino Employee | Vranje |
| 30 | Male | 47 | Lawyer | Vranje |
| 31 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 32 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |

### 3.2.4. Procedure

Within each group participants were given an information sheet (which explained the aims of the study) and a consent form to sign at the start (see appendix 1). Also, to ensure confidentiality (and address any concerns about anonymity) participants were

asked to provide their name, age and occupation to the group prior to the audio recording commenced and these were saved in collected field notes. The topic guides for each three sessions followed the same format, including six questions covering themes of history, politics and identity (see appendix 2). After conducting the first round of focus groups (April 2015), any remaining issues, tensions or points of debate for each question were used to inform the topic guide for the second session, thereby allowing the data collection to be an iterative process where I was able to go back to the participants to gain further insight on key tensions that arose. This design proved invaluable in providing an opportunity to probe unanswered questions and validate the preliminary reading of the previous focus group.

### 3.2.5. Analysis

All Focus groups were conducted (and subsequently analysed) in Serbian. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim after the final round of focus groups and a thematic analysis was conducted following the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).  Thematic analysis is an analytical process where "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p.258) allows for a form of pattern recognition within the data, where codes become themes and themes higher-order organizing themes. The use of thematic analysis for this study was deemed suitable as the research question was mainly exploratory and focused on meaning-making in the context of political change, and the analytical approach allowed for flexibility, while also being free from a dominant theoretical or epistemological stance, making it applicable in relation to various theoretical approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All transcripts were coded using NVivo 11, a qualitative data software program. The coding process utilized for this study followed a data-drive inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998).

The first stage of analysis included a familiarization with the data, which was gained from doing the transcription myself rather than outsourcing it. The second stage focused on actually coding the data within NVivo, by reading one transcript at a time and coding segment of text and generating initial codes. From this step, codes were brought together under a particular theme, and the data was then read within the theme to make sure all coded segments were an appropriate fit. This in turned entailed an iterative process of revising and refining themes before finally developing the organizing themes that collated basic themes into one larger, topic. Figure 3.1

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illustrates the thematic mapping developed from the analysis (for a detailed overview of the themes, see appendix 3).



**Myth of Origin**
1. Narrating the battle of Kosovo
2. Political Reality of Kosovo
3. Symbolic Meaning of Kosovo
(4. Tension: De Jure vs. De Facto Status of Kosovo)

Managing change and continuity

**People and Politicians**
1. Politicians as immoral
2. Citizens as representing 'real' Serbian values
3. Institutional Censorship
4. People lack agency in politics
5. Lack of normalcy
6. Negative stigma of 'Serbs'
( 7. Tension: People or System source of stigma and blame?)

**The Nation and Europe**
1. Cultural mismatch with dominant EU culture
2. Loss of sovereingty / powerlessness in EU
3. Positive civic changes as part of EU
4. Questioning idea of EU membership as progress
5. EU as historically against Serbia
(6. Tension: Integration without losing Independence)

*Figure 3.1: Thematic Mapping for Study I*

### 3.2.6. Limitations to focus group studies

While focus groups are useful for eliciting several perspectives on the same topic and allowing for interaction, discussion, contestation and clarification in relation to important societal issues, there are limitations to this method. Firstly, and perhaps most evident, is the lack of generalizability from the limited sample size. Secondly, within a group setting, the researcher (as a moderator) is faced with the challenge of balancing his/her position as an objective researcher and the urge (or request) to share personal opinions and perspectives. In this sense, the impact of the researcher is important to acknowledge (see section 3.5). Third, the researcher has less control of the data (Morgan, 1988), because despite the researcher defining the set of questions that are introduced to the group, it is hard to control the interaction between participants without disrupting the 'everyday dialogue' atmosphere which one aims for. Fourth, purely practically focus group can be difficult to organize, particularly when

accommodating the time limits of several different individuals. As was experienced with this study, the inability of a group to continue their participation in a second and third round inevitably lead to a redesign of the project and a split of the data into two different studies. Lastly, in contexts where topics of conversation are controversial, interviews might prove more suitable. However, because of the potential sensitive (or contested) nature of certain topics, participants who knew each other (either as family-members, relatives, colleagues or friends) were recruited to be part of the same focus group. In some contexts where 'strangers' were present, it was ensured that at least one other person in the group was acquainted with another individual, to ensure that no one was left completely unfamiliar with the faces (and voices) within the group. This, as Howarth (2002) argues "made it possible for controversial, and sometimes personally upsetting, topics to be discussed with both empathy and respect" (p.3). In conclusion, despite these limitations, the exploratory nature of study one and its crucial role in informing the third study highlights the added benefits of a mixed-methods approach in allowing for qualitative research to inform quantitative tools and measurements (i.e., Hughes & DuMont, 2005; Kelly, Njuki, Lane & McKinley, 2005).

### 3.3. Study II: Political Discourse

**Research Question***: How is a sense of compatibility between Serbian identity and EU belonging constructed by entrepreneurs of identity to either promote or resist change? Which discursive strategies have become the most successful within political discourses?*

While the first study intended to explore lay representations of national identity, history and political change, the second study of the PhD aimed at analysing political discourses of history and identity, and how these intertwined in discussions on the socio-political changes (and potential future) of Serbia as it works towards EU accession.

In the early 1990s, the political goal of Serbia was to build an independent but victimized image of a nation that had been treated wrongly by the world, with the EU being one of its scapegoats (MacDonald, 2002; Ramet, 2007; Subotic, 2011). For the past 15 years however, the political goal has shifted to integrating Serbia into a European community, epitomized in the idea of membership in the European Union. The second study conducted as part of this research was an exploration into the ways

in which politicans in Serbia have acted as entrepreneurs of identity over the past two decades to promote change as aligned with, and supportive of, a collective past and identity. In particular, the focus was on exploring how political change has been constructed in relation to national identity over time, examining how these discourses have shaped (and at times constrained) the ways in which politicians have discussed EU membership. This section will first outline the rationale for using political speeches to inform the research questions, then the sampling procedure will be explained followed by a description of the procedure taken during data collection. Lastly, the analytic procedure discusses how the data was processed using a particular version of critical discourse analysis which places emphasis on the historical context of speech and text.

### 3.3.1 Rational for political speeches

Much literature on the construction of national identity and the ways in which it becomes a mobilizing tool for pursuing political agendas acknowledges the role that politicians (or community leaders, elites and activists) play in this process. Considering this, there were two primary reasons for using political speeches within this PhD; firstly as it is a common method used in political science to explore political 'rhetoric' (Finlayson, 2014; Frank, 2011; Nelson, 1998) but also social psychology when exploring how politicians mobilize support for political agendas or legitimize the status-quo (Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Gleibs, Hendricks, & Kurz, 2017; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), and secondly because political speeches are a form of political communication intended to influence and persuade the public and is a rich source of data for exploring how socio-political change is managed top-down in a particular context.

As discussed in chapter two, politicians can act as entrepreneurs of identity, engaging in an active process of constructing themselves as the prototype of an ingroup, while also shaping the meaning, and boundaries of who is included. In doing so, politicians attempt to position themselves as the most representative of a group's values and goals in the hopes of gaining social and political power to shape the group's future (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Therefore, drawing on political speeches in this part of the PhD allowed for an exploration into how elite discourses around socio-political change have been constructed over time in Serbia, particularly considering how and why, certain political agendas were more successful than others.

As Gibson (2012) argues, "[i]f we are to take seriously the discursive elements of social representations of history, we need an approach which places actual instances of people representing history at centre stage" (p.13.5). In other words, an analysis of political speeches using a discursive approach enables us to unpack history 'in the making' by highlighting the discursive tools which allowed for socio-political change to become successfully accepted within a larger public sphere. Similar to Augustinos & De Garis (2012) the rationale behind the use of political speeches was to "build on previous work that emphasizes the need to examine social identities as categories of social practice that are constructed and mobilized by social actors themselves rather than treating them as analysts' categories." (p.267).

### 3.3.2 Sampling

Due to the centrality of continuity and change over time in this research project it was crucial to collect speeches over a significant time frame to explore the ways in which national identity has been constructed in historical turning points, and the implications this has for the politics, and future, of the nation. In order to first determine which events in Serbia's recent history were deemed memorable by the public, a survey was constructed and administered online. The survey included 20 event from 1989-2014 (see appendix 4) which were chosen after consultation with a historian, a political scientist and a lawyer on Serbia's recent history during a visit to Belgrade in February, 2015, as well as an examination of the literature on Serbia's recent political past (Damjanov, 2004; Pavlaković & Ramet, 2005; Živković, 2011). The survey was divided into two time-frames and participants were asked to rank the events in order of significance. The logic behind splitting up the time frame was to get an even distribution of political events over the past 25 years, particularly as the 1990s were a time of increased conflict and turbulence in Serbia as well as the region and so events from that time could potentially have been seen as more memorable (overall) than any events past 2000.

The survey (N=467) was administered through social media channels, probably limiting the generalizability of the results, although no demographic details were asked of participants so this is unclear. Nevertheless, the events that scored the highest in terms of significance seem to concur with the general literature on Serbia's political history (Damjanov, 2004; Ramet & Pavlaković, 2005; Živković, 2011) as well as political events brought up in a previous study exploring collective memory in Serbia

(Obradović, 2016). From the survey, the five highest ranked events of each time frame were chosen to inform the corpus for speech collection. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the results of the survey as represented in a historical timeline.
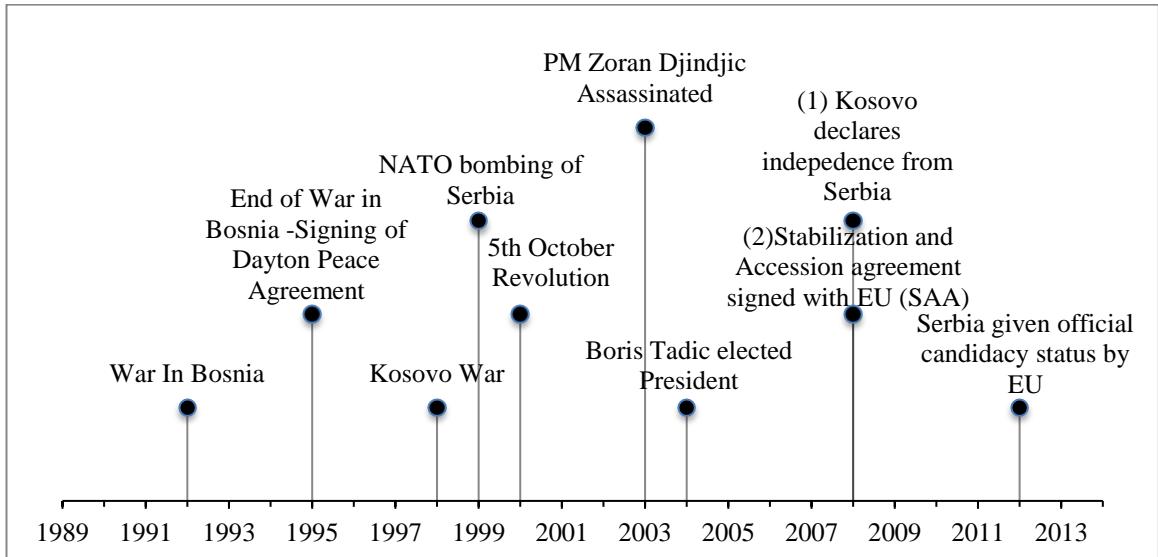


*Figure 3.2: Historical Timeline of Political Events*

From these 10 events, two speeches were chosen from each event. The sampling for speeches followed what we call 'oppositional sampling' where one speech was chosen to reflect the party in power and another to reflect the main opposition. Two additional criteria for the selection process included choosing speeches that addressed the domestic audience (i.e., public address, inauguration speech, pre-election speech) and took place on, or close to the original event from the survey.

### 3.3.3 Procedure

Speeches were sampled from political elites, by which we mean individual politicians who played a central role in shaping Serbian politics at the time of a specific event. Initially, an attempt was made to locate official archives in Belgrade, Serbia, where speeches might have been stored. However, after visiting and consulting an administrative manager of the National Assembly Library in Belgrade it became clear that official archives mainly existed for parliamentary speeches or proceedings, and I was advised to instead use books, internet archives or political party websites to locate speeches. For example, it took several weeks to get access to the presidential inauguration speech in 2004, and this was eventually accessed by contacting (and

visiting) a member of the official videography team of the ceremony, and gaining a copy from them. It was even more difficult locating speeches prior to 2000, as the 1990s were seen as a time of a nationalistic and xenophobic political climate in Serbia (Ramet, 2007), with limited official records of the political speeches that took place. Thus, the limited access to speeches made the sample non-exhaustive and rather selective.

Nevertheless, as the goal of the project was to offer an in-depth exploration into how national identity was constructed at key political moments, with a particular focus on the importance of managing continuity and change, the study made no direct claims about the generalizability of these themes. Instead, it was seen as a starting-point for exploring national identity in Serbia as it has developed top-down over time, as most studies have tended to focus on the construction of national identity in a specific time and context, without exploring the roots of these constructions or their further significance in the future.

Despite this focus, for some events (total of 3), due to the lack of access to speeches, it proved hard to find complete speeches to analyze, particularly in attempting to find speeches that reflected the party in opposition. In these specific cases, only one speech was used as it was considered important to have the whole speech, rather than selected parts of it, to be able to analyze the discourse in its entirety. As some speeches were located in video or audio format (rather than written text), these were subsequently transcribed verbatim using ExpressScribe before the analysis took place. Table 3.3 below describes the sample of speeches, including the name, political affiliation and position of speaker, as well as the particular domestic context of the speech.

**Table 3.3** *Political Speech Corpus*

| Event | Speaker | Political Position / Affiliation | Political Ideology | Speech Context |
|-------|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1992 | Vuk Drašković | Leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement. | Centre-right wing | St Vitus Day Assembly, Anti-Government protest rally, June 28th, 1992 |
| 1992 | Slobodan Milošević | President of Serbia, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left-wing | 2nd SPS Congress, Closing Statement October 23rd, 1992 |
| 1995 | Zoran Djindjić | President of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | '5 Years of the Democratic Party' Assembly, |

| | | | | 3rd March, 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | Slobodan Milošević | President of Serbia, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left-wing | Televised announcement following signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, 28th December, 1995 |
| 1998 | Mirko Marjanović | Prime Minister of Serbia, Member of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, left wing | Parliamentary address after Kosovo war started, 24th March, 1998 |
| 1998 | Zoran Djindjić | President of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Democratic Party Assembly, 17th July, 1998 |
| 1999 | Vojislav Koštunica | Leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia.[3] | Right-wing | Public announcement at beginning of NATO bombing, 24th March, 1999 |
| 1999 | Slobodan Milošević | President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left wing | Address to the nation at beginning of NATO bombing, 24th March, 1999 |
| 20000 | Slobodan Milošević | President of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until the 7th of October, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left wing | Public televised address to the nation before elections (which he lost), 2nd October, 2000 |
| 2000 | Vojislav Koštunica | President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after 7th October, Democratic Party of Serbia. | Right-wing | Address at meeting after (won) election, 5th October, 2000 |
| 2003 | Zoran Djindjić | Prime Minister of Serbia until death in 2003, Leader of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | 13th anniversary of the Democratic Party, 1st February, 2003 |
| 2003 | Natasa Micić | Acting President of Serbia, Member of the Civil Alliance of Serbia. | Centre | Public address after Zoran Djindjić's assassination, declaring state of emergency in Serbia, 12th March, 2003 |
| 2004 | Boris Tadić | President of Serbia, Newly elected Leader of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Televised inauguration ceremony, 11th July, 2004 |
| 2008 (1) | 1. Vojislav Koštunica | Prime Minister of Serbia, Democratic Party of Serbia. | Right-wing | Protest 'Kosovo is Serbia', 21st February, 2008 |
| 2008 (2) | Bozidar Đelić | Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Member of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Press Conference following SAA signing, 30th April, 2008 |
| 2008 (2) | Vojislav Koštunica | Prime Minister of Serbia, Democratic Party of Serbia. | Right-wing | General Election assembly, 26th June, 2008 |
| 2012 | 1. Boris Tadić | President of Serbia, Leader of the Democratic Party, | Centre, Centre-left wing | Press Conference following EU granting Serbia official candidate status, |

[3] The Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Serbia are two different political parties.

| | | | | 2nd March, 2012 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

### 3.3.4 Analysis

Taking a functional approach to language in context, the present paper draws on Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the Discourse-historical approach (DHA) developed by Wodak (1996; Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl & Leibhart, 2009), to explore the ways in which talk is used to construct political change as aligned with identity and continuity. The DHA is a development within the Critical Discourse Analysis literature which focuses specifically on integrating the historical context in which naturally occurring language takes place, thereby incorporating "a larger quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive 'events' are embedded" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 65). The DHA draws on insights from critical theory, argumentation theory, British discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis, German 'politicolinguistics' and Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics to focus on the interrelationship between discourse and practice as it occurs within particular socio-historical contexts (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001:, pp. 32–35). Studies utilizing the DHA have illustrated the subtle ways in which politicians draw on history, identity and the 'Other' as a threat to shape discourses around political issues such as war and immigration (Clary-Lemon, 2014; Graham, Keenan & Dowd, 2004). A key concept within CDA which becomes crucial in successfully applying this methodology to speeches (and their consequences for social action) is 'intertextuality'.

Intertextuality refers to the ways in which texts or discourses are linked to, or embedded in, other larger discourses. Coined in the late 1960s, the term refers to the ways in which "texts and utterances are shaped by prior texts that they are 'responding' to and subsequent texts that they 'anticipate'." (Fairclough, 1992, p.270). Intertextuality allows us to explore how texts, or discourses, build on the past but also shape it in the process. This becomes particularly significant when exploring how discourses change in relation to socio-political change.

A comprehensive guide to using the DHA can be found in Wodak et al.'s (2009) study of Austrian national identity. Within the book (pp.30-47), the authors distinguish between four closely interwoven dimensions of analysis which allow for triangulation; (1) identification of thematic content areas; (2) analysis of micro- and macro-level discourse strategies; (3) analysis of argumentation schemes, or topoi, as they relate to micro- and macro-level discourse strategies (i.e. topos of comparison;

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topos of threat); and (4) analysis of the linguistic means of realization of discourse strategies (i.e. the use of metaphor, rhetorical questions, referential vagueness) (pp. 30–47). Although both thematic content areas and the linguistic means of realization were explored in the analysis, the chapter itself focused on presenting the discursive strategies and argumentative schemes (topoi) used in the speeches, with reference to means of realization where appropriate (see appendix 10 for detail). Wodak et al., (2009) distinguish between five different discursive strategies (construction, perpetuation, justification, transformation and demontage/dismantling) frequently present in political speeches around nationhood. When exploring continuity and change, three strategies become particularly important; construction, perpetuation and justification. Strategies of construction attempt to establish a certain national identity by promoting unification within and differentiation from others, as well as identification and solidarity of the ingroup. Strategies of perpetuation function to maintain and reproduce pre-existing groups or images, while strategies of justification serve a similar function while frequently drawing on the legitimacy of past acts "which have been put into question" in order to restore a positive image of the nation (Wodak et al., 2009, p.33). Relating to these strategies are various topoi, "warrants which guarantee the transition from argument to conclusion." (Kienpointner, 2011, p.265). For example, the use of a topos of threat functions to justify the speaker's political agenda (argument) as one in defense of the nation (conclusion).

### 3.3.5 Limitations

As the study focused on a larger time frame for exploring representations of history and identity in relation to EU integration in Serbia, it is limited in its ability to cover recent developments in the process. Indeed, as the speeches were chosen based on a survey, it restricted the freedom to select discourses taking place around EU specific topics. Thus, although the EU was not a key foreign policy priority in Serbia until 2005 and onwards, it has however been a constant presence in the nation due to its involvement in the Kosovo conflict and Serbia's cooperation with the International Crime Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY). Furthermore, by extending the time-frame of speeches we were able to explore the ways in which discourses on EU integration in the second half of the sample became embedded in legitimized discourses developed in the first half of the sampled speeches. Future research on the role of political discourse on national identity, history and politics in Serbia should look at more recent developments in the EU

integration process in Serbia, exploring perhaps how different political parties construct discourses around membership and identity differently or how the EU itself has responded to and treated the Serbian integration process.

In addition, perhaps a more important limitation which also influenced the development of the former, was the lack of access to speeches, which might have biased the sampling procedure to those speeches which have had larger political and historical significance, and are thus more widely accessible online. While several avenues were explored in attempts to locate archives of speeches both within Belgrade, through searching Serbian books on the period of 1990-2010 (particularly political science books) and through searching political party websites, YouTube and other online platforms, it was nevertheless difficult to access a larger pool of representative speeches. Despite these difficulties, we attempted to at least partially deal with them by making sure that the initial sampling criteria were met, and thus that the speeches chosen addressed the public or were broadcasted on national television as they took place.

## 3.4. Study III: Mixed-methods Study

**Research Questions:** *Qualitative component: What are the lay understandings of supranational integration in the context of Serbia joining the EU, and how do these relate to identity and intergroup threat? Quantitative component: What is the underlying role of power dynamics in shaping a) fears of the undermining of Serbian identity by EU accession, b) perceptions of prototypicality of the category 'European', and c) the perceived compatibility of national and supranational identification? What are the consequences of these processes for attitudes in favour of EU accession?*

The final study composed of the two largest data sets of the PhD within a mixed-methods design known as sequential exploratory design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003). Data-collection is conducted in two phases, with qualitative data collection taking place first, followed by quantitative data. This design was considered suitable as it 1) allows researchers to determine the generalizability of a phenomenon within a selected population, and 2) it is useful when developing and testing a new instrument (Morse, 1991), such as the one developed and tested for meta-representations of prototypicality.

### 3.4.1. Methodology for Qualitative Component

A total of nine focus groups were conducted between in April 2015 (5) and April-May 2016 (4). Participants were recruited through snowballing. For each group, one initial participant was contacted via telephone and (if they accepted) served as the point of contact for that particular city, helping me to organize a setting in which to conduct the interview, but also gain access to other potential participants. These key participants were contacted several times prior to the focus group to establish a rapport. The rationale behind the sampling of these individuals was not to reach statistical representativeness or generalisability, but rather to explore the diversity in beliefs and opinions expressed by a larger pool of individuals (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, p.7).

67 individuals participated in this study (27 females and 40 males). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 57, with median age 34 (see table 3.4 for overview and appendix 5 for detailed demographics). All participants self-identified as ethnic Serbs; 58 were born in Serbia, with the exception of 9 participants (6 females, 3 males) who were Serbs born in Bosnia but later moved to Serbia either because of the war in the 1990s or for university/work. Occupations ranged from students to employees of public and private sector. Each group was composed of 5-9 participants with no invited participants dropping out; instead, in some instances certain individuals brought a friend, co-worker or family member. In order to maintain a good rapport with the participants, these additional participants were included as well. All focus groups took place in 'natural' settings such as cafes, participant's homes or reserved rooms in local libraries.

**Table 3.4** *Overview of Focus Group Demographics for Study III*

| FG (City) | Participants | Median Age |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Belgrade 1 | 8; 3 Female & 5 Male | 26.9 |
| Belgrade 2 | 9; 3 Female & 6 Male | 21.8 |
| Belgrade 3 | 6; 4 Female & 2 Male | 31.5 |
| Cacak | 7; 5 Female & 2 Male | 48.7 |
| Niš | 9; 5 Female & 4 Male | 28.4 |
| Novi Sad | 7; 1 Female & 6 Male | 31.1 |
| Paracin | 8; 1 Female & 7 Male | 30.5 |
| Surdulica | 5; 3 Female & 2 Male | 27.8 |
| Vranje | 8; 2 Female & 6 Male | 37.1 |

**3.4.1.1 Procedure**

Prior to the focus group, participants were given an information sheet (which explained the aims of the study) and a consent form to sign (see appendix 1). Also, to ensure confidentiality (and address any concerns about anonymity) participants were asked to provide their name, age and occupation to the group prior to the audio recording commenced and these were saved in collected field notes.

The same topic guide was used for all groups, with a total of six questions covering themes of Serbian politics in relation to the EU, what Serbia's future in the EU would look like, and the role of other EU countries in shaping the politics of the EU (see appendix 6). The topic guide was piloted on four individuals from Belgrade (capital of Serbia) two months prior to the first focus group, and minor changes were made to the wording of three questions based on their feedback.

All sessions were conducted (and subsequently analysed) in Serbian.Each focus group lasted between 21 minutes and 77 minutes (mean =61 minutes). In order to ensure participant confidentiality all names and identifiers were modified during transcription.

### 3.4.1.2 Analysis

The audio recorded focus groups were transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was conducted following the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). All transcripts were coded using NVivo 11. After coding five of the transcripts, a codebook was developed and applied to the remaining transcripts. The first round of coding led to 42 codes. These were then revisited, and some codes were removed (due to infrequency), or merged with similar codes after re-reading the coded sections. The final codebook included 38 codes, 10 basic themes and three organizing theme (see appendix 11). In order to ensure reliability, a sample of six translated pages were given to a fellow researcher, along with the codebook and code descriptors. Further, in order to ensure the language barrier in coding was overcome, the same sample of six pages were given to a Serbian researcher from Belgrade, along with the codebook and code descriptors. In the former case, intercoder reliability was 85% and in the latter 92%. After consulting the first inter-coder two codes were merged, one was renamed and three new codes were added. These in turn led to some minor revision to the thematic network, but no changes to the overall analytical narrative that was developed from the data.

### 3.4.2. Methodology for Quantitative Component

In order to explore the underlying processes which emerged in the discourse of the qualitative data above, I decided to construct an exploratory survey, particularly focusing on how issues of power related to social identity processes such as dual identification with a superordinate group and subsequent political attitudes towards prospective EU accession.

#### 3.4.2.1 Rationale for Survey

Much of this PhD up until this study took a qualitative approach to the research question, focusing on exploring the connections between history, psychology and politics more in-depth and within the context in which these individuals live and experience the tensions between continuity and change. While these studies have been invaluable in providing insights into the lay and elite understandings of supranational integration and how it intersects with questions of belonging, power relations and history, it was also considered important to attempt to operationalize some of these key issues and explore them more directly on a larger population.

#### 3.4.2.2. Participants

Participants were 1192 individuals living in Serbia who completed the survey online. Individuals interested in participating in the survey were invited to click on a link which would take them to the QUALTRICS platform. Participants were informed that the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous, and that the questions focused on exploring the attitudes of Serbian citizens towards current affairs in Serbia and Europe. My email was provided at the end of the survey for participants to contact me if they wished to do so.  29% (349) of participants self-identified as male and 58.6% (699) self-identified as female, with 144 not indicating their gender. Participants' age ranged from 18-79 years old; the median age was 37.

#### 3.4.2.3. Procedure and Measures

The survey was constructed with the help of Jennifer Sheehy-Skeffington (second PhD advisor) by discussing the findings of the qualitative study and developing testable measures of the processes visible in the qualitative data. The focus of the survey was on exploring variables that influenced identification with a supranational group and subsequently political attitudes towards it, however a series of measures were included

as potential confounding variables (i.e., 'personal control' and 'social dominance orientation'). Taking a relational approach to identity, the survey was constructed to explore not only self-expressions of identification and representativeness of a superordinate category, but also the role of what we think other's think (meta-representations), power-asymmetries and symbolic threats to identity.

Key measures included measures on national and European identification, taken from Cinnirella (1997), measures on prototypicality and meta-prototypicaltiy adapted from Devos and Banaji's (2005) study on the extent to which particular ethnic groups in America were more or less associated with the national category 'Amerian' and measures of future power(lessness) and identity undermining adapted from Sindic and Reicher's (2009) study on Scots' attitudes towards Britain. For a list of the all the measures and scales, see appendix 7 (English version of survey).

The survey was initially designed in English and two research assistants from the University of Belgrade, Serbia were recruited for the translation and back-translation of the items. After both version of the survey had been returned to the researcher, any discrepancies were discussed with a third bi-lingual research assistant. It became clear that it was important to manage the extent to which verbal and conceptual translation of the items was achieved. Once the survey had been properly translated it was preregistered on Aspredicted.org (REF: nr: 6039) and uploaded onto QUALTRICs. The order in which measures were completed was randomized, however open-ended questions were placed at the start and the demographics at the end. Before the survey was administered it was piloted by 8 individuals living in Serbia. Based on the pilot study, it was estimated that the survey would take about 10 minutes to fill in, and this was indicated when recruiting participants. After the pilot, minor spelling errors were corrected and mislabeled Likert-scale items were corrected as well. The final survey consisted of two open-ended question and 69 other items, including questions on national/supranational identification, power, subjective societal status, prototypicality and SDO and demographic questions.

Data collection took place from September to October 2017 and social media channels were used to recruit participants. Due to the limited access to the Serbian population via academic survey platforms such as MTurk, Prolific Academic and Crowdflower, and due to a limited budget to go for marketing companies to get participants, the survey was shared widely via social networks and social media channels in Serbia, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, organizational email lists

and university email lists. While this undoubtedly limited the access to participants of a wide range of socioeconomic and age class, the survey was not intended to be statistically representative of the Serbian population to begin with, and so this was not seen as a pressing concern for the research design.

*Analysis*

Before the survey could be analysed, the data had to be cleaned of incomplete responses. The final recorded number of surveys was 3249, however as there was an unexpected spike in responses during a particular day of data collection, I realized that several surveys were empty. In order to clean out the missing data, we relied on percentage completed and completion time to scan and delete empty surveys. Namely, the average time it took participants to complete the survey was 10 minutes and so any surveys completed in less than 120 seconds, and with less than 10% completed were selected. These (N=2057) were then carefully screened to see whether the respondent had filled in the open-ended questions or completed enough items within one measure for them to be considered useful. This however was not the case, and these were all deleted. The final survey included N = 1192 participants.

The analysis of the survey was divided into several different stages, the most important of which are discussed in chapter 6. Within this paragraph, I briefly cover only the preliminary stages that did not feature explicitly in the write-up of the findings. Firstly, items were reverse-coded where necessary to align all the items within a measure and to make sure that higher numbers indicated higher/stronger identification or attitudes, as well as more agreement if the question was a statement. Secondly, we explored the reliability of each scale by computing Cronbach's alphas for each scale. Scores ranged from .63 to .86, thus indicating good internal consistency, particularly for those measures used in the analysis. As most measures were taken from existing and verified scales, this was expected. As this was an exploratory survey we also ran principal component analyses (PCAs) to see whether the potentially overlapping measures (such as future-power or current power-measures) loaded on the same item. These analyses were satisfactory in indicating that the items were in line with the measures of the survey. Thus, the next stage focused on exploring the correlations between measures and testing the predictions that arose from the qualitative component of this study. This is outlined in detail in chapter 6, and will therefore not be covered here.

### 3.4.2.4. Limitations

Coming from a predominantly qualitative background in social and cultural psychology, I have always been aware of the many critiques of survey data, including that it is often de-contextualized, does not take into account the meaning individuals might give to a question when they answer it, and limits the responses of participants to pre-set categories constructed by the researcher. I attempted to keep all these things in mind while designing the survey, and considered the qualitative study informing the survey as a positive aspect in this regard. However, many of these concerns were also echoed in the emails that I received from participants, who had conducted the survey and felt certain phrasings of questions could be constructed differently. For example, when we asked 'How powerful are the following countries in Europe?' one participant emailed me to state that this could be understood as economic power, political power, normative power, and that in this regard, countries such as Germany and Turkey would differ quite starkly.

In replying to all the emails (about 10 or so) that I received, one of them also made me aware of the extent to which the issue of EU integration had been portrayed in Serbia as a very political question, and thus, dissociated from the concerns and thoughts of the public (a theme which was noted in the focus group data as well). Namely, most participants prefaced their emails by stating that they had filled in the survey, despite not knowing much about the EU. These comments echoed something that I had encountered throughout the PhD, which was a reluctance among people to participate in my research on the grounds that they were not very knowledgeable about EU integration, and it would be best if I spent my time interviewing politicians, political scientists of lawyers.

Nevertheless, there were important strengths to the survey, which complimented certain weaknesses of the qualitative data. Unlike the qualitative studies, the survey allowed me to collect data from a larger sample of participants and thereby explore certain attitudes and processes on a bigger set of the Serbian population. In addition, the survey gave me the opportunity to explore more directly the relationships between various key themes, and to confirm certain findings of the qualitative studies with more robust data. Lastly, the survey gave me an opportunity to measure and test the role of meta-representations in relation to identification, an important contribution to this PhD.

## 3.5. Researcher Impact and Reflexivity

Serbian identity, history and politics are topics of contested and sensitive nature in Serbia, due to the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars and Serbia's role in it. The construction of Milošević's Serbia as one of nationalistic, xenophobic and exclusionist sentiments has made many Serbs wary of claiming a strong national identity, but also of discussing the past with their children, grandchildren and future generations to come (see Obradović, 2016). These contextual factors are important to highlight in understanding the role of the researcher and the dynamics between myself and my participants.

Namely, the presence of me – the researcher – as an individual of ethnic-Serbian origin, but born and raised in a Western European country (Sweden) may have allowed for a more open approach to participation by positioning me as an insider, a native speaker and someone familiar with the history and the culture of the country, but also as somewhat of an outsider having grown up elsewhere and spent little actual time engaging in these kinds of questions and debates *in* Serbia. This simultaneous 'insider-outsider' position had an impact on the dynamics of the group in at least three ways, as I explain below, and were important in making me reflect on my own assumptions and subjective positioning while doing this research.

Firstly, while participants were receptive towards me, while reading and signing the consent form many questioned the use of the data and the potential for the supervisor (whose name was also on the form) to misunderstand and misconstrue their opinions because they just did not *understand* the Serbian experience. Participants were reassured of the anonymity and confidentiality in the handling of the data and their personal information, but nevertheless in more than one instance did the issue of wrongfully portraying Serbs surface. This concern can only be understood if you are, or become, familiar with the current socio-political context in which Serbs live, where debates about Serbia's role in the Yugoslav wars, and their perceived unjust treatment and portrayal in international media during the conflict (Cox, 2012; David, 2014; Subotic, 2011; 2013) are still very much salient in their everyday lives. In several instances, I had to position myself as a 'naïve insider' in an attempt to convince participants that the goal of the study was to explore and understand their perspectives, rather than pass judgment or attempt to validate non-Serbian representations of Serbia. While the emphasis on 'no right or wrong answers' was both written in the information

sheet and communicated orally, it was often necessary (and expected) of me to communicate who I was and why I was doing this research, in what could only have been an attempt to make sure their views and opinions were not misrepresented to a non-Serbian audience. In addition, as many participants eventually ended up sharing stories that were at times painful or self-critical, the importance of knowing who was listening became more obvious. In many instances there was also a source of pride located within my role as a PhD student at a prestigious university in a Western European country, with participants remarking on the importance of 'people like me' in improving the image of Serbia outside of its borders. This type of comment is something I have frequently come across in other Serbs who have left Serbia in their later years in life, either temporarily (students) or permanently (through reallocating with their partner or because of employment). The importance of acting as a positive 'Ambassador' for Serbia was echoed in these informal conversations and was present within the focus group context as well.

Secondly, (and following on from the first point), many participants showed awareness of me as reflecting a 'Western gaze' (Greenberg, 2010) and thus often engaged in a dialogue with an 'imaginary West' as embodied in my thoughts and beliefs. This was done in different ways, either by positioning me as 'less Serbian' for not having the lived experience of Serbs living in Serbia, or by eliciting reactions and responses from me as a representative of the West, in an attempt to legitimize and support their point of view. For example, in response to a question about a statement made by politicians that Serbia will join the EU by 2020, one participant stated (to me) that *"you're from a functioning society, so it's a little stupid that you believe in something that's been said on our television."* (Study I, Niš-1 transcript). I soon became aware that they were often made in an attempt at claiming a positive self-esteem in the eyes of someone who, to some of them, represented a seemingly stigmatizing 'Western' or 'European' perspective on Serbia. These remarks were not always made in a negative fashion, but could also be made to elicit support for their own progressive attitudes, which they contrasted with those of the general public.

Thirdly, while these challenges at times made me uncomfortable, they served an even more crucial role of forcing me to uncover some of my own subjective assumptions that I had brought into my research. Namely, my initial, somewhat naïve, belief that because I was ethnically 'Serbian' I would be accepted as an insider, was turned on its head, and the focus groups made me realize that claims to identity and

belonging are frequently embedded within the everyday lived experiences that people share. 'Being' Serbian for these people was more than simply biological or symbolic, it was practical and continuously constructed in their everyday lives. These interaction then renewed the importance for me as a researcher to continue to be dedicated to an understanding of these social psychological processes as processes 'becoming', of which identity became a clear example of. Another important assumption which I was forced to come to terms with, was the extent to which sharing their thoughts, beliefs and attitudes with me (and others) was oftentimes painful, highlighting the importance of making sure I treated their voices with respect when conducting and analyzing their experiences. This became particularly important in contexts where I felt personally rejected by participants (in terms of my knowledge of Serbia and what it means to 'be' Serbian) as I had to step away to consider how this positioning served a purpose for *them*, rather than defensively rejecting it as an attack on *me.*

In conclusion then, my position as both an insider and outsider of the Serbian collective created an interesting dynamic within the focus groups in several ways. While predominantly, participants engaged with one another, I was often drawn on to either exemplify the voice of the West, or to support an argument that outsiders simply could not understand Serbs because they lacked the lived experience of being a Serb. This emphasis on the strategic negotiation of self-positioning in relation to current affairs in turn highlighted the significance of the 'Other' in the construction of their sense of self, political attitudes and place in the world. Despite these obstacles, the fact that I am of Serbian ethnic descent, spoke Serbian, and often took time to develop rapport with participants before beginning the official interview, most likely helped in eliciting honest responses from participants, which was visible in the many instances of talk where emotions (both positive and negative) were freely expressed. Lastly, being reflexive about my role in the micro-contexts of this research ultimately helped me to also be reflexive in regard to the larger context of the PhD, and the subjective assumptions which I was previously unaware of that guided not only how I entered into the phase of data collection, but also constructed (and subsequently revised) my theoretical framework.

# PART II: EMPIRICAL STUDIES

## Preface 1: Chapter 4

Chapter 4 focuses specifically of the role of history in the processes of making sense of political change in the present by analysing how individuals in Serbia, as part of focus group discussions, construct an 'essence' or 'core' of the modern Serbian nation, and how this in turn becomes linked to how Serbian identity and politics is represented in the present. The aim of Chapter 4 is to given an introduction to the underlying role of history in shaping representations of national identity and how this has consequences for which political actions are deemed legitimate for the future. Chapter 4 draws extensively on the social representation theory, including key theoretical concepts which delve deeper into the ways in which social representations are formed and shaped. In particular, the concept of 'thema' is introduced in this chapter. 'Thema' (or themata in plural) originates in the work of Holton (cited in paper) and was later developed further by Markova. The concept refers to the ways in which social thought, or common sense thinking, is characterized by opposites. Thinking in opposites is a part of cultural socialization; we know what is long with reference to what is short, what is day by what is night (Markova, 2000). These opposites, or antinomies as Markova calls them, are mutually interdependent. Markova argues that not all opposites become themata. This essentially means that not all opposites of thinking become problematized or a source of conflict. Instead, this occurs as a consequence of socio-cultural and historical events. In the present study, the recent push towards EU accession in Serbia has become the event which has triggered debates and tensions around how this political change will influence Serbs as a people. The oppositional pair which defines the core representations of a Serbian identity (as that of both victim and resilient, as inbetween) discussed in Chapter 1, thus comes to the fore in shaping how this potentially new future is perceived and understood. In other words, Chapter 4 focuses explicitly on how social representations of history feature in discussions of political change by considering how these opposites come to frame how individuals perceive both the domestic and international context. Chapter 4 offers a first glance at the themes which emerged when participants discussed Serbia's EU accession. Chapter 4 was published in *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science* as an online first article in December 2017.

REGULAR ARTICLE

# Who are we and where are we Going: from Past Myths to Present Politics

Sandra Obradović[1]

**Abstract** Social groups, and the social identities which people develop as part of them, are often experienced as stable and continuous over time. Thus, countries experiencing rapid socio-political change often face the challenge of re-constructing the meaning of the social group to adapt to the demands of the present, while simultaneously making this re-construction appear as a natural progression of 'our' historical journey. In the present paper, I ask the question of how, in times of socio-political change, the past is used in the present, and the implications this has for how individuals represent their nation's future. Drawing on Serbia and its political movement towards EU integration, the present article illustrates how developed and legitimized historical narratives, linked to the myth of origin of a nation, become utilized to frame present challenges. In doing so, it allows for uncertainties in the present to become anchored in established historical narratives, which in turn have consequences for which political actions are deemed acceptable and legitimate for the future.

**Keywords** Perceived collective continuity · National identity · Historical representations · Myths

## Introduction

Scholars working on collective memory, identity, history and inter-group relations have argued, and illustrated, that social groups, such as a nation, are frequently constructed as stable over time and space (Alonso 1988; Jetten and Hutchison 2011; Jovchelovitch 2012; Liu and Hilton 2005; Penic et al. 2016; Sani et al. 2007). Sani et al. (2007) use the concept of 'perceived collective continuity' to illustrate how groups perceive links

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between their past, present and future, and the implications this has for intergroup relations and political decision-making.

In the present paper, we ask the question of how, in times of socio-political change, the past is used in the present, and the implications this has for how individuals represent their nation's future. The article begins by first discussing the social psychological literature on historical myths and narratives, and the role these play in providing a sense of attachment to an essentialized version of national identity. Secondly, it draw on social representations theory to argue that, the ability of historical myths to persist over time is due to their adaptive nature, understood through the concept of 'thema'. Thirdly, drawing on qualitative data from Serbia, it illustrates the ways in which developed historical narratives about a nation's origins and identity become utilized to anchor present politics, thus providing a template from which to understand socio-political change. Lastly, the article discusses the implications of this for how individuals come to conceptualize the future of their nation, and their role in shaping it.

## Identity Continuity: Myths of Origin and Historical Narratives

For scholars interested in issues of national identification, nationalism and intergroup relations, understanding the historical contexts in which these develop becomes crucial. Because of this, there is a growing acknowledgment of the importance of history in providing the material through which social groups, such as nations, are developed and maintained, with scholars emphasizing the importance of promoting a psychology that includes history in its analysis (Liu and Hilton 2005; Reicher and Hopkins 2001).

History becomes important as it tells a story of where a nation and its people come from by providing it with foundational myths (Malinowski 1926) and historical charters (Liu and Hilton 2005). These constructs bind the past with the present and future of a nation and its people by defining the origins of the group, but also its role in relation to other nations.

Liu and Hilton (2005) have argued that nations have particular 'historical charters' that define their identities and their role vis-à-vis other nations. A historical charter provides a narrative of a group's origins, which in turn functions to legitimizing present socio-political actions intended to promote a future that is perceived as continuous with the past. Considering this, Liu & Hilton argue that the different responses of England, France and Germany to the 9/11 aftermath can be understood by the different historical missions, and identities, of the nations.

The importance of drawing on history to legitimize not only the present, but also proposed projects for the future, places historical myths and narratives at the centre in creating a sense of stability and continuity in a nation. The idea of 'perceived collective continuity' (Sani et al. 2007) conceptualizes the ways in which we see our social groups and consequently social identities, as stable constructs moving through time. The construction of a perceived collective continuity assures that "within the national imagination, we are rendered immortal, forever reproduced through the timelessness of metaphorical genealogy" (Alonso 1988, p.40). However, while perceived collective continuity functions to essentialize a national identity as stable and outside of the boundaries of time, it is important to note that historical continuity "is not derived from a passive act of perception [but rather] involves an active process of selection,

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interpretation and construction" which is always future-oriented (Reicher 2008, p.151). Thus, an inclusion of history into the study of psychological phenomena does not entail taking a deterministic and static approach to topics of interest, but rather it provides a framework through which to understand how socio-political change becomes (and dissent silenced) possible by embedding it within legitimized narratives of group belonging (Obradović and Howarth 2017; Penic et al. 2016).

Because of the importance of perceived collective continuity and foundational myths in providing a sense of belonging and stability to a group's identity, in contexts of proposed socio-political change, perceived threats to national identity (or group identity more generally) frequently lead to unwillingness to support the change (Jetten and Hutchison 2011; Sindic and Reicher 2009). Identity threats can be based on disrupting a sense of continuity from the past, but also a perceived fear of how the group will fare in the future. Thus, advocates of change are faced with the challenge of representing socio-political change as a continuation, rather than rupture, of group identity (Reicher and Hopkins 2001; Obradović and Howarth 2017). As Smith (1995) has argued, nationalism should be understood as a form of 'political archaeology' where history functions to rediscover, reinterpret and regenerate a national community.

However, as is often evident within both reified and lay perspectives on history, not all historical events are given equal importance and emphasis within nations. Thus, when studying how nations maintain a sense of continuity in times of change, we must first understand what parts of history are given centrality to a collective identity, and thus become the elements selected through political archaeology. In other words, we must unpack the myths of origin beyond the content of the events themselves to understand what they *communicate* about a nation's identity. We can do this by drawing on the social representations theory and the concept of thema, to understand how supposedly fixed events of the past become re-negotiated and kept alive through times of change.

## Social Representations and Thema: Unearthing the Core of Identities

Myths of origin persist due to their dialogical nature. They are, like identities, constantly re-presented and re-negotiated to provide a historically rooted legitimacy for present ingroup goals and identities. The theory of social representations (hereafter SRT) becomes a useful theoretical framework through which we can understand how historical events become part of common-sense knowledge, and communicate something about who 'we' are, and how 'we' should act.

At the core of SRT (Moscovici 2000; Howarth 2006) is an emphasis on how we make sense of the world and thus how knowledge is socially created and re-presented. This becomes particularly relevant to understand in the study of how history, psychology and politics become intertwined. For example, the popular saying that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (originally coined by George Santayana) illustrates the powerful nature of history as a source of legitimacy in shaping and mobilizing groups for certain political actions, supposedly intended to safeguard the group for re-living past atrocities (or failures to hinder them).

Social representations of history thus serve a vital function in providing both the content (meaning) of identities as well as providing an understanding of the processes

through which this meaning becomes shared, re-interpreted and resisted through communication. The past, and the ways in which it is remembered, is thus constantly in a process of reconstruction. Historical representations, and their corresponding cultural signs and symbols, will become remembered or forgotten "depending on their ability to fulfil the needs of different social, political and cultural functions" (Jovchelovitch 2012, p.444). Social representations of history further provide an addition to research on social (particularly national) identities in acknowledging the importance of place and space in creating a sense of psychological attachment to a physical reality (Hopkins and Dixon 2006). By considering how historical events (often tied to specific territories or lands) shape identities and create a sense of continuity, we can also understand how identities encompass a spatial dimension, which comes to have implications for geopolitics and the management of boundaries and belonging.

The concept of 'thema' can be seen as the "basic starting point for generating social representations" (Markova 2000, p. 442). Originating in the work of Holton (1975), thema and themata were originally defined as antinomies of thought found in science (see also, Liu 2004). Developing this further, Markova (2000, 2003) argues that common sense thinking is characterizes by antinomies of thinking, where opposites such as "we/them" come to shape our way of understanding the social world. According to Markova (2000) not all antinomies become themata. Rather, this occurs "if, in the course of certain social and historical events, e.g., political, economic, religious, and so on, they turn into problems and become the focus of social attention and a source of tension and conflict." (Markova 2000, p. 184). Themata then, allow us to explore "the socio-historical embeddedness" of social representations in a non-reductive way (Liu 2004, p. 254).

Applying the concept of thema to social representations of history and social identities allows us to understand how an ingroup's identity can be built on opposites. For example, Jovchelovitch (2012) found that the oppositional nature of the foundational myth of the Brazilian people functioned to celebrate the 'mixedness' of its identity, and to allow for inclusion and endurance by being inherently dynamic and complex. Similarly, in the context of Serbia, the myth of origin (discussed more in detail below) emphasizes an identity that is simultaneously victimized and strong/resilient (Bieber 2002). Thus, SRT in general, and the concept of thema in particular, becomes useful for unearthing the links between foundational myths, ingroup identities and the ways in which socio-political change becomes understood.

## Continuity in Times of Change: The Case of Serbia

By understanding foundational myths, and the historical charters which they become part of, through the concept of thema we can begin to unpack the dynamic function that historical representations serve for national identities, and the role they come to play in shaping how present socio-political changes are understood and oriented towards. The present article focuses on unpacking how a particular historical event, the battle of Kosovo, became a core myth through which ingroup identity was understood in Serbia, but also intergroup relations and present politics. However, before we can unpack this, we must give some context to the event itself.

The issue of the political status of Kosovo is perhaps the biggest hurdle for Serbia on its path towards EU membership. Kosovo is a region in (or below) Southern Serbia that declared independence from Serbia in 2008 (after years of conflict and with a predominantly non-Serbian population). The territory holds a prominent identity position among Serbs as it was the territory on which the legendary battle of Kosovo took place in 1389 and has continued to be a site of conflict between Serbs and Kosovars in the past 20 years. This story of the battle is one of both victory and defeat. Namely, in 1389 Prince Lazar led Serbia into battle against the more powerful Ottoman forces, which were invading the country in an attempt to conquer it. As Bieber (2002, p. 96) argues;

"According to the myth, on the eve of the battle, Knez Lazar was offered the choice between establishing either a heavenly or an earthly kingdom. Lazar chose the former, which prevented his victory the following day but ensured the creation of a perpetual heavenly realm for the Serbian people.'

Consequently, from the fifteenth century and onwards (until the eighteenth century) Serbia was under Ottoman rule, a period known as the epoch of Turkish slavery (Ćirković 2004, p. xx). The Kosovo myth gained significance only after this period as the foundational myth of a newly independent Serbian state in the late 1800s (Bieber 2002). The reproduction of the myth through cultural symbols, songs, religious holidays and celebrations has further solidified the image of Kosovo in Serbia, making it an everyday and banal symbol of nationalism and national identity (Billig 1995). It further legitimizes claims to the territory of modern-day Kosovo by constructing the region as the physical embodiment of a psychological belonging to the nation (Hopkins and Dixon 2006).

The narrative that the myth communicates is one which emphasizes how the Serbian people were simultaneously victims (under Turkish power) but also strong and resilient when faced with a seemingly more powerful opponent. In a way, the myth draws on an oppositional pair of victory (spiritual) and defeat (physical), with the former proving more significant on a symbolic level than the latter.

Although the EU is said to hold no position towards the independence issue, continued efforts have been made to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo. These efforts in turn have domestically led many to believe that Serbia would (eventually) have to make a decision between EU membership and Kosovo (Ker-Lindsay 2009, p.6), a trade-off with consequences extending far beyond the sphere of geopolitics.

## Method

The present paper asks the question of how, in times of socio-political change, the past is used in the present, and the implications this has for how individuals represent their nation's future. It does so by drawing on qualitative data gathered in Serbia, exploring how citizens perceive their country's movement towards joining the European Union, and the (positive/negative) implications this might have for their collective future.

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**Study Design**

As the aim of this study was to explore the ways in which lay representations of history become part of understanding the present and future, a qualitative approach was deemed most suitable. Particularly as research on social representations is best explored "in the in-between space we create in dialogue and negotiation with others" (Howarth 2006, p.68). With this in mind, 12 focus group (FG) sessions were conducted between April 2015 and April 2016 in four cities in Serbia, two in the North (Novi Sad and Belgrade) and two in the South (Nis and Vranje) of the country. These comprised of meeting the same 4 groups (one from each city) at three different time-points (April 2015, September 2015 and April 2016). The rationale behind this design was to develop an iterative method through which in-depth tensions could be explored more fully, by returning to the same participants with new questions, rooted in the discussions from the previous session. Furthermore this design was seen as complimentary to the theoretical framework both in terms of the focus on perceived continuity, but also the emphasis that SRT places on communication. Namely, it highlights the role of dialogue in the process of generating and re-negotiating socially shared knowledge, and iterative FGs were seen as an innovative method for capturing this in situ. Lastly, the selection of cities in the north and south reflected an interest in exploring the importance of physical proximity to Kosovo in shaping opinions, and understandings, of the importance of the region for Serbian identity, and subsequently collective continuity in the future.

**Participants**

32 individuals participated in this study, 10 of which were female and 23 male. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 55, with median age 31 (at time of first FG sessions; for participant demographics see Table 1). Participants were recruited through snowballing. For each of the first FGs, one participant was contacted via telephone and (if they accepted) came to serve as the point of contact for that particular city, helping the researcher organize a setting in which to conduct the FG, as well as gain access to other potential participants. The rationale behind the sampling choice of these individuals was not to reach statistical representativeness or generalisability, but rather to explore the diversity in beliefs and opinions expressed by a larger pool of individuals from different parts of the country (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999, p.7). The first round of FGs comprised of 7–9 participants. In some instances, certain individuals brought a friend, co-worker or family member (particularly if they did not know any of the prior invited participants). In order to maintain a good rapport with the participants, these additional participants were allowed to join the FG discussions. However, due to the nature of the study design, an average of 2 participants per FG did not attend the second and third sessions.

**Procedure**

All FGs took place in 'natural' settings such as cafes and participant's homes. Within each group, participants were introduced to the moderator, the aims of the study, as well as the intended procedure of the FG. Participants were told that "together with another

**Table 1** Participant Demographics

| Participant | Gender | Age | Occupation | City |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Male | 55 | Business owner | Belgrade |
| 2 | Female | 28 | Student (PhD) | Belgrade |
| 3 | Male | 27 | Insurance Agent | Belgrade |
| 4 | Female | 28 | NGO Employee | Belgrade |
| 5 | Male | 25 | Engineer | Belgrade |
| 6 | Male | 29 | Student | Belgrade |
| 7 | Male | 26 | Engineer | Belgrade |
| 8 | Male | 27 | Journalist | Belgrade |
| 9 | Male | 28 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 10 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 11 | Female | 27 | Retail Worker | Niš |
| 12 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 13 | Female | 27 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 14 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 15 | Male | 28 | Electrical Engineer | Niš |
| 16 | Male | 26 | Medical Technician | Niš |
| 17 | Female | 50 | Office clerk | Niš |
| 18 | Male | 31 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 19 | Female | 35 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 20 | Male | 31 | Accountant | Novi Sad |
| 21 | Male | 31 | Taxi Driver | Novi Sad |
| 22 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Novi Sad |
| 23 | Male | 28 | Lawyer | Novi Sad |
| 24 | Male | 34 | Waiter | Novi Sad |
| 25 | Male | 30 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 26 | Female | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 27 | Male | 36 | Unemployed | Vranje |
| 28 | Male | 57 | Self-employed farmer | Vranje |
| 29 | Female | 55 | Casino Employee | Vranje |
| 30 | Male | 47 | Lawyer | Vranje |
| 31 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 32 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |

5-7 people, you will discuss certain topics and questions that will be provided by the moderator. All I ask you to do is state your honest opinion about these topics and engage in discussion with the other participants." Following this, participants were given an information sheet (which repeated some of this information) and a consent form to sign. Also, to ensure confidentiality (and address any concerns about anonymity) participants were asked to provide their name, age and occupation to the group prior to the audio recording commenced and these were saved in collected field notes. The topic guides for each three sessions followed the same format, including questions

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covering themes of politics, identity, the past and the future (see Table 2). After conducting the first round of FGs (April 2015), any remaining issues, tensions or points of debate for each question were used to inform the topic guide for the second session, thereby allowing the data-collection to follow an iterative design where the researcher was able to go back to the participants to gain further insight on questions which had remained unanswered. FG discussions lasted between 33 and 87 min, with an average length of one hour and five minutes.

All FGs were conducted (and subsequently analysed) in Serbian. The ability to conduct the FGs in Serbian overcame an important language barrier. However, while the researcher is of Serbian ethnic-origin, she was not born nor has ever lived in Serbia (which was disclosed to the participants). This positioned her as both an insider and outsider in all group discussions and influenced the dynamics of the FG discussions in an interesting way, as participants reflexively positioned the researcher as both a source of Western knowledge and practice, but also a representative of a non-Serbian world that inherently misunderstood the lived experiences of Serbian people. In order to ensure participant confidentiality all names and identifiers were modified during transcription.

**Analysis**

The audio recorded FGs were transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was conducted following the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). All transcripts were coded using NVivo 11, a qualitative data software program. The analytical procedure was also iterative and consisted of firstly coding the transcripts from the first set of FGs (hereon FG1), from which an initial codebook was developed and subsequently applied to FG2 and FG3 transcripts. As additional codes were added during the analysis of FG2 and FG3 transcripts, the FG1 transcripts had to be re-analysed as well. The analytical procedure was deductive, focusing on coding for references to change (socio-political and cultural), historical events, political attitudes and references to the past and the future. The data was coded on a semantic level, and the initial codebook consisted of 76 codes. These were re-read and combined into themes. After revising some themes, the final codebook included 72 Codes, 17 themes and three organizing themes. For each organizing theme there were tensions that arose between the various theme (i.e., between independence and inclusion) which captured the 'essence' of each organizing theme, of which the various topics discussed became manifestations of. These tensions are the basis of each of the three subsections of results, but also evident in the extracts themselves.

**Results**

At the heart of the data, were tensions around managing a sense of continuity in times of change. Namely, as the analysis will show, both the past, the present and the future become understood through the foundational thema of Serbian identity; victimhood and resilience. This antinomy functioned to both make sense of the domestic and international context of Serbia, and became thematized due to the tensions which arose around answering the question of 'who we are' and which political direction we should take in the future.

**Table 2** Focus Group Topic Guides

FG1: Topic Guide
General Questions to Start Discussion
 1. There have been many discussions about Serbia joining the EU. What have been some of the benefits and some of the downsides discussed?
Identity / Compatibility
 2. What is your opinion about Serbia joining the EU? Are you for or against it?
Meta-perspective
 3. Do you think Serbia is welcomed in the EU, from the perspective of other member countries?
Politics
 4. Serbia has (or has had) a close relationship with Russia, which has at times conflicted with its pro-EU politics. Do you think that Serbia should be more political oriented towards Russia or the EU? Or both, if possible.
 5. In many media reports, EU membership and the question of the status of Kosovo have been placed in opposition. Do you think accepting Kosovo's independence is worth it if it would guarantee Serbia membership into the EU?
Future
 6. When the year 2020 comes, the year by which politicians predict Serbia will have finally become a member, what do you realistically think the situation will look like?
Identity (2)
 7. Considering the past 25 years and everything that has occurred in Serbia and the region, do you think that the people, as a nation, has changed in comparison with the past?

FG2: Topic Guide
General Question to Start Discussion
 1. When we last met in April I asked you if you thought Serbia joining the EU was a good idea, has your opinions changed at all since then?
Identity / Compatibility
 2. Do you consider Serbian culture as compatible with European culture?
 3. Do you think Serbia's way of life is representative of a European way of life? How are they similar, and how are they different?
Meta-perspective
 4. Do you think that the majority of Serbia is pro- or against EU integration?
Politics
 5. Since the EU integration process came on the Serbian agenda, there have been various government in Serbia in support or against the process. Who are some of the most important politicians in this process?
 6. do you feel like you can trust politicians in Serbia?
Future
 7. If Serbia becomes a part of the EU in the future, do you think anything will change [in Serbia] and if so, what exactly?
 8. Do you think people in Serbia have a voice in shaping Serbia's future and politics?

FG3: Topic Guide
General Question to Start Discussion
 1. Within our last two FGs there's been a lot of talk about the politics around Kosovo. What is the historical significance of Kosovo?
 2. What are some media sources (whether it is print or broadcast TV) which you use and consider to be unbiased in their news-reporting?
Politics
 3. What role do you think the media has is in shaping the political attitudes and opinions of people in Serbia?
 4. This year there is an election on the 24th April, do you plan to vote and if so, why?
Meta-perspective
 5. Prompts 1 and 2: Texts from FGs in South (Nis and Vranje) introduced in North FGs (Novi Sad and Belgrade) and vice-versa to stimulate discussion (specifically, the prompts selected included both commonalities and differences to the discourses of the FG itself, and was intended to function as a way of engaging with the perspective of an 'Other')
Future
 6. If you had the possibility to imagine the future of Serbia, how would this Serbia look?

The results section is divided into three parts, each addressing one of these 'tensions'. The first relates to how the political and symbolic meaning of Kosovo is narrated and the implications this has for the construction of a Serbian identity, the second considers how this narrative becomes utilized in explaining the domestic socio-political context and addressing the tension of who is to blame for a lack of progress, and the third section explores its application to meaning-making on an international scale, which at root is a debate about how to maintain a sense of sovereignty while becoming part of a seemingly hierarchical and stigmatizing union.

**Narrating Kosovo: Tensions between De Facto and de Jure**

Within the various FGs over the one-year time frame, participants were asked about the historical and political significance of Kosovo. Discussions often centred on the tension between the historical and symbolic importance of the region and acknowledging the political reality of Kosovo as a 'de facto' independent state. When asked about the Battle of Kosovo, social representations of the historical event often drew on imagery of heroic martyrdom;

*Excerpt 1: Belgrade 3*

*M3: Uhm, the whole myth is primarily associated with the Battle of Kosovo and everything that happened afterwards, and that whole, this great Serbian army, which opposed an even greater Turkish army, and our glorified defeat.*

*Excerpt 2: Nis 3*

*W3: Well yes, a small Serbian army which defeated large Turkey [Ottoman Empire]. Told as one of the greatest victories of Serbs.*

These short excerpts illustrate that within both northern and southern cities in Serbia, the battle of Kosovo is narrated in a similar manner. However, what differs is the supposed outcome of the battle, illustrating the extent to which the battle is remembered as both a victory and a defeat. When discussions moved from the socio-historical representations to the political status of Kosovo, participants frequently used words such as 'cradle' 'root' and 'home' to anchor the space within the boundaries of Serbian belonging, not only as a part, but as encompassing a central place.

*Excerpt 3: Novi Sad 3:*

*M6: I think the question [of the political status of Kosovo] becomes important in Serbia because it represents the territory on which the first Serbian state was constructed in the 7$^{th}$ century. It is the cradle of today's national identity, and from there, that was, how do I put this… a key territory which was Serbian, from where, no matter how much Serbia expended or narrowed, it originated.*

*Excerpt 4: Vranje 3*

*M1: You see, the oldest Serbian monasteries are down there.*

*M5: Yes*

*M1: Orthodox monasteries, not only Serbian. So…, it's not for nothing that it's the source of Serbian heritage.*

*W4: the cradle of Serbia.*

*M5: Yes, from where Serbia originated, from the beginning.*

From these excerpts we see how the territory of Kosovo is constructed as the only stable point in Serbian history, from which a sense of continuous national identity has been build. As Hopkins and Dixon (2006, p.179) argue, "a striking feature of much talk about place and identity is the way in which it naturalises people's relationships with territory in politically significant ways." In relation to Serbia, the psychological significance of the battle of Kosovo becomes embodied in the physical territory of the region, intertwining attachment and continuity with geopolitical attitudes. This is visible in the following excerpt;

*Excerpt 5: Belgrade 2*

*W1: You know what, theoretically that sentence, "Kosovo is not Serbia" no one will say that, but everything else beyond that has been done. So, what does that mean to you when you publicly don't say it but you have a liaison officer to communicate with them, you have borders, I mean, I think we've already recognized Kosovo, only that we're not saying it….*

*W2: I don't think there was ever a big problem saying like 'Kosovo is lost'. But it's what comes after that. –*

*W1: It's not lost, it's its own state, that's different*

*W2: But no, no, you can always add after that 'currently'. So, there's always that, this moment of the current arrangements in the world, Europe, and so on, so that that's simply the reality now, but I don't think anyone thinks that it's something final.*

In this exchange, we see the tension between participants when attempting to come to terms with the political reality of Kosovo, a reality that stands at odds with a perceived collective continuity of the Serbian identity. W2 evokes a statement of temporality to argue that, despite the present (independent) status of Kosovo, the future is uncertain, and therefore the current political reality is one that is malleable, and potentially up for change. While this communicative strategy was common among

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participants from northern cities, those who lived in the south were less likely to even recognize the current political reality of Kosovo as 'lost'. Instead, the proximity of these participants to the physical space of the region and the border made the psychological attachment stronger and less flexible in accepting alternative representations of the region where it belongs.

What this section has attempted to briefly illustrate is that, the foundational myth of Serbia rests on the Battle of Kosovo myth, which highlights a thema drawing on both victimhood and strength/resilience. This myth in turn becomes both rooted in the present-day physical territory of Kosovo as well as the psychological identification individuals feel towards their nation, making any political changes, which cause disruption to this continuity, considered threatening to the nation as a whole. While the third section will explore this more closely in relation to Serbia's EU trajectory, the following section explores how this myth, and its embeddedness within constructions of national identity, becomes part of framing how individuals see their relationship vis-à-vis their political elites and the institutions they become affiliated with.

**The People and Politicians: Managing Agency and Accountability**

The myth of origin, and its foundational elements which give meaning to the Serbian identity, also shape how individuals position themselves vis-à-vis their state. Namely, similarly to how the Battle of Kosovo was represented through an imagery of 'heroic martyrdom', so citizens conceptualize their relationship to their political elites. When discussing the necessary changes needed to improve Serbia, discussions centred around themes that emphasized a lack of 'normality' and institutional order in the country, the powerlessness of the public to bring about positive change and therefore the naivety of those who believed in change, but also the corruption of politicians and continued efforts to suppress dissent and promote a disenfranchised and docile citizenry. Consider a context in which participants discussed how political and socio-economic progress of the nation would become possible;

*Excerpt 6: Vranje 2*

*M6: Under the condition that Serbia is governed intelligently.*

*M1: Intelligent governing means that a person is incorruptible. Honest, meaning, he doesn't have to be a specialist but he has to be honest.*

*W3: and how long will that last?*

*M2: it can't*

*M1: hold on, just so we're on the same page here. If I steal from my own house, I don't know, a TV, and sell it, my wife and kids have nothing to watch. Meaning, I need that TV.*

*W5: That's right, with this political perspective we haven't done anything, we've even gone backwards.*

The importance of incorrupt leadership in order to achieve progress in Serbia was an important theme that permeated discussions acknowledging that Serbia was 'lagging behind' other European countries in its modernization and democratization. Within this type of argument then, it is the assumption that, while the public is doing their part to move forward, this movement is being stifled, and even overturned, by the political elite stealing from their "own home". As one participant argued;

*Excerpt 7: Belgrade 1:*

*M7: It's a matter of the system, they [EU countries] have an orderly system and then they act towards that specific model because they've learned to [...] and I don't think at all that, okay it's the Serbian mentality, okay, every nation has its own mentality but it's built over time and only at the level of an orderly state can you see a country that serves its people and not the other way around.*

*W2: I respect the law and follow it, but then you come to a point where they [criminals] don't pay taxes and laugh in your face when you do. And then you think, whatever, why should I give money to the state when it's robbing me. And then they force you to the other side, where you do everything opposite of what is order and law, which isn't your, or at least not my, choice.*

*M4: And then they tell you at the end 'see how you [Serbs] are!'*

*W2: Yeah. But it's not that we're like that but that they've forced us to the tipping point.*

As this exchange illustrates, participants rationalize 'corrupt' behaviour on the part of citizens as an adaptation to the malfunctioning situation that they're in. In doing so they highlight their ability to adapt, persevere and prove resilient, despite the continued challenges they face. This exchange furthermore illustrates how the stigmatizing representations attached to Serbia (as corrupt) are actually held by the political elites, and not Serbian citizens themselves. Instead, by emphasizing resilience as an adaptive strategy participants are able to reinterpret seemingly negative characteristics into positive, and even envied, features of the Serbian people. This is evident in the exchange below;

*Excerpt 8: Vranje 1:*

*M6: Look at the past 25 years, this nation has survived so much trauma, from economic crises, sanctions, poverty, wars, NATO aggressions, loss of workplace, factories closing down, jobs being lost, territory being lost, uhm, all that influences a nation in a very stressful way. And it's a real mystery –*

*W5: that we've survived*

*M6: that people are still surviving, still an exceptionally mentally well people, of course we have out problems with –*

*M7: the limits of our tolerance*

*M6: meaning everyone is at the tipping point of their tolerance because of these everyday stresses and trying to survive, but we're still here. So I think that, had any other nation experienced this, that would have been a disaster.*

*M1: People are more or less the same, the only difference is how the situation has forced them to act.*

*M6: but that's just proof of how resilient and capable we are as a people. We're ready to overcome any crisis.*

*W3: That's how we grew up, that's how we've learned [to be].*

As the present section illustrated, Serbian individuals make a clear distinction between a positive Serbia, embodied by the resilient people and a powerful, corrupt system (driven by the decisions of politicians) which in turn victimizes them and forces them to adapt to seemingly negative behaviours. We see how discourses on victimhood and strength/resilience manifest themselves in positioning Serbs as bearers, and protectors, of a truly Serbian identity, one which is being stifled from its full potential by the acts of greedy politicians. By drawing these links, the participants are inevitably also constructing themselves as continuous with past Serbs, from which they have "learned" to be resilient. In the domestic context, the antinomy of victimhood/resilience is thematized in attempts to make sense of the present, and distinguish between the 'good' and the 'bad' of the nation. Thus, extending this further, the victimhood/resilience thema becomes a particular manifestation of a more universal thema; we/them. While in the domestic context, this distinction is made between we 'the people' and them 'the politicians', in the context of EU integration, it is instead the we 'the nation' and them 'the EU' which is problematized.

**The Nation and the EU: Managing Independence and Inclusion**

When discussing Serbia's potential membership into the European Union, issues of global powerlessness were central, and these highlighted how a potential future in the EU would be one where Serbia would lose three crucial things; 1) sovereignty, becoming a colony or cheap labour for the rest of Europe, 2) cultural continuity, being forced to 'Westernize' and thus strip itself of Serbian values to be replaced by more individualistic and capitalistic values, and 3) territory, as EU integration would, it was speculated, lead to a choice between joining the union and keeping Kosovo as a part of Serbian territory. We provide a quote for each to illustrate the functionality of the victimhood/resilience thema.

*Excerpt 9: Nis 2:*

*M2: The gist of the story is that we're so small that we can't play independent but be so financially dependent of that same EU, that is over with. We're being blackmailed, a basic colony, we don't have the opportunity, our budget is filled with EU funds, I mean we don't, we don't, I think that that's the reality of it. Values and education and whether they want us to join or not, the reality is that we can't leave that [relationship] because our budget is being filled, we haven't bankrupted thanks to the fact that they're pumping money into us, and that's as long as we do as we're told.*

*M4: Yeah, we can't make any kinds of demands.*

The use of the word 'colony' and the implication that Serbia, due to its financial instability has no agency over its own country and politics draws on the victimhood element of the thema to position Serbia as moving towards complete loss of sovereignty as part of the EU. The asymmetrical power-relationship in turn also has consequences beyond politics and economics, stretching into the area of cultural values.

*Excerpt 10: Vranje 2:*

*M5: Although the last few years, I have to admit, that more and more people are accepting those influences from the West, becoming worse.*

*M2: Before marriage used to be sacred, whatever either does, a divorce was never an option, but recently –*

*6: but that's coming from the West*

*W2: that the West.*

*M6: The Western system*

*M5: To not respect your parents or family*

*W4: nothing good has come from the west*

*M5: that's right. It's not like before, of course we're still humanitarian but not the same way as before, socially, that doesn't exist anymore. Earlier, it wasn't tied to money nor the time of the year but simply, the system has changed.*

When discussing how the present is different from the past, participants often reference the influences of (Western) capitalism in bringing about values of materialism and individualism, which in turn clash with the more "warmer" (Novi Sad3, M4) nature of Serbs. These discourses, occurring more frequently in the south than north, thus

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highlight the assumed (and continued) disruption to a more collectivist Serbia through the political integration into the EU. Thus, the antinomy of victimhood/resilience becomes thematised in the context of present politics as goals such as EU integration bring up tensions regarding how to maintain, and protect, a sense of perceived collective continuity (Sani et al. 2007). It is not surprising that this was discussed more in the south than north, as the southern cities are more rural and experience less tourism and interaction with foreign travellers, thus creating more distance and assumed differentiation from the non-Serbian other. It also emphasizes an underlying belief that Serbian cultural values are neither respected nor wanted within the EU. This is particularly evident in quotes attributing stigmatizing representations to the beliefs of 'EU member-states, such as the following two excerpts illustrate;

*Excerpt 11: Novi Sad 2:*

*W2: And the Brits, Swedes and those [countries] look at us, not as second-class citizens, but as tenth-class.*

*M3: Well when they think that we're savages [...]*

*M6: But see, that image will never change because we've literally, 20 years, been presented as poor, miserable and guilty for everything in this region, and that image will never change unless someone comes to this country and meets people.*

What is interesting in this exchange is the positioning of Serbian individuals in relation to these representations. While participants are aware of the negative representations of Serbs held by others, and the extent to which these are because of recent political events, they are able to re-negotiate the actual source of these representations (Howarth 2006). Namely, similarly to excerpt 7, we see how individuals actively resist these stigmas by arguing that it is only when "someone comes to this country and meets people", meaning that it is not the people themselves that embody these representations. Rather, these representations have been (wrongfully) imposed on the people, again reaffirming a sense of victimhood. The thematization of the antinomy of victimhood/resilience comes to the fore when discussions turn to tangible political changes. Most problematic here, is of course the future status of Kosovo if Serbia joins the EU, as participants speculated that the EU would use membership as a bargaining chip to pressure Serbia into recognizing the independence of Kosovo.

*Excerpt 12: Novi Sad 1:*

*M8: You know, we're all aware that Kosovo is lost but my personal opinion is that people wouldn't accept this publicly because we know that it's one of the conditions that we're asked to fulfil and who knows how many of these conditions are yet to come if we publicly say 'okay, Kosovo isn't ours'. How much more can they ask of us?*

EU conditionality then, particularly in relation to Kosovo, becomes seen as a normative pressure to strip Serbia of its 'essence', both geopolitically and psychologically in order to become a better fit within the superordinate union. These sacrifices in turn are seen from a context of an asymmetric power-relationship, where Serbia is dependent on the EU for sustenance but in turn risk losing their identity in the process. This political tension with regards to EU integration is framed as a struggle between being victimized (by being pressured to give up Kosovo) and staying resilient (by never fully acknowledging or supporting its independence, no matter how 'real' it is). Consequently, while most participants voice concerns and worries about EU integration, ultimately many of them see no other alternative for the future (i.e., excerpt 9).

The lack of alternatives comes not only from the censorship within the sphere of politics (i.e., Penic et al. 2016), but more importantly, it becomes an ironic way of sustaining a sense of continuity in the future. By representing themselves as powerless (both domestically and internationally), individuals also strip themselves of any agency or responsibility in bringing about change, instead commending themselves on their ability to adapt, and adjust, to a corroding society. Ultimately then, these narratives function to provide individuals with a sense of security and stability; while everything around them is changing (potentially for the worst), at least they are able to maintain a sense of continuity with the past, and the sufferings of previous generations of Serbs.

## Conclusion

At the heart of both the theme of the domestic and international context is a tension of answering the question of who we are, and in turn, how we should act. It was illustrated that the battle of Kosovo, serving as a foundational myth to the Serbian nation, communicates that Serbian identity is (and continues to be) an identity that is victimized but resilient and strong, an underdog that does not surrender without a fight.

It is important to highlight here that this identity (as with all social identities) exists and is kept alive within communities of others, whether real or imagined. That is, "[m]eaning is always relational – and therefore the contestation of meaning can only occur in relationship." (Howarth 2006, p.77). In the present context we saw the meaning of history and identity be negotiated within a context of a domestic Other (politicians) and international Other (EU community). Namely, the thema of victimhood/resilience, embedded within a context of we/them, was utilized to construct an essentialized national identity, a process which functioned to adapt in-group identity to a complex present and recent past, wrought with conflicts and ruptures. It further functioned to distance participants from those conflicts and ruptures, by positioning the 'Other' as a source of stigmatization (i.e., excerpts 7 and 11), *against* which a positive sense of self was constructed and reaffirmed. This in turn allowed participants to become the embodiment of collective continuity of a historically old nation, despite circumstantial changes and challenges. Consequently, these processes of meaning-making became part and parcel of their justifications for, and rejections of, various political change.

What this study then tells us is that, while history might weigh on the present, history is also utilized to give meaning to the present and to construct a particular version of the future, which is seen as aligned with a sense of collective continuity, both

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historical and cultural (Jovchelovitch 2012). By doing so, it inevitably has consequences for the present-day politics which become deemed legitimate for attaining this future, particularly when social knowledge and psychological attachment become intertwined and linked with existing geopolitical tensions. The empirical example draw on in this paper provides an interesting context in which to explore how these processes are negotiated as they occur, and the importance of considering not only the role of history, but also the role of place and space, in the construction of psychological belonging (Hopkins and Dixon 2006).

Research on historical representations, national identity and socio-political change should thus contemplate the importance of an interdisciplinary approach which considers not only the psychology behind these processes, but also the history through which they have developed, transformed and solidified, and the political consequences they bring. The SRT, coupled with a temporal understanding of identity, has the potential to allow us to do so. Namely, by considering how social representations become part of constructing continuity and how they become anchored in existing physical spaces, SRT can realize its full potential as a critical theory of both agency and resistance (Howarth 2006). Thus, an interdisciplinary approach to socio-political change would consider the ways in which the meaning attributed to political actions emerge from the significance these actions have for promoting, or disrupting, a perceived continuity of the group's identity and historical narrative. This can only be done by combining a thick description of the socio-historical context and an analysis of its role in giving meaning to political and psychological processes of integration, belonging and change.

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## Preface 2: Chapter 5

Chapter 5 moves us from a focus on bottom-up constructions of national identity (in Chapter 4) to focus instead of how politicians have discursively attempted to construct continuity as compatible with their political goals for Serbia. Chapter 5 focuses less on how history is represented, and more on how national identity and its content (informed by history), is used to mobilize support for certain political actions. The importance of this chapter for the thesis as a whole is to provide both an overview of how EU integration emerged as a viable political goal in post-communist Serbia, and how politicians have framed the goals as compatible with Serbian values, norms and traditions. The chapter further focuses on another important aspect of the theoretical framework of the thesis, namely the role of continuity in discourses on identity and change. The discursive analysis in the chapter allows for an understanding of the strategic uses of specific words, metaphors and references in arguing for, or against, change. Chapter 5 therefore provides a bit of 'historical' contextualization for Serbia's EU accession path, and how various existing political goals (such as maintaining the status of Kosovo as part of Serbia) have become embedded within larger narratives of nationhood and nationalism. Focusing on the period 1991-2014, the data follows a period where Serbia's membership in one superordinate union fell apart, and the dream of membership in another emerged. The time-period in question is one of important socio-political transition in Serbia where the political discourse of the democratic opposition faced the challenge of addressing the wrongdoings of Serbia in the Yugoslav wars and proposing a 'new' perspective for Serbia, while simultaneously ensuring that their criticisms and changes were not seen as stigmatizing of their own citizens. The chapter illustrates that collective continuity, much like identity, is flexible and malleable, and discontinuity can at times be constructed as positive, and as a small price to pay to regain and recover the true 'essence' of an identity.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The power of politics: How political leaders in Serbia discursively manage identity continuity and political change to shape the future of the nation

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**Abstract**

The construction of national identities through political discourse is a growing field of interest to social psychologists, particularly as many countries face changing demographics, borders and social realities as part of globalization, immigration and continued political integration and conflict. Through an analysis of 17 key speeches by Serbian politicians over the past 25 years, the present paper explores the question of how politicians, as entrepreneurs of identity, discursively manage the relationship between identity continuity and political change over time, in attempts to construct the future of a nation. We particularly explore this issue in the context of Serbia's present political aspirations toward joining the European Union. The findings indicate that (i) political change becomes negotiated within the framework of established and legitimized identity discourses that have developed over time, and (ii) while history is frequently drawn on to support political agendas, it is successful to the extent that this history offers a sense of cultural continuity rather than a coherent narrative of historical events and time periods. We conclude by arguing for the benefits that a diachronic approach to political discourse can offer social psychologists interested in the discursive construction of national identity.

For more than two decades, Serbia has been a nation in turmoil and unease. From the fall of one superordinate union (Yugoslavia) to the continued efforts of joining another (the European Union), the Serbian political landscape has transitioned from authoritarian to pro-democratic. However, this transition from ex-Yugoslav to potential EU nation has not been without its complications. Both within Serbia as well as among EU member-states, the integration process has been met with skepticism and resistance (Obradović-Wochnik & Wochnik, 2012; Subotić, 2011). In order to understand the national, as well as inter-national ambiguity towards Serbia's potential membership in the EU, one must examine the history and politics of identity that have led up to present-day socio-political debates and tensions.

The present paper draws on a diachronic dataset of selected political speeches from Serbia to illustrate how discourses on national identity, particularly in nations that have endured longer periods of political turmoil and change, become embedded in, and also constrained by, wider discourses on identity continuity developed over time.

## Serbia over the Past 25 Years

Between the years 1991 and 1999, four wars were fought on the territory of former Yugoslavia, a supra-national state of six republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina). The wars, including the aftermath of the conflicts, saw the revival of the importance of ethnic and national identities. The wars also saw the increased involvement of the international community in the region, particularly through the establishment of an International Crime Tribunal in Hague (ICTY) in 1993, intended to prosecute and convict war criminals from Former Yugoslavia, and the decision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to bomb Serbia in 1999. In Serbia, the context of this research, the involvement of the international community was frequently perceived as negative, unjust and unfair towards the nation and its people (Klarin, 2009; Obradović, 2016a). This perception of Serbia as being 'vilified' on a global level leads to both institutional and political narratives emphasizing a stigmatized and victimized national identity during the 1990s (MacDonald, 2002; Subotić, 2011).

Despite the difficult aftermath of the Yugoslav wars, the early 2000s were a time of re-invention and democratic transition in Serbia (Greenberg, 2014). Beginning with the Democratic Revolution on 5 October 2000, Serbian democratic parties gained rising support among the public. However, there was also resistance to this

change, evident in the assassination attempt and subsequent killing of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, an advocate of pro-democratic reforms. The year 2004 saw a win for democracy in Serbia when the president of the Democratic Party, Boris Tadić, was elected President for two consecutive terms (2004–2012). Alongside democratic and pro-European developments in Serbia were worsening relations with Kosovo, an autonomous province in southern Serbia. The region, while today populated by a Kosovo–Albanian majority, stands as a symbol of origin of the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox church. It was on the territory of today's Kosovo that the first Serbian Orthodox Church was founded. It is also on that territory that the infamous 'Battle of Kosovo' was fought in 1389. The Battle of Kosovo was fought as Serbs tried to fight off Ottoman forces attempting to claim the territory. While the battle was lost by the Serbian army, the story told is one of a physical defeat but spiritual victory (Anzulovic, 1999). Namely, Prince Lazar, the leader of the Serbian army, was given the choice between a physical victory in the battle, or the creation of a 'Heavenly Serbia'. The Prince, in a true act of martyrdom, chose the latter.

The ties between religion, national identity and history were further solidified through the recognition of the date of the battle as an official national holiday known as St Vitus' Day (Bieber, 2002). In addition, several events of historical significance, such as the 1914 killing of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the beginning of the Yugoslav wars in 1991 and the surrendering of Slobodan Milošević to Hague in 2001, all occurred on or close to the commemorative day, emphasizing its importance for the 'fate' of the Serbian nation. Thus, St Vitus' Day, in addition to being a religious and national holiday, has become a prevalent symbol of patriotism and self-sacrifice, with references to Kosovo as 'Serbian Jerusalem' found in political and religious discourses over the past centuries (Perica, 2002).

Considering the importance of the territory, it is not surprising that when Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, the act was met with outrage and declared illegal. However, Kosovo's independence was met with different reactions internationally, when not only the majority of EU member-states but also a majority of the members of the United Nations (UN) recognized the act legal and valid. This example emphasizes the need to consider the role that national identity plays in shaping what political actions become seen as possible, and legitimate. The bulk of the burden for managing the relationship between politics and national belonging falls on politicians.

## Entrepreneurs of Identity

Whether promoting change or upholding the status quo, politicians are faced with the task of aligning their political goals with national identity in order to gain power and authority to shape collective action. To be able to do so successfully, they must act as entrepreneurs of identity. In other words, when politicians claim to be speaking 'on behalf of the nation' when promoting a particular political agenda, they are engaging in an active process of constructing both the group boundaries of the nation and its content, as well as positioning themselves as the prototypical member, and thus best representative, of the group's values and goals (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). By aligning the in-group identity with their political interests, leaders can gain social power and necessary political support to shape the future of a nation.

In other words, while change inevitably occurs in all societies, it is those who propose change that face the task of making it appear natural and continuous with a group's identity. Frequently, politicians do this by drawing on history, a powerful source of authority that can lend legitimacy to present political agendas.

History plays an important part in shaping the nation and nationhood, and so becomes integral to national identity. According to Liu and Hilton (2005, p. 537), '[r]epresentations of history help to define the social identity of peoples, especially in how they relate to other people and to current issues of international politics and internal diversity.' An important concept to consider in relation to entrepreneurs of identity is the in-groups 'historical charter' (Liu & Hilton, 2005). A group's charter binds the past, present and future of a nation by defining the historical origins and mission of the group. Often such charters can be traced back many centuries.

Entrepreneurs of identity are thus not completely free to construct the content of a group identity but become constrained by these historical discourses that have developed over time, and have been afforded legitimacy and significance within the in-group context. The challenge for politicians, as key entrepreneurs of identity, is therefore twofold; to re-negotiate historically established narratives to fit the needs of the present while also constructing their politics as the best possible way to maintain, and thus protect, the continuity of the nation and its identity in the future.

## National Identity and Continuity

As research on group identities has shown, people tend to perceive their in-groups as temporally continuous and enduring communities (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sani et al., 2007). Sani et al. (2007) have used the concept of 'perceived collective continuity' to discuss this phenomenon. Perceived collective continuity refers to the ways in which individuals feel as if their groups move over space and time in a coherent historical narrative that transmits and fosters essential group values, beliefs and traditions. There are two important dimensions that influence perceptions of in-group continuity: (i) perceived cultural continuity and (ii) perceived historical continuity. Perceived cultural continuity refers to the transmission (and continuation) of core cultural traits (values, traditions, etc.) of the group over time, while perceived historical continuity is related to the ways in which events and periods of a group's history become interconnected to create a coherent

narrative. Experimental research using Sani's work has shown that perceived cultural continuity, but not perceived historical continuity, can become important for strengthening group identification as it more strongly provides individuals with feelings of self-continuity (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014). Thus, core cultural traits, which can become essential components of a group's identity, become more important to maintain and emphasize in order for individuals to feel a sense of continuity, both individually and collectively.

A growing body of literature on group mergers and schisms illustrates the implications perceived collective continuity has for both the present and future of groups.

Namely, both strands of research demonstrate the ways in which proposed change becomes endorsed when it is seen as representing a progression, rather than rupture, with a group's past and sense of identity (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Monden, & de Lima, 2002). As Sani (2008) and Sani & Reicher (2000) have shown, schisms are not triggered by disagreement over the proposed change but rather the implications this change has for group identity. Thus, when proposed change is seen as causing a break from a group's essence, it can lead to group divides. Therefore, it is important to note that what is considered a group's essence is not pre-given or fixed, but rather, up for debate.

By taking a social identity theory approach (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to national identity, coupled with an emphasis on perceived collective continuity, we acknowledged the flexible and constructed nature of social categories over time. Social identities are thus processes, embedded within the larger social, cultural and political context of the present, but also of the past (Andreouli & Howarth, 2013). Giving centrality to the past in relation to identity does not entail a loss of agency on the part of individuals, nor does it make history and tradition deterministic in limiting the possibility for social change. Rather, it is precisely through this theoretical framework that we are able to understand group identities, histories and futures not as pre-given or fixed, but as up for debate, contestation and re-negotiation over time and space (Howarth, 2011).

As part of a larger research project looking at both the public and political side of Serbia's recent history, politics and its impact on national identity (see Obradović, 2016b), the present paper focuses exclusively on the latter. More specifically, it builds on existing literature exploring how political leaders mobilize identity in order to create support or resistance for political agendas, such as those of superordinate membership (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sindic & Reicher, 2009). We extend this discussion by showing the benefits of using a diachronic data set to explore how discourses on change in the present become embedded and shaped by socio-political changes of the past, affording change legitimacy and a sense of continuity. In this context, Serbia offers an ideal case study for exploring the ways in which national

identities, but also national politics, are co-constructed by the past, present and future.

In what follows, we demonstrate this through a critical discourse analysis of political speeches in the Serbian context, offering a starting-point for exploring how present-day politics (regarding Serbia–EU relations) have become embedded and constrained by domestic politics and discourses on national identity over the past 20 years.

## Method

### Data

Because of the centrality of continuity and change over time in this research project, it was crucial to collect speeches over a significant time frame to explore the ways in which national identity has been constructed in historical turning points, and the implications this has for the politics, and future, of the nation. A survey was constructed asking participants in Serbia to rank 10 events from 1989 to 2000 and 10 events from 2001 to 2014 in order of their political significance. This was done to gain a general understanding of how Serbia national identity has been constructed by politicians in historic moments of importance for the public. The initial 20 events were chosen after consultation with a historian, political scientist and lawyer on Serbia's recent history during a visit to Belgrade by the first author in February, 2015, as well as an examination of the literature on Serbia's recent political past (Damjanov, 2004; Ramet & Pavlaković, 2005; Živković, 2011).

The rationale behind splitting up the time frame was to get an even distribution of speeches over the past 25 years. The survey (N = 467) was administered through social media channels, probably limiting the generalizability of the results, although no demographic details were asked of participants so this is unclear. Nevertheless, the events that scored the highest in terms of significance seem to concur with the general literature on Serbia's political history (Damjanov, 2004; Ramet & Pavlaković, 2005; Živković, 2011) as well as political events brought up in a previous study exploring collective memory in Serbia (Obradović, 2016a). From the survey, the five highest ranked events of each time frame were chosen to inform the corpus for speech collection. The Figure 1 below illustrates the results of the survey as represented in a historical timeline.

Two speeches were chosen from each event. The selection of speeches focused on what we call 'oppositional sampling' where one speech was chosen to reflect the party in power and another to reflect the main opposition. Two additional criteria for the selection process included choosing speeches that addressed the domestic audience (i.e., public address, inauguration speech and pre-election speech) and took place on, or close to the original event from the survey. Speeches were sampled from political elites, by which we mean individual politicians who played a central role in shaping Serbian politics at the time of a specific event.
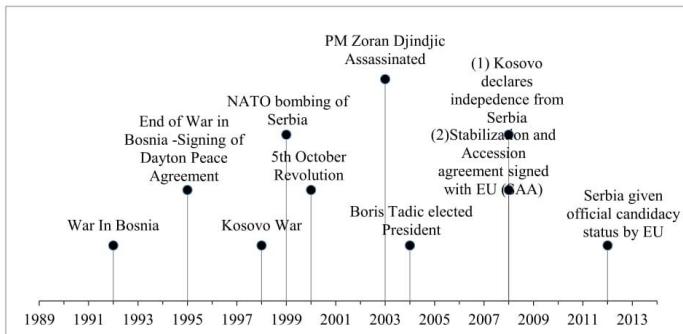
**Fig. 1**: Historical timeline of political events

Because of the troubled past in Serbia, there are no offi-cial archives of speeches from recent history; instead, speeches were located through books, internet archives and political party websites. Because of this, the sample is not exhaustive. However, as the goal of the project is to offer an in-depth exploration into how national identity is constructed at key political moments, with a particular focus on the importance of managing conti-nuity and change, it makes no direct claims about the generalizability of these themes. Instead, the present study is a starting-point for exploring national identity in Serbia as it has developed over time, as most studies have tended to focus on the construction of national identity in a specific time and context, without explor-ing the roots of these constructions or their further significance in the future. In addition, for some events (total of 3), because of the lack of access to speeches, it proved hard to find complete speeches to analyse, particularly in attempting to find speeches that reflected the party in opposition. In these specific cases, only one speech was used per event as it was considered impor-tant to have the whole speech, rather than selected parts of it, to be able to analyse the discourse in its entirety.

Table 1 below describes the sample of speeches, includ-ing the name, political affiliation and position of speaker, as well as the particular domestic context of the speech.

**Analytic Procedure**

Taking a functional approach to language in context, the present paper draws on Critical discourse analysis and the Discourse-historical approach (DHA) developed by Wodak (1996), Wodak and Meyer (2001), and Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl, and Liebhart (2009), to explore the ways in which talk is used to construct political change as aligned with identity and continuity. The DHA allows for an integration of the historical context in the analysis of naturally occurring language, thereby incorporating 'a larger quantity of available knowledge about the his-torical sources and the background of the social and po-litical fields in which discursive 'events' are embedded' (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 65). It further emphasizes the intertextual relationship between discourses and

the history and situational frame of a speech or text. Intertextuality refers to the ways in which texts or dis-courses are linked to, or embedded in, other larger dis-courses. Coined in the late 1960s, the term refers to the ways in which 'texts and utterances are shaped by prior texts that they are 'responding' to and subsequent texts that they 'anticipate'.' (Fairclough, 1992, p.270). Thus, intertextuality allows us to explore not only how texts, or discourses, build on the past but also shape it in the process. This becomes particularly significant when ex-ploring how discourses change in relation to socio-political change. Thus, we consider the DHA a suitable methodological tool for exploring the ways in which identity, continuity and political change are constructed and negotiated over time.

A comprehensive guide to using the DHA can be found in Wodak et al.'s (2009) study of Austrian na-tional identity. Within the book (pp. 30–47), the au-thors distinguish between four closely interwoven dimensions of analysis which allow for triangulation: (i) identification of thematic content areas; (ii) analysis of micro- and macro-level discourse strategies; (iii) anal-ysis of argumentation schemes, or *topoi*, as they relate to micro- and macro-level discourse strategies (i.e., topos of comparison; topos of threat); and (iv) analysis of the linguistic means of realization of discourse strategies (i.e., the use of metaphor, rhetorical questions and referential vagueness) (pp. 30–47). Although both thematic content areas and the linguistic means of real-ization were explored in the analysis, in the interest of space and the emphasis on managing continuity and change within the corpus of speeches, the presentation of the results will focus mainly on discursive strategies and the accompanying argumentative schemes (topoi).

Wodak et al. (2009) distinguish between five different discursive strategies (construction, perpetuation, justifi-cation, transformation and demontage/dismantling) frequently present in political speeches around nation-hood. When exploring continuity and change, three strategies become particularly important: construction, perpetuation and justification. Strategies of construction attempt to establish a certain national identity by promoting unification within and differentiation from

**Table 1.** Political speeches

| Event | Speaker | Political position/affiliation | Political ideology | Speech context |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1992 | Vuk Drašković | Leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement. | Centre-right wing | St Vitus Day Assembly, Anti-Government protest rally, 28 June 1992 |
| 1992 | Slobodan Milošević | President of Serbia, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left-wing | 2nd SPS Congress, Closing Statement 23 October 1992 |
| 1995 | Zoran Đinđić | President of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | '5 Years of the Democratic Party' Assembly, 3 March 1995 |
| 1995 | Slobodan Milošević | President of Serbia, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left-wing | Televised announcement following signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, 28 December 1995 |
| 1998 | Mirko Marjanović | Prime Minister of Serbia, Member of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, left wing | Parliamentary address after Kosovo war started, 24 March 1998 |
| 1998 | Zoran Đinđić | President of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Democratic Party Assembly, 17 July 1998 |
| 1999 | Vojislav Koštunica | Leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia.[a] | Right-wing | Public announcement at beginning of NATO bombing, 24 March 1999 |
| 1999 | Slobodan Milošević | President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left wing | Address to the nation at beginning of NATO bombing, 24 March 1999 |
| 2000 | Slobodan Milošević | President of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until the 7th of October, Leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia. | Centre-left, Left wing | Public televised address to the nation before elections (which he lost), 2 October 2000 |
| 2000 | Vojislav Koštunica | President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after 7th October, Democratic Party of Serbia. | Right-wing | Address at meeting after (won) election, 5 October 2000 |
| 2003 | Zoran Đinđić | Prime Minister of Serbia until death in 2003, Leader of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | 13th anniversary of the Democratic Party, 1 February 2003 |
| 2003 | Natasa Micić | Acting President of Serbia, Member of the Civil Alliance of Serbia. | Centre | Public address after Zoran Đinđić's assassination, declaring state of emergency in Serbia, 12 March 2003 |
| 2004 | Boris Tadić | President of Serbia, Newly elected Leader of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Televised inauguration ceremony, 11 July 2004 |
| 2008 (1) | Vojislav Koštunica | Prime Minister of Serbia, Democratic Party of Serbia. | Right-wing | Protest 'Kosovo is Serbia', 21 February 2008 |
| 2008 (2) | Bozidar Đelić | Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Member of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Press conference following SAA signing, 30 April 2008 |
| 2008 (2) | Vojislav Koštunica | Prime Minister of Serbia, Democratic Party of Serbia. | Right-wing | General Election assembly, 26 June 2008 |
| 2012 | Boris Tadić | President of Serbia, Leader of the Democratic Party. | Centre, Centre-left wing | Press conference following EU granting Serbia official candidate status, 2 March 2012 |

[a]The Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Serbia are two different political parties.

others, as well as identification and solidarity of the in-group. Strategies of perpetuation function to maintain and reproduce pre-existing groups or images, while strategies of justification serve a similar function while frequently drawing on the legitimacy of past acts 'which have been put into question' in order to restore a positive image of the nation (Wodak et al., 2009, p.33). Relating to these strategies are various topoi, 'warrants which guarantee the transition from argument to conclusion' (Kienpointner, 2011, p.265). For example, the use of a topos of threat functions to justify the speaker's political agenda (argument) as those that will defend and save the nation (conclusion).

The analysis is divided into two sections, each exploring a separate part of the 20-year time period. The first period (1992–2000) considers how democratic change emerged and gained strength in Serbia, cumulating in the overthrowing of Slobodan Milošević's authoritarian government. The second period (2001–2012) explores

how this progress towards democracy became embodied in the goal of EU integration, leading to tensions and divides within the democratic coalition as to how these changes would be realized, and their subsequent consequences for the nation and its future. Last, we conclude with a discussion exploring to what extent discourses of change have become compatible with national identity, demonstrating that the latter time-period has shown less ability to coherently construct EU integration as the best possible future for Serbia because of its continued threats to historical and cultural continuity.

### 1992–2000: Change as Returning to Serbia's True Self

The first period explored in the analysis (1992–2000) was a time of war and conflict, bombing, corruption, propaganda and authoritarianism in Serbia. The emergence of a democratic voice was visible in the 1992 St Vitus'

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Day Anti-Government Protest in Belgrade, where the Leader of the Democratic Renewal Movement gave a speech on the day honoring the Battle of Kosovo. Drawing on the momentum of the commemorative day, his speech paralleled the past with the present, giving the outlines of the 'historical charter' of Serbia.

Extract 1:

'After 603 years, the St Vitus Day battle is being repeated. The first battle lasted one day, ours lasted 8 days. In the past battle around 1000 Serbs participated, in the present, a couple of million […] in the past one, no Serbs survived, in this one, no one was killed. Because of that, the past one was physically lost but morally and spiritually won. This one led to some type of defeat, as our goals were not reached. After that moral victory Serbs endured 500 years of Turkish slavery, after this St. Vitus Day, we cannot even endure 5 years of communist slavery' —Speech 1, Drašković (1992).

Drawing a historical parallel, Vuk Drašković attempts to justify the purpose of the democratic opposition by likening the challenge faced by the opposition with that of Serbs in 1389. Much like Prince Lazar and the Serbian holy martyrs fought for the independence of their country, so 603 years later, the democratic opposition is attempting to free Serbia from the tyranny of Slobodan Milošević. The historical charter thus sets out the mission of the group, to defend itself from allowing history, and the victimhood experienced by the people, to repeat itself. This topos of victimhood is further visualized through the sentence 'he [Milošević] has locked Serbia into a cage. We are isolated from the rest of the world.' (Drašković, 1992). The anthropomorphic reference to Serbia as a caged prisoner emphasizes the asymmetric power relationship between Milošević and the people. Interesting enough, with the rise of the oppositional movement against Milošević, discourses around the emergence of a 'Second Serbia' followed (Mimica, 2002). This is visible in Drašković's speech as well where he further parallels not just the past with the present but the First Serbia with a Second.

Extract 2:

'The whole of Europe and the world have seen who is who in Serbia, and this is the greatest victory of this St Vitus' Day. Who relies on Kalashnikovs and whose full wit and power lays in Kalashnikovs, and who, in those same Kalashnikovs places carnations. These are two worlds, two Serbias, and we are doing everything so that the Serbia of carnations becomes so great that the evil, and we can already say crazy Serbia, drops its weapons from its hands' —Speech 1, Drašković (1992).

The emergence of a Second Serbia speaks to the belief of a growing part of the nation that the First Serbia (of Milošević) was not representative of their construction of Serbian identity and belonging, and

thus a schism emerged in the nation where an alternative discourse around national identity and Serbian character developed (Sani, 2008). This Second Serbia offered a democratic alternative for the future of the nation, a 'savior' from the threat imposed by Milošević's regime and a nation aligned with the morality of the rest of the world.

In contrast, Milošević and members of the ruling elite considered the crisis of the early 1990s 'largely the consequence of international interest and the policy pursued in keeping with those interests.' (Speech 2, Milošević, 1992). Through strategies of shifting blame, Milošević and his government place responsibility for Serbia's current socio-political climate onto the international community. In turn, Milošević offers himself as the most competent politician to protect Serbia from outside threats, stating that 'in our Party, as well as in our people, there is an additional strength to surmount difficulties, to defeat the enemy and overcome troubles.' (Speech 2, Milošević, 1992).

The strategy by both Drašković and Milošević to couple discourses of threat with justifications of their politics as offering resilience and survival becomes linked to the cultural beliefs and values rooted in the battle of Kosovo. The emphasis on Prince Lazar's heroic martyrdom is embodied by the speakers, attempting to position themselves and their politics as those that will offer the people a sense of empowerment and redemption. Thus, the speeches build on the past by drawing on a hegemonic narrative of Serbia; as victims engaged in an honorable struggle for self-defense and survival (MacDonald, 2002; Subotić, 2011). Consider Zoran Đinđić's speech in 1995, the year the war in Bosnia finally came to an end;

Extract 3:

'Our generation is a generation that has a huge responsibility. Of course, with this responsibility comes great honor. We are chosen. We have a mission. That mission will not bring us any honor, nor will it bring us prosperity, because the time of our generation is a time of asceticism and renunciation. Only those who are willing to give up their personal well-being, can say, 'we belong to that generation in Serbia that saved Serbia, we are the people of the new politics' ' —Speech 3, Đinđić (1995).

Zoran Đinđić draws on the topoi of heroic martyrdom to construct the Democratic opposition as the selfless saviors of Serbia. By aligning the political goal of the party with the characteristics of national identity, the proposed change put forward by the Democratic opposition is seen not as an alternative, but as a civic and moral responsibility. Đinđić's discourse does not emphasize the need for transformation, thereby risking the possibility that his politics will be seen as a break from the past, but rather perpetuates his politics as the necessary path to ensure that Serbia will endure as a nation in the future. As Wodak et al. (2009) note, the topoi of threat is frequently

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used within strategies of perpetuation to position the speaker in defense of the nation. In this sense, the Democratic Party's construction of Serbia comes to actually represent the true Serbia.

This becomes more clearly articulated in 1998, when Đinđić argues that democratic change 'means that things again come back to their rightful place.'

In contrast, Milošević see not himself, but the external world outside of Serbia, as its biggest threat to continuity. In 1999, at the start of the NATO bombing, Milošević made a public announcement, stating that:

Extract 4:

'They [NATO] have chosen that door [Kosovo] because it is assumed that an Albanian Separatist Movement should stand in front of it, and not the army of Yugoslavia, and not the citizens of this country as a whole. And in that way, our country, step-by-step, but very quickly, will lose its independence and its freedom. The only right decision that could have been made was to refuse the acceptance of foreign troops on our territory' —Speech 8, Milošević (1999).

Similarly to the Democratic speakers, Milošević draws on the topos of threat to construct his politics as the most appropriate ones in the context. However, unlike the Democratic speakers, the source of threat is not internal, but external. Another similarity between the different speakers is the strategic use of Kosovo to construct continuity as compatible with the politics of the speakers. This is most noticeable in speeches occurring in 2000, the year where the struggle for democratic change in Serbia finally became realized in the 5th October Revolution. The event led to the overthrow of Milošević and the beginning of democracy under the leadership of Vojislav Koštunica, Leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia. The extracts illustrate the ways in which political elites discursively draw on us-them distinctions to position their political opponents as against the interests of the in-group.

Extract 5:

'With the establishment of an administration supported or installed by NATO, Yugoslavia would quickly be dismembered. These are not NATO's intentions alone. These are the pre-election promises of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia. […] Within this policy of dismembering Yugoslavia, Kosovo would be the first victim. Its present status would be proclaimed legal and final. It is the first part of Serbian territory to which Serbia would have to bid farewell, without even a hope that we could reclaim this part of our country' —Speech 9, Milošević (2000).

Extract 6:

'If there is anyone who has led anti-Serbian politics, Albanian politics in recent years, if there is anyone who made it possible for the Albanians to come close to an independent Kosovo, if there is anyone who has brought so many foreign troops into Kosovo, into our country, that is Slobodan Milošević. […] And I know, that there would not have been NATO troops on either side of the Danube had there been no Slobodan Milošević' —Speech 10, Koštunica (2000).

In both speeches, the same discursive arguments are used to position the speaker as the voice of the in-group, and the opponent as a part of the out-group. Interesting enough, both speakers also draw on the issue of Kosovo, to construct the political opponent as working against Serbian interests. This is accomplished through parallels between their opponent and various others, either in explicit (NATO, Albanian) and more vague terms (anti-Serbian, foreign troops). Thus, while both politicians take for granted the importance of Kosovo for the nation, this 'common sense' knowledge is utilized to justify very different political agendas. Further, Koštunica's speech takes place a few days following Milošević's, and thus we see how he is responding to the allegation made by Milošević, instead turning them back on his opponent. This example of intertextuality shows the extent to which relevant 'Others' become part of the political discourse of individuals. It is through these discourses that we also see that various international organizations and countries are not seen as collaborators or partners of Serbia, but as unwelcome intruders causing conflict and loss of territory in the country. The presence of an external threat was common in discourses of the ruling elite, but less prevalent in the democratic opposition.

This first section illustrates the importance of playing on fear, and the strategic discursive work by the opposition to try to position their politics as not a break from the past, but rather a return to a more moral, and righteous Serbia, a Serbia that has to be saved from the hands of Slobodan Milošević. Thus, for the opposition, their work is the work of heroic martyrs, much like that of Prince Lazar in 1389, who have taken upon themselves the difficult task of freeing Serbia from its authoritarian oppressor. Meanwhile, Milošević's tactic plays on threat as well, but on a larger, global scale. By emphasizing the victimhood and unfairness against Serbia by the global community, he is able to position himself, and his politics, as those that will protect Serbia. In turn, Milošević is able to create a sense of isolation within the public, a sense of international stigma and rejection, which is evident in the public attitudes towards the ICTY (as discussed in the introduction; Klarin, 2009). Thus, while perpetuating different political agendas, neither the politicians in power nor those in opposition refute the image of Serbia identity as victimized and under threat. As we will see in the next section, this legitimized discourse on identity, rooted in the Kosovo myth, creates a lingering sense of international stigma and unfairness, which in turn causes difficulties for those politicians promoting compatibility between Serbia's political and historical past, and its potential EU future.

## 2001–2012: Change as Democratization through EU Integration

Following the democratic turn in Serbia in 2000, discussions about democratization and modernization slowly became synonyms with 'Europeanization' and the development of a 'European perspective' in Serbia (Greenberg, 2014). Thus, while the first period showed discourses around change centering on re-gain freedom and empowerment, in the second period, the democratic politicians developed this discourse further by arguing for the need to move from isolation and 'reintegrate into the international community' (Speech 12, Micić, 2003). However, an awareness of the stigma attached to Serbia because of the recent past is visible in these discourses, where an emphasis on the 'need to return into history' (Speech 11, Đinđić, 2003) and the 'need to make up for lost times' (Speech 13, Tadić, 2004) constructs the past as a time of rupture from Serbia's true trajectory as a nation. It is thus in this second period that we seem more explicitly the importance of establishing positive recognition for Serbia in the eyes of 'others', particularly the European community. This is visible in discussions of EU integration, as in Boris Tadić's 2004 Presidential Inauguration Speech.

Extract 7:

'… [T]here is a great energy to continue the improvement of Serbia and her inclusion into the EU. Serbia has had enough misunderstandings with the world and dissent in the country, and is ready to recognize a new character of politicians who will assume more responsibility, more effort and a different political voice' —Speech 13, Tadić (2004).

The use of the word 'misunderstandings' allows Tadić to acknowledge the negative representations of Serbia's recent past, while positioning himself, and his politics, as different, and thereby unaffiliated with the 'corrupt' Serbia of the past. In doing so, he is responding not only to critiques of Serbia internationally but also any subsequent discourses that question his politics and intentions.

Besides the emphasis on the 1990s as a rupture from a Serbian continuity, another trend was visible in the second time period. Namely, the second period saw a schism occur within the democratic coalition as a result of tensions over what this newly created democratic Serbia would actually look like. As the ruling elite argued for EU integration as democratization, this soon became challenged by an emerging democratic opposition. An important cause of tension during this period was the extent to which Serbia as a whole (including Kosovo) was compatible with a democratic future accumulating in EU membership. Thus, again we see the continued significance of Kosovo in shaping the 'essence' of the group, and the extent to which potential changes to its status in Serbia would lead to a rupture within the group (Sani, 2008).

On 17 February 2008, Kosovo declared unilateral independence. A few months later, the EU signed a Stabilization and Accession Agreement (SAA) with Serbia, despite the fact that Serbia had not fulfilled all of the EU's demands for signing the agreement. This led many in Serbia to consider the SAA a 'concession' to Serbia, to pressure it to recognize Kosovo (Subotić, 2010). The clashing of these two events in turn positioned EU integration as a threat to Serbian sovereignty. This discourse of incompatibility is perhaps best illustrated through the following extract from Vojislav Koštunica's speech at the Protest 'Kosovo is Serbia' held in Belgrade in February, 2008, only days after the province declared independence.

Extract 8:

'If we as Serbs renounce Serbianhood, our origin, our Kosovo, our ancestors and our history – then, who are we Serbs? What is our name then? Is there a nation in the world that is being asked to renounce everything that makes it a nation, as is being sought of the Serbs today? If we accept that we are not Serbs, they are promising us that we, as a nation without memory and origin, will be better off. They are asking us to give up our brothers on Kosovo' —Speech 14, Koštunica (2008-1).

It is through argumentative schemes drawing on family, identity and origin that Kosovo is constructed as the essence of Serbia, warranting the rejection of the demands made by an unidentified 'they'. Considering the wider context of this speech, we see that 'they' refers to the EU. Namely, as a consequence of Kosovo's declaration of independence, the Democratic coalition became divided on the issue of how to proceed with EU relations. The schism that occurred as a result of the event further speaks to the feared implications EU integration might have for Kosovo's status within the group, an argument both sides drew on.

Extract 9:

'Our first objective must be to defend Serbia, which means to defend Kosovo. And when we would agree to only defend Kosovo literally, while using alternative routes by signing various agreements to gradually allow for the implementation of Kosovo's independence, then without a doubt, that same foreign actor would assert that we are good and that we are committed to European integration. The DSS will never accept that pro-European means paying with 15% of Serbian territory. Nor will we ever accept that we are not for Europe simply because we are for all of Serbia in Europe' —Speech 16, Koštunica (2008–2).

Extract 10:

'As was said yesterday in Luxemburg by European officials, the SAA is neutral on the question of the status of Kosovo, the solution to the question of the status of Kosovo and Metohija will be found in the UN Security Council and in direct contact with those countries who unfortunately made the mistake and injustice towards our

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country by recognizing the illegal unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo. And the address is not Brussels, it's not Luxemburg, but Washington, Rome, Paris and London. And of course New York where the UN is located. Those are the addresses for solving the problem of Kosovo, and not the SAA or Brussels and Luxemburg. […] So any other representations of this reality is clear political manipulation and lie as part of pre-election campaigning' —Speech 15, (Đelić, 2008–2).

The importance of constructing change as continuous with politics around Kosovo is visible in both speeches, and it is again here that we see the international community in general, and the EU in particular as being constructed as a possible threat by the opposition. While both politicians acknowledge the incompatibility between Serbia's politics towards Kosovo and the politics of the member-states of the EU, Koštunica does so by clearly articulating that Serbia will only be accepted internationally when it gives up some of its territory. In response to Koštunica's claims, Đelić tries to appease these criticisms and an increasingly worrying public, by referring to these incompatibilities as an unfortunate mistake made by the countries that recognized Kosovo's independence as legal. Đelić further chooses to repudiate the potential threat of losing Kosovo as part of joining the EU by spatially separating the political issues. The issue of Kosovo (Washington, Rome, Paris and London) and the EU integration process (Brussels, Luxemburg) are thus geographically located in different places. In doing so, Đelić is able to reject fears of loss of uniqueness (through loss of Kosovo) as a consequence of another set of political actions (EU integration) (Wodak et al., 2009). In other words, he is able to consolidate continuity and change by physically and psychologically separating the two political agendas.

A similar attempt at appeasing fears of loss of continuity because of EU integration can be seen in the following extract by President Boris Tadić in 2012, the year when Serbia gained official candidacy status.

Extract 11:

'The position of Serbia is crystal clear in terms of the recognition of Kosovo. Serbia is not going to recognize Kosovo's independence under any circumstances and that is all that I can say today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. That position is not changeable' —Speech 17, Tadić (2012).

Within this second time period, we see attempts by politicians to try to anchor the process of democratization in the idea of joining the European Union. Established discourses around continuity are reflected in references to Kosovo, and the presence of schisms speaks to inability of some politicians to consolidate the political goals of EU integration with the identity of the nation. Thus, we see the increasing challenges faced by politicians trying to promote EU integration as the incompatibility between domestic and foreign policies cause ambiguity towards the process.

## Discussion

The present analysis illustrates the ways in which politicians navigate arguments of continuity and change over time by drawing on various strategies of construction, justification and perpetuation. The use of an extended time frame allows us to illustrate how discourses on political change become localized in larger discourses on history, continuity with history and national identity. In turn, it further allows us to illustrate how the territory of Kosovo, rooted in the myth of origin, has permeated discussion of change over the last 20 years in Serbia, and is frequently drawn on as a strategic resource by politicians to positions their politics as aligned with national interests and identity. Last, the analysis demonstrates the ways in which not only history but also more powerful 'other' players, such as the international community, are draw on to 'legitimize' political agendas or to construct the nation as under threat. We will discuss each in turn before concluding.

The analysis illustrated that while no explicit references to 'national identity' were present (only one instance of this occurred within the 18 speeches), the construction of an in-group identity occurred through references to the past, continuity and the importance of unity against a potential threat. The speeches chosen focused on significant political events in Serbia's recent history, and they illustrate the challenge faced by politicians in attempting to act as entrepreneurs of identity in order to mobilize the public for collective action (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). The analysis illustrates that these entrepreneurs of identity become restricted by the historical charter and thus have to make their political ideas compatible with the perceived historical origin and mission of the in-group. Most frequently, we saw this occurring in relation to Kosovo.

From the analysis, it can be argued that the battle of Kosovo in 1389 has continued to be an important guiding historical charter within politics in Serbia over the past 20 years (Liu & Hilton, 2005). However, the historical charter of Kosovo proves important because of the cultural elements it perpetuates, rather than the strictly historical events of the battle of Kosovo. Namely, the narrative around Kosovo has established a Serbian 'essence' emphasizing the co-existence of victimhood and resilience. The 'heroic martyrdom' mentality rooted in the charter grounds most of the speeches analyzed, and becomes an essential point of collective continuity, which constrains the rhetoric strategies available to political speakers. This discourse in turn is not limited to the persuasive language of politicians, but is visible in broader institutional practices such as education and policy-making (MacDonald, 2002; Subotić, 2011). Thus, similar to the findings by Smeekes and Verkuyten (2014), we see perceived cultural continuity to be more significant in shaping in-group identification, and thereby compatibility with political agendas, than perceived historical continuity. It is thus important to consider the beliefs, values and traditions communicated through the telling of historical events, rather than their

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causes and consequences. Last, discourses around Kosovo also shape inter-group relations, as it is in instances where the politics around Kosovo are under threat than the international community becomes a unifying threat, for both the parties in power and those in opposition.

The importance of the international community is similar over the data set, for those proposing change it is seen as an ally, whereas for those resisting change, it is seen as a threat. Thus, those proposing political change, which at times is seen as incompatible with continuity, choose to also draw on the support and authority of the international community to support their goals. The importance of international recognition of Serbia becomes evident in second time-period as the politicians attempt to overcome the stigmatizing consequences of the 1990s and re-establish a positive image of Serbia. This has not only consequences for politics but also national identity and the political attitudes of the people. Powerful 'others' become resources for politicians to draw on in order to afford legitimacy to their politics and to thereby attempt to construct a sense of belonging, and representativeness, within the larger international community in general and the superordinate group of the EU in particular. Appeasing threats to autonomy and identity when joining a superordinate group becomes important in creating public support for the union (Sindic & Reicher, 2009; Wodak et al., 2009).

In the present study, the use of diachronic data allowed us to examine how the co-existence of continuity and change occurred in political discourse. We illustrated how a longitudinal approach to social-political phenomena such as identity allows us to clearly track how change becomes constructed as non-threatening to a nation and its way of life by making promises of continuity to historical and cultural elements of a national identity. Thus, the present study offers some insight into the ways in which political elites mobilize identity in order to promote political agendas, in different ways over time. It extends this discussion by showing that the strategies used by entrepreneurs of identity become successful to the extent that they acknowledge, and interact with, established discourses on national identity.

Thus, a psychological perspective with a temporal dimension can function to track how the political agendas proposed by politicians move from 'being' possible alternatives for the future to 'becoming' socially recognized and acceptable avenues of progress. The importance of intertextuality becomes visible through the use of a diachronic data set, where responses to prior discourses or anticipated discourse of the future become evident, showing how the socio-political and historical context comes to interact with the social actors attempting to promote or resist change.

## Conclusion

Power, be it social or political, is legitimized or de-legitimized in discourses. One of the ways in which this occurs is by constructing one's politics as aligned with history, and thus a continuation of a group's essence. Politicians then, as key entrepreneurs of identity, can attempt to discursively manage the relationship between identity continuity and political change by perpetuating a national identity rooted in a historically developed (and so taken-for-granted) discourse on the origin and mission of the nation. These historical charters become powerful tools for shaping collective action and the future of a nation.

In the present paper, we have shown the ways in which this occurs, and by using an extended time frame, the diachronic nature of discourse on socio-political change in Serbia has been demonstrated. Although the study does not offer an exhaustive account of political discourse in Serbia over the past 25 years, it does offer a starting point for exploring how the discursive construction of national identity in the present has developed through key historical turning points in Serbia's recent political past. We add to the broader literature on entrepreneurs of identity and the inter-relationship between identity continuity and socio-political change by illustrating how a diachronic data set can allow us to uncover how the construction and negotiation of national identity become shaped by, and at times constrained by, discourses that have gained legitimacy and taken-for-grantedness over time. By mapping out the 'historical charter' of a nation, this type of study allows us to uncover what has remained stable, and thereby essential to national identity over time, illustrating more clearly the challenges faced by those promoting a different socio-political reality for the future of a nation. Specifically, by looking at the role political speeches play in this process, we can understand how the democratic choices that citizens make about their nation's future are informed by the available discourses within their socio-political environment. In doing so, we see the importance of considering the role of time, both theoretically and methodologically, in research on socio-political change.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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# Preface 3: Chapter 6

Chapter 6 combines both qualitative and quantitative datasets to bring together the exploratory, in-depth parts of the thesis with data designed to test some of the key threads that emerged from the qualitative findings. Namely, Chapter 6 provides an explicit focus on the role of power, and how it interlinks with identity processes, in the context of supranational integration. Discussions around power and powerlessness featured heavily within much of the qualitative data and point to the importance of explicitly considering how it shapes both the relationship between continuity and attitudes towards change and the relationship between compatibility and dual identification. The chapter brings together many of the themes from the previous chapters and focuses specifically on how these shape processes of identification and attitudes towards change. While Chapter 4 focused on giving more in-dept insight into how Serbs use a historical perspective for making sense of Serbia's present and future politics in the context of EU accession, Chapter 6 focuses more specifically on the supranational context and the subgroup-superordinate group dynamics that permeate it. In doing so, Chapter 6 contributes important insights into how subgroup and superordinate group dynamics are shaped by perceived belonging, compatibility and power. Questions of identity undermining, as a form of threat to a way of life, become central throughout the chapter and highlight the importance of representation within a superordinate group. The chapter draws heavily on the work of Sindic and Reicher (2009) and attempts to extend this work to consider the temporalities of power and the importance of both self- and meta-representation in managing a sense of belonging in a superordinate group.

Chapter 6 was co-authored with Jennifer Sheehy Skeffington and the manuscript is in preparation for publication.

# Chapter 6: Power, identity, and belonging to a superordinate group: The case of Serbia and the EU.

Abstract:

Politicians have argued that the expansion of the European Union (EU) allows European populations to overcome intergroup differences and promote a common identity that can co-exist with strong national identities. However, recent events such as the Brexit referendum result and the Eurozone financial crisis, have illustrated that the EU as a superordinate group can often become a source of threat and tension vis-a-vis national identity concerns. Taking a mixed methods approach, using focus group (N=67) and survey data (N=1192), we explored the psychosocial dynamics underlying national population ambivalence toward European Union integration in the case of a potential future member state, Serbia. The findings from the qualitative study highlight concerns about national identity continuity as part of the EU and perceptions of compatibility between a Serbian and European identity. To explore these issues further, a survey was administered to Serbs across the socioeconomic spectrum, asking questions about power, identity and attitudes towards EU accession. Results demonstrated a relationship between perceptions of relative power in Europe and sense of belongingness in the EU, as illustrated through two moderated mediation models. In the first, perceptions of future powerlessness of Serbia as an EU member led to heightened fears of identity undermining in the EU, which in turn had downstream consequences for attitudes towards EU accession. In the second, perceptions of Serbia's current relative powerlessness lowered perceptions that Serbia was representative of Europe, and this lowered identification of Serbs as European. Both indirect pathways were stronger among high national identifiers. We conclude by discussing the importance of considering intergroup power relations in processes of superordinate group dynamics, and the extent to which these can function as either barriers or bridges to positive integration.

The present state of the European Union (EU) is one of growing scepticism toward membership and enlargement, both among existing and prospective member-states. Prominent questions of belonging, culture, history, and intergroup dynamics become important to consider when making sense of the current state of global politics and the rise of nationalism in various forms. Doing so requires taking seriously the EU, its enlargement and integration, as inherently social psychological phenomena, making it useful to consider how theories of intergroup relations can be applied to make sense of negative attitudes towards the EU. If EU membership is seen as threatening to nations, what, specifically, does it threaten, and why?

In this article, we consider the case of Serbia, a prospective EU member, as an example through which to explore (1) how citizens perceive national identity-related threats posed by accession to a supranational body, (2) the underlying role of power dynamics and representativeness in shaping the perceived compatibility between a national and supranational identity, and (3) consequences for attitudes in favour of joining a supranational body. Taking a mixed methods approach, we consider the extent to which a sense of intergroup power asymmetry and threat to national identity might shape citizens attitudes toward EU accession and integration, in part by constraining the perceived compatibility between identifying with one's country and identifying with the higher level grouping it is about to join.

**Threat in the context of superordinate membership**

Social psychological theorizing on threat in contexts of intergroup relations has illustrated that there are two different types of threats that can be experienced: realistic and symbolic. Though early research on intergroup conflict positioned realistic threat as pivotal (cf. Allport, 1954 Bobo, 1983; Sherif, 1966), the role of symbolic threat, in the form of threat to values, culture, and identity, is increasingly being recognized (Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Matera, Stefanile & Brown, 2015). In an attempt to overcome the perception of threat as either realistic or symbolic, Sindic and Reicher (2009) propose using the concept of identity indermining, to allow for a conceptualization of identity threat that encompasses both threat on a cognitive level *and* on the level of practically realizing one's social identity. The concept of identity undermining, unlike previous conceptualizations of symbolic threat, addresses the more 'active' dimensions of social identity: the ability to enact a certain identity and thus to maintain its continuity as part of a superordinate group. Drawing on research

on Scottish people's attitude towards Britain, Sindic and Reicher argue that the concept of identity undermining is derived from two factors; incompatibility and power(lessness). Firstly, incompatibility refers to the perception that different subgroups within a superordinate group are not (or will not) be able to express or enact their identities at the same time. Secondly, power(lessness) refers to the perceived position of power of the subgroup vis-à-vis other subgroups. In the case of membership in a supranational group such as Britain or the EU, the prospect that one's subgroup (national) is neither compatible with, nor powerful within, the larger supranational context, can have important consequences for whether people support independence or integration.

Again taking the case of supranational identity, we explore these two key antecedents of identity undermining by considering how existing models of superordinate identities address, or explain, the key processes at play in shaping sub- and superordinate group dynamics.

## Compatibility: Superordinate membership and dual identification

Two key models within social psychology that have been informative for our understanding of subgroup-superordinate group dynamics are the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM, see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; 2012) and Ingroup Projection Model (IPM, see Wenzel, Mummendey & Waldzus, 2007). Both models are rooted in the work of Turner (1987) and self-categorization theory, but rely on different mediating processes in explaining when, and how, superordinate identities become either conflicting or compatible with subgroup identities.

The CIIM draws on the concept of 'depersonalization' to argue that the introduction of a superordinate group evokes a process of re-categorization among members of a subgroup. As part of this process, perceived out-group members are categorized as members of a new, common ingroup, are seen as more similar to oneself, and are therefore more positively perceived than previously. The outcome is the creation of a 'dual identity'which allows subgroups to maintain a sense of distinctiveness alongside membership in a larger, common ingroup (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Hopkins, 2011). As Dovidio, Gaertner and Saguy (2008) explain "[a] dual identity involves the simultaneous activation of original subgroup identities and a common ingroup identity." (p.301). In this scenario, identification with one's subgroup becomes positively correlated with identification with the superordinate group, as the

two identities can exist in harmony. This approach to superordinate groups has been successfully applied to studies of acculturation and migration, which outline the complex ways in which individuals balance needs for inclusiveness and distinctiveness by re-categorizing the superordinate group through its commonalities with the subgroup (Berry, 2006; Hopkins, 2011; Gomez et al., 2013; Vezzali et al., 2015).

In contrast to the CIIM, the IPM sees subgroups as inherently in tension with one another as part of a larger superordinate group. The IPM draws on the concept of 'prototypicality' from self-categorization theory, which defines a 'prototype' as a person within a specific group that best represents, or embodies, the goals, values and norms of the group, and is therefore seen as an 'ideal-type' member in a given context (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1998). The IPM extends this concept to superordinate group dynamics by arguing that subgroups will tend to project their own image onto the 'prototype' of the superordinate group, closely aligning their subgroup's values with those seen to be representative of the superordinate category (Wenzel et al., 2007). These dynamics have consequences for the extent to which other subgroups are perceived as compatible with the superordinate group, as the more one projects one's own group's identity onto the superordinate identity, the less positively one evaluates members of other groups within that broader category. Thus, according to the IPM, the process of projecting one's subgroups identity onto the larger superordinate identity, becomes a way for compatibility between the two to be achieved. Yet unlike the CIIM, it limits the extent to which all subgroups are seen as compatible with the superordinate group. In addition, this process has real implications for group dynamics as prototypicality affects the legitimacy of unequal status relations between groups, and the access to resources that these entail. Specifically, the more prototypical member or subgroup will be perceived as more entitled to the privileges associated with membership in the superordinate category than less prototypical members (Wenzel et al., 2007, p. 336; Waldzus, Mummendey, Wenzel & Boettcher, 2004).

What factors determine prototypicality? The IPM emphasizes that ingroup projection is affected by reality constraints such as historical intergroup relations, status and power, which can lead to one group being regarded as more prototypical than another in a superordinate context (Waldzus et al., 2004). As such, the literature refers to *relative* ingroup projection, in that prototypicality tends to be higher in *relative* terms than absolute terms, especially among subgroups of lower social status and power. In other words, ingroup members subjectively rate their group as more

prototypical of the superordinate group than out-group members would rate them: they see themselves as more representative of the umbrella identity than others do. Yet this does not happen to the same extent for all groups, as demonstrated by research showing systematic *asymmetry* in ingroup projection. Devos & Banaji (2005), for example, reported that Asian Americans rated their own ethnic group as less prototypical of the superordinate category 'American' than they rated White Americans. Ultimately, the determinant of which group comes to see itself as prototypical of a superordinate group, and to be recognised as such, is the level of power it has in the intergroup context.

**Power(lessness): Ingroup projection, prototypicality and defining 'us'**

Before we discuss the role of power, it is important to distinguish between status and power, especially as IPM has focused more explicitly on addressing questions of status rather than power. According to Turner (2005), power is a social means of having impact on the world through people. Following Turner, Reicher (2015) argues that "[t]hose who are in a position to define the meanings of group identities, and how they should translate into action in any given context, are in a position to wield that social power: They control a world-making resource." (p. 4). It is this definition of power that we employ throughout this paper.

While closely aligned with this definition of power, status has in turn been conceptualized as the social value of a person or a group, and has often been given preference over the concept of power within research following the social identity approach (Gleibs & Haslam, 2016). Yet in the present context, where the focus is on the EU as a superordinate group, it is being that powerful entails being in a position to define what it means to be European both on a cognitive and practical level.

The IPM does in fact acknowledge how asymmetries in both group status and power can limit the extent to which low status groups can claim a sense of prototypicality of a superordinate group (Waldzus et al., 2004). However, within this work the focus has been predominantly on status, its antecedents and consequences for ingroup projection and superordinate group dynamics (Weber, Mummendey & Waldzus, 2002). In contrast, the application of insights regarding intergroup power has not yet come with the direct measurement of perceptions of power within studies of ingroup projection, which have so far inferred them from the socio-political or historical relations between two groups (i.e., Waldzus et al., 2004).

As a key antecedent to feelings of identity undermining, perceptions of intergroup power become important to consider as they can constrain the extent to which subgroups feel they will be able to maintain a sense of identity continuity as part of a superordinate group. This type of scenario has been considered more explicitly within studies of migration and acculturation, focusing on the different expectations of minority and majority groups within a superordinate national context (Berry, 2006; Matera, Stefanile & Brown, 2015; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). For example, across three studies, Verkuyten & Yildiz (2007) illustrate that perceived rejection of minorities by majorities (within a superordinate context) can lead to both an increase in minority identification and a weakening of superordinate identification (p. 1460). This literature highlights the importance of recognition of one's representativeness and belonging by more powerful relevant others. In other words, it highlights the usefulness of considering not only what ingroup members think and believe, but also what they perceive relevant others to think and believe.

What we think other people think is core to the concept of 'meta-representation', as it involves the representation of the mental and social representations of others (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011; see also literature on meta-perceptions and meta-stereotyping; Vorauer, Main & O'Connell, 1998; Matera, Stefanile & Brown, 2015; Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011). Meta-representations come to matter, particularly among low power groups, as they can indicate the extent to which individuals see their groups' claims to group membership (at a superordinate level) to be considered valid and legitimate. Considering meta-representations and their link to intergroup power relations thus allows us to extend the work on identity undermining to consider the ways in which not only subgroup-superordinate group continuity, but also subgroup-subgroup dynamics, shape identification with, and attitudes towards, supranational entities.

In the case of EU accession, we must ask whether citizens' perceptions of representativeness and power of one's own and other nations, and of other nations' perceptions of such factors, can offer a window into whether the supranational identity of the EU is seen as either enhancing or undermining of their subgroup identity.

**Present Research**

How are the above dynamics between groups of unequal power articulated by low power group members, and how do they affect the possibility of identification with a

superordinate identity it is applying to join? In this paper, we explore the antecedents of superordinate group identification from a low power group's perspective, highlighting the threat to identity continuity and compatibility made salient by an unequal intergroup power context. Focusing on Serbia, a country facing accession to a European Union arguably dominated by more higher power countries (i.e., Chryssochoou, 2000a), we examine the processes enabling and constraining the vision of the EU: to maintain a sense of national identity alongside an affiliation with a supranational community.

We adopt a mixed-methods approach, drawing on its potential to overcome some of the limitations of single methods and result in a more synthetic research product (Power, Velez, Qadafi, & Tennant, 2018). By firstly drawing on qualitative focus group data, we explore the meaning given to national and supranational identities as well as the complex ways in which these meanings shape discourses on EU integration. We then draw on quantitative survey data to test the generalizability of insights regarding the relationships between identity, power, recognition, and change. Thus, in Study 1, we explore how identity and intergroup relations feature in discussions among Serbs about political integration into the European Union. We then use insights from this qualitative analysis to quantitatively assess the relationship between perceptions of power, prototypicality, identity undermining, and superordinate group identification, and the consequences of these for political attitudes. More precisely, the two studies ask the following questions;

*Study 1: What are the lay understandings of supranational integration in the context of Serbia joining the EU, and how do these relate to identity and intergroup threat?*

*Study 2: What is the underlying role of power dynamics in shaping 1) fears of the undermining of Serbian identity by EU accession, 2) perceptions of prototypicality of the category 'European', and 3) the perceived compatibility of national and supranational identification? What are the consequences of these processes for attitudes in favour of EU accession?*

## Study 1

### Methods

A total of nine focus groups were conducted in Serbia between 2015 and 2016. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling, targeting Serbian citizens living in different cities, both urban and rural, across the country. For each focus group, one initial participant was contacted via telephone and (if they accepted) served as the point of contact for that particular city, helping the first author to organize a setting in which to conduct the focus group and also to gain access to other potential participants. The first four focus groups were conducted in 2015 and the remaining five were conducted in early 2016.The rationale behind the sampling of these individuals was not to reach statistical representativeness or generalisability, but rather to explore the diversity in beliefs and opinions expressed by a larger pool of individuals (see Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, p.7).

*Participants*

Sixty-seven individuals participated in this study (27 females and 40 males). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 57 (M=34). Each focus group was composed of 5-9 participants. Occupations ranged from full time study to employment in the public and private sector. All focus groups took place in 'natural' settings such as cafes, participant homes, or reserved rooms in local libraries.

*Procedure*

Prior to the focus group, participants were given an information sheet, conveying the aims of the study, and a consent form to sign. The same topic guide was used for all groups, with a total of six questions covering themes of Serbia's relationship with, and potential future in, the EU, as well as the nation's history within Europe and questions of how domestic politics would be influenced by the EU. The topic guide was piloted on four individuals from the capital city, Belgrade, two months prior to data collection, and minor changes were made to the wording of three questions based on their feedback. All focus groups were conducted (and subsequently analysed) in Serbian by the first author. Each focus group lasted between 21 and 77 minutes (mean = 61 minutes). In order to ensure participant confidentiality all names and identifiers were modified during transcription

*Analysis*

The audio-recorded sessions were transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was conducted following the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). All

transcripts were coded using NVivo 11, a qualitative data software program. After coding five of the transcripts, a codebook was developed and applied to the remaining transcripts. The first round of coding led to 42 codes. These were then revisited, and some codes were removed (due to infrequency), or merged with similar codes after re-reading the coded sections. The final codebook included 38 codes, 10 basic themes and three organizing themes (see Figure 1 below).  In order to ensure reliability, a sample of six translated pages were given to a fellow researcher, along with the codebook and code descriptors. Further, in order to ensure the language barrier in coding was overcome, the same sample of six pages were given to a Serbian researcher from Belgrade, along with the codebook and code descriptors. In the former case, intercoder reliability was 85%, and in the latter it was 92%.

**Results**

The thematic analysis brought to the fore three organizing themes which permeated much of the discussions around politics and Serbia's place in the EU: 1) The EU as a source of civic improvement 2) Political change as rupture to collective continuity and 3) The EU as a source of inferiority. In presenting them below, all names have been changed to either W (indicating female participant) or M (indicating male participant) followed by a number, which was assigned through order of speaking in the focus groups.

***Theme 1: The EU as a source of civic improvement***

An important theme across focus group discussions centered on unpacking what the benefits of EU membership were, and which sections of Serbian society were in need of change. Emphasis on the structural benefits of EU integration was common, and participants voiced belief in the idea that Serbia would "become more organized if it joined the EU, particularly in relation to laws" (Participant 6, Novi Sad). In these discussions, participants collaboratively managed the conflict between critiquing the lack of progress made by Serbia vis-à-vis EU countries, and situating the blame for that lack of progress.

| EU as a source of civic improvement | Rupture to collective continuity | EU as a source of inferiority |
|---|---|---|
| • *Benefits to EU integration*<br>• EU has better laws<br>• EU entails possibility to leave dysfunctional nation<br>• EU entails more freedom of trade<br>• EU represents national progress<br>• Want EU standards of living<br>• *Limits to Serbian self-improvement*<br>• Incompetent political leadership<br>• Lack of accountability for the past<br>• Public powerless in political decision-making | • *Choosing a political 'side'*<br>• Historic ties to Russia<br>• EU enforces common foreign policy<br>• EU unstable as a union<br>• The West support Albanian expansion on Serb territory<br>• Serbian politics straddling East & West<br>• *Everyday-level change*<br>• EU means changing mentality<br>• EU places limit on banal practices of nationalism<br>• Fears of identity loss<br>• Loss of collectivist values<br>• Serbia incompatible with EU way of life<br>• Inability to imagine the future<br>• *Losing national sovereignty*<br>• EU makes decisions for new members<br>• Losing territory over time<br>• The importance of national borders<br>• *The political status of Kosovo*<br>• Historical significance of Kosovo<br>• Kosovo 'parasite' on Serbia<br>• Kosovo is de facto independent<br>• Kosovo is only 'temporarily' lost<br>• Resistance to de jure recognition of Kosovo | • *Feeling subordinate & stigmatized*<br>• Negative views of Serbia in EU<br>• Internalized stigmatization<br>• *Negotiating accountability for stigmatization*<br>• Critical of in-group<br>• Institutions causing corrupt behaviour<br>• Institutions censor criticism<br>• *Power asymmetry within the EU*<br>• EU exploits incoming members<br>• Hierarchy of countries within union<br>• Serbia dependent on EU aid<br>• Serbia implementing change mindlessly to please EU<br>• *Rationalizing lack of progress*<br>• Ideological shift from communism to capitalism<br>• Institutional instability over time |

*Figure 6.1*: **Overview of Thematic Analysis**

*Excerpt 1: Vranje, Southern Serbia*

W1: [Joining the EU would bring] safety, legality, order, some normalcy, certainty that you'll be able to live a normal life tomorrow, a humanitarian life, and to live and expect a normal retirement with a pension and that everything is covered by the law. We currently don't have that.

M2: But that needs to start with us. The EU can't come and now it's like 'oh, it's going to change my mentality'. No. We have to start with us, that is, everything depends on you and me.

W1: No, I'm saying that I expect that because they [EU] would probably have some influence, or allow for a new generation of politicians […] if someone makes you do the right thing, I think there is some logic to that…

Excerpt 1 illustrates that there is a clear tension in relation to who is responsible for bringing about change in Serbia, but also what exactly needs to change. Underlying this tension is a deeper ambiguity in regards to whether the 'problem' of Serbia lies in its system (i.e., institutions and political leaders) or its people (i.e., the mentality of Serbs). While W1 argues for institutional and political changes, M1 situates change in

the mentality of the Serbian people. The implications of problematizing the Serbian 'psyche' and constructing it as if at odds with the EU can be seen more explicitly in the excerpt below;

*Excerpt 2: Čačak, Central Serbia*

W4: I think that the EU can bring one very good thing for us, and that is its laws, regulations, rules and generally all procedural matters […] We're a people where 'oh it can be done this way, oh or maybe that way it doesn't matter', but there [in the EU]

M3: No I don't agree, the Germans are no better people than us, they just have to respect the laws, and we would be like Germans if we respected the laws –

W4: we cannot be like Germans –

M3: We can, we can

W4: We aren't

M3: When the law would force you, yes you would.

A seemingly tautological argument emerges in the discourse of participant M3, where improvement entails respecting the laws, which can only be done if the law in turn forces you to do so. Interestingly enough, without previous reference to Germany, M3 uses Germany as a synonym for the EU, a seemingly unconscious replacement that begins to reveal the meaning given to the social category of the EU. In fact, throughout the focus group discussions, countries such as Germany, France and England (noting that data was collected before the British 'Brexit' referendum) were frequently mentioned when participants were asked about the EU as a whole. This echoes findings from previous qualitative studies on how the meaning given to the EU identity project tends to situate Western European countries as more prototypical of a European identity than non-Western countries (Chryssochoou, 2000a). The use of Germany to signify the EU constructs Serbia as incompatible with the EU, as Serbs 'cannot be like Germans'. Consequently, in both the first and second excerpts, the emphasis on civic change is countered with arguments of cultural, and psychological incompatibilities, which hinder the 'Europeanization' of Serbia.

### Theme 2: Political Change as a Rupture to Collective Continuity

The second theme of the qualitative study focused on how political change was seen as potentially undermining of a Serbian way of life. This sense of threat permeated both micro-level expressions of continuity through social practices, and macro-level

expressions of continuity in relation to geopolitics and national sovereignty, emphasizing the need to understand both realistic and symbolic threat as relevant to questions of identity. One such potential threat was to the historical and cultural ties that Serbia had with Russia, which seemed for many participants to be in direct conflict with the political aspirations of its government.

*Excerpt 3: Belgrade (1), Capital of Serbia*

W5: It's simply not possible that we'll join the EU without previously having done with Russia what they [the EU] wants us to in order to get on board with the EU's way of thinking in relation to Russia. Because if they let you join them they surely won't let you have anything independent of that

[M2: Of course]

W5: In terms of thinking. That's a big topic, meaning, now you're going to have to explain to Serbs, to get them to think that Russians aren't all that nice, even though that's what you've been telling them for hundreds of years. That'll require a lot of work.

The assumption that EU integration entailed not only a common foreign policy but also a common 'way of thinking' speaks to social psychological underpinnings of sense making in contexts of political change. For example, many participants weighed the cost-benefit relationship of EU integration from the perspective of what the EU would bring vs. what it would take away. In some cases, what would be taken away was quite tangible;

*Excerpt 4: Belgrade (3), Capital of Serbia*

W2: The question is, when that moment comes, and the last condition is the 'de jure' recognition, both de facto and de jure recognition of Kosovo? Because you can't join the EU when you can't define your borders. […] they messed up once with Cyprus, which was a comparably smaller problem than this.

In other discussions, loss to continuity was expressed through references of 'banal' nationalism (Billig, 1995), evident in social practices. The following two excerpts highlight this;

*Excerpt 5: Belgrade (2), Capital of Serbia*

W1: The standards, we want EU standards, but to say to a farmer from Sumadija [region known for the production of plum brandy, Serbia's national drink] "you can't make your own brandy", he'll say "who me? What do I need the EU for?"

*Excerpt 6: Niš, Southeast Serbia*
M4: Our people, an average citizen with a high school education says "we'll get this and that [benefits], that's great!" but when you tell him "you can't park your car wherever you want man" then it's "oh, what, the EU? What's the point?"

With topics ranging from foreign relations to parking cars, it is evident that participants see a certain incompatibility between Serbia and the EU. Where does the fear of a rupture to collective continuity come from? The third, and final theme, suggests an answer to this question. Namely, these perceptions of the EU as a threat to continuity are rooted in discussions about the subgroup dynamics within the superordinate group. In particular, perceptions of unequal power relations between the nations of the EU was linked with arguments that those nations with more power were afforded the ability to dictate what being European means, both politically and psychologically.

### Theme 3: EU as a source of inferiority: the importance of 'others' in supranational groups

Two interrelated discussions featured within this final theme, which centred on the role of other subgroups within the EU and the power relations within the supranational group itself. Namely, participants' sense of incompatibility with the EU came from perceptions of the EU as a union dominated by Western European countries, which in turn were seen not only as different from Serbia, but also intolerant towards creating a diverse European community and thus recognizing Serbia's place within it.

*Excerpt 7: Belgrade (2), Capital of Serbia*
M1: In any case I think they should at least try to 'Europeanize' us, even if those aren't some values that, I don't consider the 'Europeanization' paradigm to be, we are Europe just as much as they are and with regards to civilization, well maybe we are a little bit on the edge, with some influences from the Oriental, and both East and West. But I think that we are no less European from them over there […] and I think that no one will ever, even if we do join the EU, we'll be some third class country there. You

know exactly which countries are of first class, such as for example Germany and France, which for example have the right to subsidize agriculture, France is so powerful that I can do that. But for us, that won't be allowed…

M4: and we expect that.

Within this excerpt, we see how Western European countries (Germany and France) as positioned as powerful in the EU and Europe through their ability to define what it means to be European, over and beyond a geographical belonging ('we are Europe just as much as they are') and through the expectation of Serbs that they use that power to'Europeanizing' Serbs. Interestingly, the need to claim that Serbia is 'no less European than them over there' indicates that participants draw on meta-representations of 'Europeanness' when negotiating the meaning of this social category, meta-perceptions which in turn might position Serbia as less prototypical of a European community than other countries. This was evident in other groups as well, where participants voiced negative meta-representations of Serbia as rewarded by Europe at large (i.e., They see that Europe is rewarding anyone who hates Serbs, and so they go "oh we hate Serbia too.", *Niš, Southeast Serbia*). In other words, power became an important resource in dictating not only politics in the EU, but also the way of life and identity of the supranational group (Sindic & Reicher, 2009). Consider the following quote (again, data collected prior to the British 'Brexit' referendum);

*Excerpt 8: Čačak, Central Serbia*

W6: All we want is to be an equal member, but there are no equal members there. Everyone knows who's who.

M1: Who's in charge.

W6: Like they say, 'all countries are small, only Britain is Great.' (Laughter)

R: What are some of the things you think might be less beneficial with joining the EU then?

W4: Loss of identity

W3: In fact, we'll become a colony

M2: We already are

W4: Yes! Either way we already are…

Echoing the awareness of a privileging of Western European countries seen in the previous excerpt, the current exchange illustrates the extent to which some participants see EU integration as not only undermining of a Serbian identity, but potentially destructive of it. The use of the word 'colony' interlinks questions of power and belonging, and anchors the EU project in Europe's colonial past. This in turn highlights that the construction of meaning in regards to a superordinate group such as Europe cannot be detached from the historical context within which the superordinate group was formed (Kinnvall, 2016). The implication of this for many participants was not only a sense of stigmatization, which was in many cases internalized, but also a sense of incompatibility with the EU.

**Discussion**

Data from focus groups from across Serbia revealed that, at least in everyday conversations, Western European countries are spontaneously drawn on as the prototypes of Europe, creating an exclusive superordinate identity. This in turn makes the process of negotiating a sense of belonging in Europe in general, but the EU in particular, a principally challenging one for Serbia (as it is for the Balkans at large). For many of the participants, the stigma attached to the nation's identity, the perceived power hierarchy within the EU (and Serbia's place at the bottom of it), alongside issues of deeper historical, cultural and practical incompatibilities created a sense of ultimate sacrifice; to belong to the EU would mean to become less Serbian. Thus, participants, due to the socio-political context shaping the relationship between their nation and the EU, seem unable to project their country's characteristics onto a European identity.

These findings have important implications for understanding processes of identification with, and perceived belonging within, a superordinate group. They highlight, firstly, the importance of symbolic concerns alongside the potential material and symbolic benefits on offer from joining the supranational group of the EU. For the participants within this study, there was a clear tension between wanting to be seen as part of a civilized, stable, economically productive, and regulated Europe, and the perception that Serbia was neither welcome nor representative of the cultural values and norms of a European identity. Those countries spontaneously referred to in discussion of Europeanness are described as having a great deal of power in defining the unique perspective on reality which is seen as aligned with a European identity

(i.e., excerpt 3), and which Serbia would need to adopt in order to fit in. In sum, there seemed to be two interrelated threads which permeated the focus group discussions; the first related to the relationship between the subgroup and the superordinate (the nation and the EU, incorporating Themes 1 and 2, above), while the second centred on the relationship between subgroups within the superordinate (Serbia and other nations, such as Germany, corresponding to Theme 3, above). Both threads, in turn, were placed in a larger context of questions of power and powerlessness, and the implications this had for identity and the ability to 'be' Serbian in an EU future.

Looking at the first thread, perceptions of Serbia's future power-position, were it to be a member of the EU, seemed to be intimately linked with perceptions of the sustainability of the unique identity of Serbs once they become EU members, and this mattered for whether participants were supportive of, or resistant towards, EU accession. There are similarities here to the findings of Sindic & Reicher (2009) in the case of Scottish identification with the UK, in which perceptions of the future powerlessness of the subgroup in the superordinate group predicted perceived identity undermining, which in turn shaped attitudes towards supranational membership. Our focus group findings suggest that this model applies beyond the case of existing members of a supranational union to that of prospective members. This leads to the prediction that support for obtaining supranational group membership depends on the perception that such membership will enhance, rather than undermine, the subgroup identity. Identity undermining in turn, depends on perceptions of the power one's group will have in that scenario. If this set of processes follows the same pattern as in national populations considering leaving supranational groups (see Sindic & Reciher, 2009), then they should play out most clearly among high national identifiers, as these will be the most worried about threats to national identity.

If this negative association does exist between perceived future power-position, identity undermining and attitudes towards support for accession, then it would seem that members of low power groups do not perceive their ingroup as compatible with, let alone representative of, the superordinate group. The question then becomes, why? As hinted by the second thread running through the qualitative findings, perceptions of current power-position in the EU seem to be important in shaping who is seen as more or less European, and this matters for the prospect of being able to successfully identify both as Serbian and as European. We thus need to consider how perceptions of national power constrain the possibilities for dual identification, looking to ingroup

projection as a key mediator. Given the importance of consensus and validation in the representations of superordinate groups, what should matter are not only Serbs' perceptions of prototypicality, but also their perceptions of how prototypical key others in the EU would see them to be. Thus, we might expect that successful dual identification will depend on perceptions (held by Serbs, and as perceived to be held by citizens of high power European countries) of the prototypicality of Serbia as European. This form of consensually validated prototypicality should in turn depend on perceived differences in power between Serbia and that of Europe's highest power countries.

If the above processes operate as suggested, it would mean that support for EU expansion and integration, and the successful dual identification on which it depends, requires accommodation of European identity to incorporate that of new member states.

## Study 2

Study 2 was designed to assess, in a large sample of Serbs, whether the two conceptual threads identified in Study 1 have quantitative empirical grounding. Are the themes we discuss above representative only of the particular set of conversations that arose with our small sample, or might they characterise how Serbians more broadly think about the symbolic concerns arising from potential EU accession? If so, they might have important insights to yield, not only for the tension between EU integration and insular nationalism, but also for the challenges of superordinate group endurance in unequal intergroup contexts.

We administered a survey to a large, diverse sample of Serbian nationals; designed to measure the key constructs emerging from the qualitative study and its theoretical interpretation. Drawing on the two threads identified from Study 1, we set out to test two hypotheses:

*H1: Support for EU accession among Serbs will be predicted by perceived future power of Serbia in the EU, and this relationship will (at least in part) be mediated by lower potential undermining of Serbian identity in an EU context. This mediation model will in turn be moderated by national identification, with the indirect effect being strongest among high national identifiers.*

*H2: Identification of Serbian citizens with Europe will be predicted by the perceived current relative power of Serbia vis-à-vis other European nations (specifically, Germany), and this link will (at least in part) be mediated by the prototypicality of Serbia as European, as estimated by Serbs, and as perceived to be estimated by a higher power European nation (Germany). As an indicator toward successful dual identification, this relationship will be stronger among high national identifiers.*

**Methods**

*Participants*

An online survey was administered to individuals living in Serbia, recruited through various social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook). Participants were informed that the survey was voluntary and anonymous, and that the questions focused on exploring the attitudes of Serbian citizens towards current affairs in Serbia and Europe. At the end of data collection a total of 3 249 responses had been recorded. In order to identify invalid responses the surveys were explored based on percentage completed. As can be seen in appendix 6.1, there is a stark contrast between participants who completed 10% (or less) and those who completed more than 10% of the survey. Considering this, and the high likelihood that those completing very small proportions of the survey were either 'bots' or 'low effort participants' (Buchanan & Scofield, 2018), we removed all responses with 10% or less completed as invalid. The total number of remaining and valid responses were 1192. Of these participants, 29% (349) self-identified as male and 59% (699) self-identified as female, with 12% (144) not indicating their gender. Participants' age ranged from 18-79 years old; the median age was 37.

*Materials & Procedure*

The survey was preregistered via aspredicted.org (REF nr: 6039) and was first constructed in English, after which two research assistants from the University of Belgrade, Serbia were recruited for the translation and back-translation of the items. After both versions of the survey had been returned to the researcher, any discrepancies were discussed with a third bi-lingual research assistant, and the survey was uploaded onto Qualtrics. The order in which measures were completed was randomized, with the exception of placing open-ended questions at the start and demographic questions at the end. Before the survey was administered it was piloted

by 8 individuals living in Serbia. After the pilot, minor spelling errors and cases of scale point mislabelling were corrected.

*Measures*

*National identity and Superordinate identity:* These were assessed by asking participants to respond to five items (7-point scale; 1: Strongly disagree, 7: Strongly agree) that were taken from previous studies on national identity and European identity (see Cinnirella, 1997). Sample items included "To what extent do you feel Serbian / European" and "How important is being Serbian / European to you?" The five-item scales were internally consistent for both national identity (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86) and superordinate identity (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82). For both measures a higher score indicates a stronger identification with the national/European identity.

*Identity undermining:* Adapted from Sindic and Reicher (2009) to reflect a prospective superordinate membership rather than a current one, identity undermining was assessed via four statements addressing their perceptions of the implications of EU membership for national identity ($\alpha = 0.80$). Items (e.g., "Becoming part of the EU will allow Serbia to keep its specific and separate identity" and "If Serbia becomes part of the EU it will undermine the Serbian way of life") were rated on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

*Prototypicality and Meta-prototypicality:* Participants were asked to indicate how 'European' seven countries (France, Germany, Ireland, Romania, Serbia, Spain and Turkey) were from both their own, and a German person's perspective. Specifically, for the prototypicality measure, participants were asked to:

*Bring to mind individuals who were born and live in the greater European area. In your mind, how "European" are people who belong to the following countries? That is, how strongly do you identify them with Europe and all things European?*

To measure meta-prototypicality, participants were asked to:

*Imagine that you are German, and have to answer the following question from the perspective of a German on Europe. According to Germans, how "European" are people who belong to the following countries? That is, how strongly would Germans*

*identify the following groups with Europe and all things European?*

For each country, participants were asked to indicate their opinion on a 7-point Likert scale with labels ranging from 1 (Not at all European) to 7 (Extremely European). Participants were asked to report their personal beliefs (rather than cultural norms) and the instructions to the survey explicitly stated that there were no right or wrong answers to these questions.

*Current power in Europe:* To test whether participants perceived a power asymmetry within Europe, the same seven countries rated for prototypicality and meta-prototypicality were rated individually in terms of their power-position, on a scale of 1 (Powerless) to 7 (Very powerful).

*Future power of Serbia in the EU:* Also adapted from Sindic and Reicher (2009), five statements were used to assess the extent to which participants expected Serbia to hold a position of power in shaping EU decision-making. Items included "The Serbian interest will play a part in determining EU government decision-making" and "When push comes to shove, Western European countries always get their way in EU policy (reverse-coded)", rated on a scale of 1 (Completely disagree) to 7 (Completely agree)($\alpha = 0.68$). A higher score indicated perceptions of more power in the future as part of the EU.

*Support for Serbian government focus on EU accession* was measured through one item asking participants to rate seven domestic and foreign political goals from a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important); these included 'Gaining EU membership', 'Improving the health care system' as well as 'Educational system reform.'

**Results**

Descriptive statistics of the main variables appear in table 6.1. In order to explore how power asymmetries shaped prototypicality, we created a composite variable labelled 'power asymmetry', formed from subtracting ratings of Serbia's current power from the rating of Germany's current power. This new variable thus reflected the perceived difference in power between Serbia and Germany, where a higher score indicated a

higher power-position of Germany vis-à-vis Serbia. [4] As we were testing two separate themes emerging from the focus group data, we divided the variables and analysed their interrelationships in two multiple regression analyses[5].

**Table 6.1:** *Correlation Matrix for Main Variables*

| Variables | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. National identity | 4.37 | 1.55 | | | | | | | |
| 2. European Identity | 3.90 | 1.45 | -.006 | | | | | | |
| 3. Identity Undermining | 4.20 | 1.46 | .307** | -.347** | | | | | |
| 4. Prototypicality | 3.21 | 1.7 | .195** | .281** | -.142** | | | | |
| 5. Meta-prototypicality | 2.23 | 1.40 | .093** | .167** | -.081** | .452** | | | |
| 6. Power asymmetry | 4.5 | 1.3 | -.096** | .056 | .034 | -.156** | -.184** | | |
| 7. Future power in Europe | 2.7 | .94 | -.167** | .194** | -.421** | .023 | .162** | .283** | |
| 8. Importance of EU integration | 5.43 | 3.0 | -.236** | .359** | -.543** | .036 | .074* | -.029 | .373** |
| *Note. N = 1092. *p <.05. **p<.01 *** p<0.001* | | | | | | | | | |
| *All items on 7-point scale except item 8, with 10-point scale.* | | | | | | | | | |

### *Subgroup-Superordinate group dynamics*

Our first hypothesis focused on exploring the subgroup to superordinate group dynamics in relation to the EU. We tested whether the relationship between future power-position in the EU and support for EU accession was mediated by identity undermining, and in turn different among low and high national identifiers, using a moderated mediation analysis (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007; Hayes, 2018). We utilized the SPSS macro PROCESS (Model 14) to explore the conditional indirect effect of identity undermining on the relationship between perceptions of future power in the EU and support for EU accession, at different levels of national identification. The analysis is an example of 'second-order' moderated mediation, meaning that the

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[4] *It is worth noting that only 4 out of 1192 participants reported negative values on this variables, indicating that more than 99% of participants saw Germany as more powerful than Serbia.*

[5] Multiple regression was chosen instead of a more complex structural equation model involving all variables, as the latter would entail testing the impact of one set of variables while controlling for the impact of all other variables and their interactions, thereby distorting the analysis of the two theoretical threads.

role of the moderator is explored only through the effect of the mediator on the dependent variable (see Figure 6.2, taken from Hayes, 2018, p. 591).

**Model 14**

Conceptual Diagram
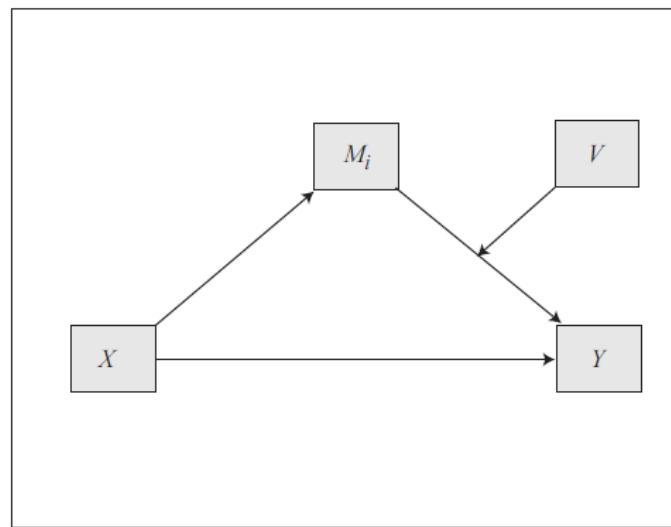


*Figure 6.2.* PROCESS Model 14: Conceptual Diagram of Second-order Moderated Mediation.

The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.2 and illustrated in Figure 6.3. Firstly, perception of increased future power in the EU was negatively correlated with perception of identity undermining as part of the EU ($b$= -.65, $t_{1046}$ = -14.8, $p < .001$), implying that the more power Serbia was perceived to have as a future EU member, the less individuals perceived the EU as potentially undermining of a Serbian identity. Higher perceptions of identity undermining, in turn, led to lower levels of support for EU accession, though this was moderated by national identification. Namely, support for supranational accession depended on the possibility of the maintenance of national identity, most strongly for high national identifiers (+1 SD; $b$=-1.10, $t_{1043}$ = -13.69, $p$ <.001), though also for those at average national identification ($b$=-.94, $t_{1043}$ = -15.48, $p$ < .001) and at low levels of national identification (-1 SD; $b$=-.79, $t_{1043}$ = -9.91, $p$ < .001).

The full moderated mediation analysis illustrated that identity undermining is a significant mediator of the effect of perceived future power on support for EU accession and that this indirect effect is stronger among high national identifiers ($b$=.71, *CI* [.58, .85]) than among low national identifiers ($b$=.51, *CI* [.37, .66]). This was a case of

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partial mediation, as the direct effect of future power in the EU on support for EU accession remained significant ($b= .55$, $t_{1043} = 6.07$, $p < 0.001$) when the indirect pathway through identity undermining was added. The index of moderated mediation provides a final inferential test as to whether the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, through the mediator, is dependent on the moderator (see Hayes, 2015). This coefficient ($b=.07$, $CI$ [.02, .11]) had bootstrapped confidence intervals ($k = 5000$) not including zero, implying significant moderated mediation.

Table 6.2: *Regression results and indirect effects for moderated mediation model (1)*

| | *B* | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mediator variable model (DV = Identity Undermining)* | | | | |
| Constant | 5.93 | .12 | 47.54 | .0001 |
| Future power in EU | -.65 | .04 | -14.84 | .0001 |
| | | | | |
| *Dependent variable model (DV = Support for EU integration)* | | | | |
| Constant | 6.66 | .74 | 8.95 | .0001 |
| Future power in EU | .55 | .09 | 6.06 | .0001 |
| Identity undermining | -.50 | .16 | -3.19 | .0014 |
| National Identity | .29 | .15 | 1.91 | .0559 |
| Identity undermining x National Identity | -.10 | .03 | -2.97 | .0030 |

*Conditional Effects of Identity Undermining on Support for EU integration at values of moderator*

National Identity

| | Boot indirect effect | Boot SE | Boot *t* | Boot *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 1 SD (2.8) | -.79 | .08 | -9.91 | .0001 |
| M (4.3) | -.94 | .06 | -15.57 | .0001 |
| + 1 SD (5.9) | -.1.10 | .08 | 13.59 | .0001 |

*Conditional Indirect Effects of future power in Europe on Support for EU integration via identity undermining, at values of moderator*

National Identity

| | Effect | Boot SE | Boot *CI* Lower | Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 1 SD (2.8) | .51 | .07 | .37 | .66 |
| M (4.3) | .61 | .06 | .49 | .73 |
| + 1 SD (5.9) | .71 | .07 | .57 | .85 |

*Index of Moderated mediation*

| Mediator | Index | Boot SE | Boot *CI* Lower | Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identity Undermining | .07 | .02 | .02 | .11 |

Low Identification (-1 *SD*)

Identity Undermining

Future power in EU

-.65**

-.79**

.51** (.55**)

Support for EU accession

High Identification (+1 *SD*)

Identity Undermining

Future power in EU

-.65**

-1.10 **

.71** (.55**)

Support for EU accession
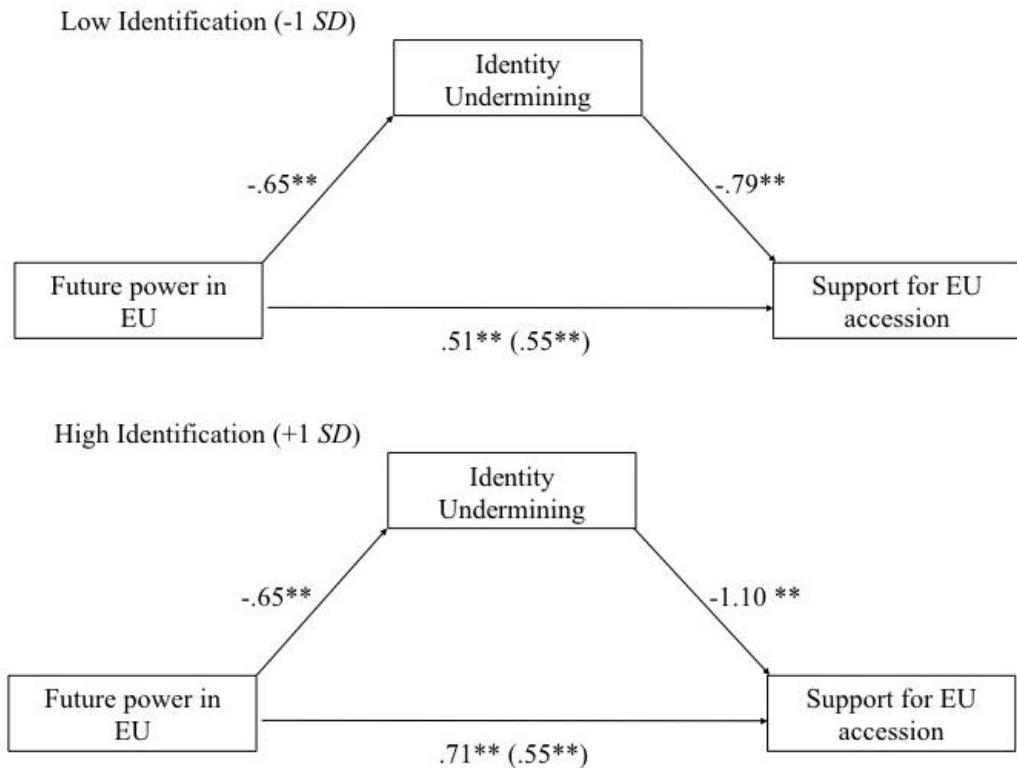
*Figure 6.3.* Identity undermining as mediator between future power in EU and support for EU accession, at low and high levels of national identification. Direct effects in parentheses.

### Subgroup dynamics within a superordinate group

Our second hypothesis explored the subgroup-to-subgroup dynamics within a superordinate context. In particular, this section explores whether power differences between subgroups play a role in shaping perceived prototypicality vis-à-vis the superordinate group, and whether prototypicality (and meta-prototypicality separately) in turn mediates the relationship between perceived power asymmetry and superordinate group identification at different levels of subgroup identification. As can be seen in Table 6.1, prototypicality and meta-prototypicality were highly correlated but distinct. In the moderated mediation analysis discussed below we focused on the mediating role of prototypicality rather than meta-prototypicality as direct perceptions of representativeness are likely to matter the most when it comes to European identification[6].

H2 was tested using Hayes' (2018) PROCESS Model 14, the results of which are reported in Table 6.3 and illustrated in Figure 6.4. The analysis showed a significant

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[6] The results, including the moderated mediation model, were similar for meta-prototypicality – see Appendix 6.2

main effect of power asymmetry on prototypicality ($b$=-.21, $t_{1031}$ = -5.10, $p < .001$), indicating that the more power Germany was seen as having compared to Serbia in Europe, the less Serbs felt representative of the category European, supporting the first part of H2. Prototypicality, in turn, was positively associated with European identity at all levels of national identity. Specifically, the link between prototypicality and identification with Europe was strongest at high levels of national identification (+1 $SD$, $b$=.39, $t_{1033}$ = 12.04, $p < .001$), but was also significant at average ($b$=.26, $t_{1033}$ = 10.12, $p < .001$) and low levels of national identification (-1 $SD$, $b$=.13, $t_{1033}$ = 3.55, $p < .001$). The link between national identity, European identity and prototypicality is further illustrated if we consider prototypicality as the moderator in the relationship between national and European identity. Here, the nonsignificant zero-order relationship between national and European identity (see Table 6.1) changes once we include prototypicality as the moderator. The link between national identity and European identity is positive and significant at high levels of prototypicality (+1 $SD$; $b$=.09, $t_{1056}$ = 1.99, $p<0.05$) but negative at average ($b$= -.10, $t_{1056}$ = -1.66, $p$ =.09) and low levels of prototypicality (-1 $SD$; $b$= -.10, $t_{1056}$ = -2.28, $p<.05$). The reversal of the correlation between national and European identity from negative (at low levels of prototypicality) to positive (at high levels of prototypicality) seems to indicate that a sense of representativeness is a necessary condition for perceived compatibility between Serbian and European identity—one way of operationalising dual identification.

The results of the moderated mediation analysis illustrated that the link between perceived power asymmetry and European identification was partially mediated by prototypicality, as power asymmetry continued to be a significant predictor of identification with Europe, once prototypicality was controlled. The indirect effect of power asymmetry on European identification through prototypicality was significant at all levels of the moderator (-1 $SD$; $b$ = -.03, $CI$ [-.05; -.01]; $M$; $b$= -.05, $CI$[-.08, -.03]; +1 $SD$; $b$ = -.08, $CI$ [-.12, -.05])[7]. Lastly, the bootstrapped confidence intervals of the index of moderated mediation ($b$= -.02, $CI$ [-.03, -.01]) did not include zero, indicating that the indirect path from power asymmetry to European identity through prototypicality was significantly stronger (i.e., more negative) among those who

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[7] As seen by comparing Tables 6.1 and 6.3, the nonsignificant correlation between power asymmetry and European identification became a positive direct effect once prototypicality was added as a covariate. As this is likely a suppressor variable effect, it should be interpreted with caution.

identified more strongly with their national identity than those who identified only to a weak extent.

Table 6.3: *Regression results and indirect effects for moderated mediation model (2)*

|  | *B* | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mediator variable model (DV = Prototypicality)* | | | | |
| Constant | 4.18 | .19 | 21.63 | .0001 |
| Power asymmetry | -.21 | .04 | -5.10 | .0001 |
| | | | | |
| *Dependent variable model (DV = European Identity)* | | | | |
| Constant | 4.02 | .29 | 13.66 | .0001 |
| Power asymmetry | .10 | .03 | 3.08 | .0002 |
| Prototypicality | -.11 | .07 | -1.57 | .1175 |
| National Identity | -.33 | .05 | -6.20 | .0001 |
| Prototypicality x National Identity | .08 | .01 | 5.76 | .0001 |

*Conditional Effects of Prototypicality on European Identity at values of moderator*

| National Identity | Boot indirect effect | Boot SE | Boot *t* | Boot *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 1 SD (2.8) | .13 | .04 | 3.55 | .0004 |
| M (4.3) | .26 | .03 | 10.12 | .0001 |
| + 1 SD (5.9) | .39 | .03 | 12.04 | .0001 |

*Conditional Indirect Effects of Power asymmetry on European identity via Prototypicality at values of moderator*

| National Identity | Effect | Boot SE | Boot *CI* Lower | Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 1 SD (2.8) | -.03 | .01 | -.05 | -.01 |
| M (4.3) | -.05 | .01 | -.08 | -.03 |
| + 1 SD (5.9) | -.08 | .02 | -.12 | -.05 |

*Index of Moderated mediation*

| Mediator | Index | Boot SE | Boot *CI* Lower | Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prototypicality | -.02 | .001 | -.03 | -.01 |

Low Identification (-1 *SD*)
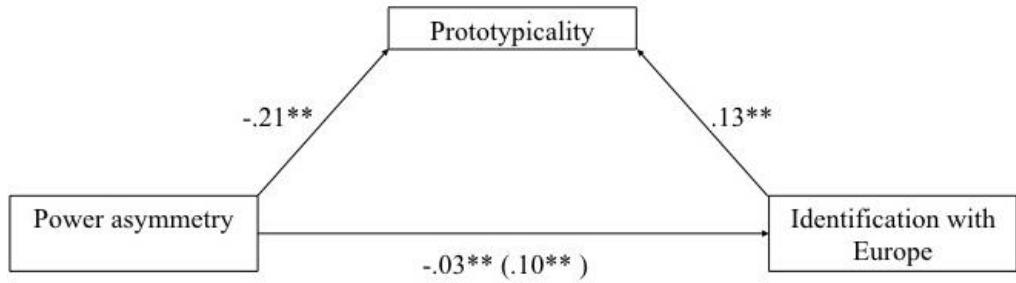


High Identification (+1 *SD*)
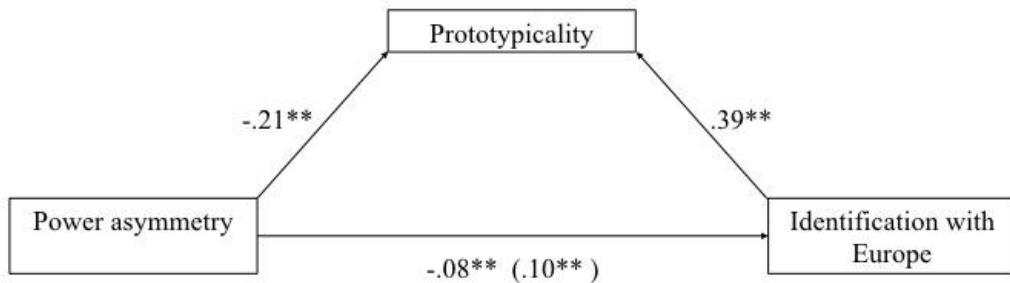


*Figure 6.4*: Prototypicality as mediator between power asymmetry and identification with Europe, at low and high levels of national identification. Direct effects in parentheses.

## Discussion

The current study was designed to assess whether the two conceptual threads identified in Study 1 had quantitative empirical grounding. It did so by formulating two hypotheses arising from the qualitative research and the theoretical issues it raised, and testing them with a large, diverse sample. Moderated mediation analyses testing these hypotheses yielded supportive results in both cases.

With regard to the first hypothesis, support for membership of the EU was shaped by perceptions of future national power as an EU member, which exerted their impact both directly, and indirectly via triggering fears of the undermining of national identity. Though this pattern held across levels of national identification, it was particularly pronounced among high national identifiers, which makes sense as these would be the people for whom the continuity of Serbian identity and influence is most cherished. The findings support H1 and closely match those of Sindic and Reicher (2009), originally found in the context of an existing member of a supranational body, however extended here to the case of a prospective member. The findings further

highlight how perceptions of continuity, or lack thereof, in the future, have significant consequences for political attitudes in the present.

National identification was also a proposed moderator in our second set of analyses, in which we sought to predict identification with a European identity. The mediated moderation model allowed us to investigate the underlying drivers of successful dual identification, operationalised as a positive correlation between national and European identification. This was predicted by the extent to which Serbia was seen, by Serbs and by Germans (according to Serbs), as prototypically 'European'. These results illustrate that the more one identified with one's national identity, the more positive the relationship between prototypicality and European identification became. Considering this interaction the other way around, the representativeness of a superordinate category was a significant moderator of the positive correlation between national and supranational identification. Namely, when perceptions of prototypicality were low, the relationship between Serbia and European identity became negative. In contrast, when perceptions of prototypicality were high, the relationship became positive, indicating that prototypicality can come to play an important role in either making subgroup-superordinate groups compatible or conflicting. Prototypicality was in turn predicted by the perceived asymmetry in power between Serbia and the country perceived to have the highest power in Europe, Germany, and mediated the path between power asymmetry and European identification in a significant, and positive way. This indirect path, as well as its moderation by national identity, was found to be significant using bootstrapped estimates, thus providing support for H2.

## General Discussion

Across two studies, using focus group and survey data, we explored how the psychosocial dynamics underlying perceptions of identity undermining could be used to make sense of citizens' ambivalence toward European Union integration in the case of a potential future member state, Serbia. The mixed methods design of the current paper allowed us to explore themes around EU integration and national identity and to draw on these, alongside the literature on superordinate group dynamics, to formulate and test two hypotheses on a larger sample of the Serbian population. Within both studies, the role of power was central in shaping core social identity processes. Namely, perceptions of power (both current and future) were closely linked with

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perceptions of representativeness of the prototype of 'European' and whether or not subgroup identities would be undermined as part of the superordinate group. These, in turn, had consequences for the extent to which participants felt part of a European identity, and were supportive of EU accession.

These findings lend support for previous research by Sindic and Reicher (2009) on identity undermining in the context of a supranational union show that they hold true even in contexts of prospective, rather than existing, membership. By doing so, we further extend these findings by adding the importance of temporality in considering the consequences of perceived powerlessness on superordinate group dynamics. Namely, whereas perceptions of current power asymmetries between subgroups in the superordinate context were strongly correlated with identification processes on the superordinate level (i.e., who is prototypical of European and how European do we in turn feel?), perceptions of future power as part of the EU were in turn more important for questions of subgroup identification and consequently attitudes towards membership (i.e., will Serbian identity be undermined as part of the EU, and if so, are we more or less supportive of joining?). This latter finding is consistent with research on the importance of ingroup continuity in contexts of group mergers (Gleibs, Noack & Mummendey, 2010), while extending it to the international context.

By considering a context of prospective superordinate group membership our findings illustrate that power plays a more dominant and persistent role in shaping identification and attitudes towards a superordinate group than has previously been found. While models such as the Common Ingroup Identity Model and the Ingroup Projection Model explore the dynamics of dual identification and subgroup to superordinate group dynamics in depth, they have been less explicit about the role that intergroup power relations play in shaping who is seen to have the most valid claims to represent, and thus influence, the superordinate group. These findings show that once perceptions of power are measured directly, their predictive power vis-à-vis ingroup projection, and the acceptance of such projection, comes to the fore. Consequently, process-oriented models such as the IPM could benefit from becoming sensitized to the ways in which ingroup projection becomes shaped explicitly by questions of power, legitimacy to claims of belonging, and recognition of inclusion and representativeness of a superordinate group. As the second model of the quantitative analysis illustrated, power relations, via prototypicality, can have particular consequences for the extent to which identities are seen as compatible rather than

conflicting. Lastly, prototypicality itself becomes important to understand as a moderator of dual identification. As Study 2 showed, subgroup and superordinate group identities are not inherently incompatible, but rather this incompatibility (and likewise compatibility) depends on the extent to which individuals see the former as a part of the latter, and recognized as such.

With recent events such as the UK vote in favour of leaving the European Union, it becomes increasingly pressing to consider how these psychosocial dynamics shape how citizens positions themselves within, and towards, a superordinate entity. Namely, questions of changing intergroup status and power relations, and their role in causing a perceived rupture to ingroup continuity, can become crucial to consider if we want to better understand why certain social groups feel more or less part of a superordinate group, and the consequences this has for their attitudes towards the politics of the superordinate group. To tackle perceptions of identity undermining, particularly among low-power groups, it would be beneficial to think about the ways in which we can make the superordinate category more inclusive, by recognizing the various practices and identities of not only existing, but also incoming, subgroups, as representative of a diverse superordinate group.

It is important to note that these implications extend beyond the context of the EU, and can also be considered in the broader literature on subgroup-superordinate group dynamics, such as the literature on migration and acculturation. Integration into a new group, whether it is through organizational mergers, ethnic subgroups within a nation or nation-states within larger, international unions, brings up questions of how to manage continuity and compatibility with the new, common ingroup. While research on acculturation strategies has focused on including both minority and majority expectations (Brown & Zagefka, 2011), the findings of this study highlight yet another potential dimension to this relationship; how perceptions of intergroup power relations can come to play a role in shaping processes of superordinate belonging. Thus, considering the explicit role of power, both current and future, in processes of superordinate group integration and identification allow us to extend the insights of superordinate identity models, such as the Ingroup Projection Model, into the realm of political psychology.

*Limitations and Further Research*

There are a number of limitations to this set of studies, which can provide potential avenues for further research. Firstly, the findings are limited to the context of Serbia, and the superordinate group dynamics are consequently shaped in important ways by the history of Serbia and its place in Europe. While the paper attempted to couple some of the more specific meaning-making processes with underlying social identity processes, the links explored in Study 2 were nevertheless informed by the specific content and context of Serbian identity and representations of Europe. As such, these dynamics might play out differently in another subgroup-superordinate context. Nevertheless, testing the explicit role of power in relation to social identity processes, particularly in contexts of dual identification and subgroup-superordinate group dynamics, would be beneficial in providing further support for the importance of power relations in shaping attitudes towards, and identification with, a superordinate group.

Secondly, another important limitation comes from the use of meta-representations of prototypicality rather than actual perceptions of others (i.e., Germans) on the extent to which a subgroup is representative of a superordinate group. However, as Elcheroth et al., (2011) argue, in context of intergroup relations permeated by ambiguity, "what people guess about their mutual mental states, ironically, becomes much more real *in its consequences* than what each of them 'really' thinks and feels." (p.752). Future research should consider drawing on all three levels (self-perceptions of prototypicality, meta-perceptions and the direct perceptions of others) in the process of exploring the role of prototypicality in superordinate group contexts.

Thirdly, the large number of empty surveys or surveys with less than 10% of the questions viewed or answered is problematic and shows the potential damaging role of automated bots or automated form fillers. As such it would have been useful to include the timing resource of Qualtrics to overcoming important screening limitations in regards to invalid responses (Buchanan & Scofield, 2018).

Lastly, as both studies were exploratory, and our survey data are correlational, clear claims of causality cannot be inferred from it. Future research should consider devising an experimental design to test how more or less power (and recognition of that power) shape attitudes towards being part of a superordinate group, and identification with it.

## Conclusion

The question posed at the beginning of this paper was, if EU integration is seen as threatening to nations, what specifically does it threaten? The findings presented seem to indicate that this question requires revising in order to become more meaningful. Namely, if EU integration is seen as threatening to nations, *how* does it become threatening? Our two studies support findings by Sindic and Reicher (2009) on the importance of understanding identity content and how it informs processes. Building on this work, our studies further highlight the centrality of power dynamics throughout these processes, as power plays a crucial role in shaping *whose version* of the social category representations becomes legitimate and consequential for the symbolic and practical aspects of the identity.

# Appendix 6.1: Percentage of survey completed by participants
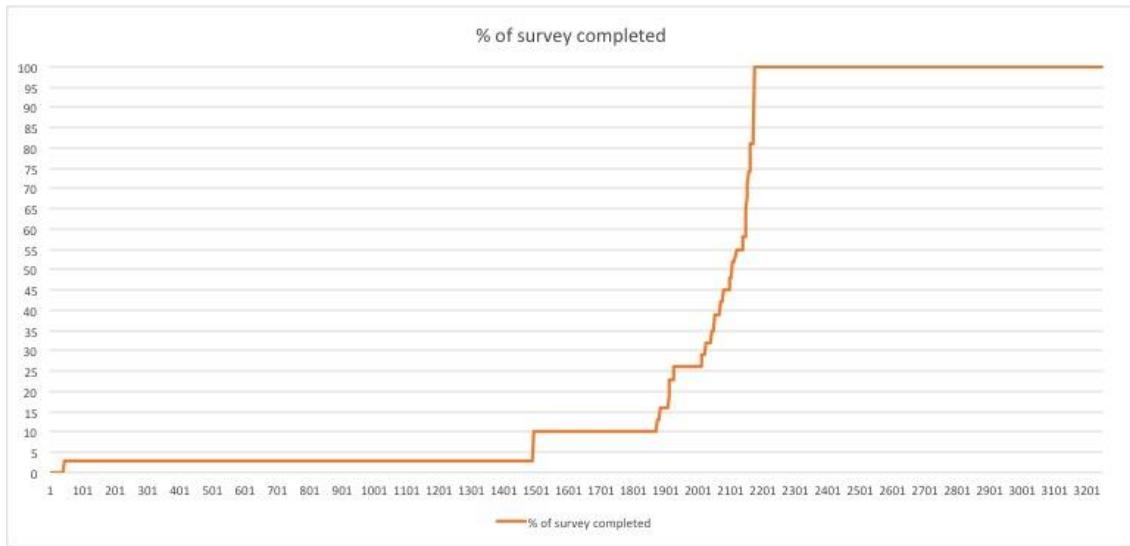


# Appendix 6.2: Regression output with meta-prototypicality as mediator.

|  | B | SE | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mediator variable model (DV = Meta-Prototypicality)* | | | | |
| Constant | 3.14 | .15 | 20.94 | .0001 |
| Power asymmetry | -.20 | .03 | -6.41 | .0001 |
|  | | | | |
| *Dependent variable model (DV = European Identity)* | | | | |
| Constant | 3.70 | .30 | 12.31 | .0001 |
| Power asymmetry | .09 | .03 | 2.76 | .006 |
| Meta-Prototypicality | -.06 | .10 | -.59 | .5570 |
| National Identity | -.15 | .05 | -3.00 | .0032 |
| Meta-Prototypicality x National Identity | .06 | .02 | 3.00 | .0028 |

*Conditional Effects of Meta-Prototypicality on European Identity at values of moderator*

| National Identity | Boot indirect effect | Boot SE | Boot t | Boot p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 1 SD (2.8) | .11 | .05 | 2.18 | .0292 |
| M (4.3) | .20 | .03 | 6.00 | .0001 |
| + 1 SD (5.9) | .28 | .04 | 7.18 | .0001 |

*Conditional Indirect Effects of Power asymmetry on European identity via Meta-Prototypicality at values of moderator*

| National Identity | Effect | Boot SE | Boot CI Lower | Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 1 SD (2.8) | -.02 | .01 | -.05 | .00 |
| M (4.3) | -.04 | .01 | -.06 | -.02 |
| + 1 SD (5.9) | -.06 | .02 | -.10 | -.03 |

*Index of Moderated mediation*

| Mediator | Index | Boot SE | Boot CI Lower | Upper |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Meta-Prototypicality | -.01 | .005 | -.02 | -.003 |

## Preface 4: Chapter 7

The first three empirical papers have explored various sub-questions intended to inform the answering of this question by providing both data on elite and everyday citizen discourses on political change, as well as testing out the ways in which specific identity-related processes such as compatibility and continuity, influenced a sense of identification with a superordinate group and a willingness to support political actions to join it.

In chapter 7, I draw these findings together and combine them with a micro-analysis of some of the qualitative data (originally part of chapter 6's thematic analysis but not reported in the results) to present the case for a social psychological approach to supranational identity in contexts of political change and integration. More precisely, this next chapter functions as an empirical and theoretical discussion of this PhD as a whole, by unpacking how discourses on international relations and global integration are conceptualized and made sense of through a dialogical construction of identity.

It will be argued in both Chapter 7 and in the conclusion (chapter 8) that our current theoretical understanding of identities needs to be developed to allow us to account more fully for insecurities in identities, as brought on by insecurities in the meaning of the social category to begin with. Thus, the starting-point has to shift from exploring the boundaries between groups to considering how the problematization of the meaning of the group itself has social and psychological implications for identity and intergroup dynamics.

# Chapter 7: The nation in times of socio-political change: how self-other relations shape whether continuity becomes desirable or threatening to social identity.

**Abstract:**

It has been argued that continuity to an ingroup's identity across time and space serves as a crucial source of stability and self-esteem for group members (Jetten & Wohl, 2012). It has further been illustrated that discontinuity can have negative consequences both for individuals and groups by undermining the group's way of life (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011). However recent work has explored the consequences of continuity when the meaning of a group's past is seen in a negative light, and the potentially threatening consequences this has for the negotiation of a positive identity in the present (Roth, Huber, Juenger and Liu, 2017). The present paper builds on this latter area of research by further situating questions of continuity within a perspective of self-other relations. Through an analysis of the discursive management of national identity within focus groups in a post-conflict context (N=67) the paper focuses on how the tensions between continuity and discontinuity manifest themselves in discourses on political change and the consequences this has for what individuals expect, and hope, for their future. It will be illustrated that continuity to an ingroup's identity is given meaning through discussions of self-other relations and their management over time, which can serve to limits the extent to which continuity is seen as positive, or even desired. The paper will conclude by exploring the limits of continuity and the importance of considering what the literature says about contexts where continuity is seen as either impossible or a cause of further stigmatization.

**Identities as self-other relations over time**

According to self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Wetherell & Reicher, 1987), our sense of self is constructed and defines in relation to an 'other'. It is through the process of self-categorization that people come to define themselves in terms of their membership in various social groups, such as ethnic, gender and national groups. This process in turn, accounts for the cognitive underpinnings of social identity. As a theoretical framework then, SCT provides us with a deeper understanding of how individuals are able to see themselves as part of a group, and what determines which type of identity becomes salient in a given context (Halsam & Reicher, 2015).

Through the process of self-categorization, individuals define themselves, and others, as part of particular groups. In doing so, they begin self-stereotype in relation to the category; they see themselves less as different individuals, and more as representatives of that shared group, more similar within the ingroup, and more different from the out-group. This process is refered to as depersonalization and it explains the psychological reality of groups. The theory distinguishes between three levels of self-categorization which range from superordinate (human level), to intermediate (social level) and subordinate (personal level). No level of categorization is more or less fundamental to a self than another, but rather, the theory argues that what makes a given self-category more relevant in a particular context is based on the salience (shaped by both readiness and fit) of the category in that particular context (Oakes, 1987).

A key idea underlining the formation of different levels of self-categories is that lower-order categories are formed through social comparison *within* higher-order categories, while higher-order categories are formed on the basis of lower level ones (Turner, Reynolds, Haslam & Veenstra, 2006). In addition, the specific content of a self-category will determine who is seen as more or less representative of the category, or in the words of SCT, who is more or less 'prototypical' of the category. Thus, crucial for the explanatory power of the theory is the incorporation of both content and context in understanding processes of categorization and identification.

Yet where the theory has been less explicit is on the role of continuity to processes of self-categorization over time. Namely, if the self is defined in relation to an other, then this would imply that the construction of a continuity to the collective

self, across time and space, becomes managed and negotiated in a context of relevant others. However, as Condor (1996) argues, SCT "doesn't account for, or even conceive of, continuity over time […] there is no account of how specific moments can be seen to fit together diachronically. This is due in large part to the fact that, in SCT, the "social field" or "context" is treated (or at least spoken of) as if it were essentially external to the perceiving subject: a stimulus display which individual subjects view, a set of instructions to which they respond, rather than a process of which they are a part." (p. 289).

Nevertheless, on both a theoretical as well as methodological level, exploring social identities and their movement through contexts and change requires an emphasis on time. The idea of 'perceived collective continuity' (PCC; Sani et al., 2007) offers a starting-point for this kind of focus.


**Ingroup continuity, threat and resistance to change**

Perceived collective continuity conceptualizes the extent to which we see our social groups (and identities) as stable over time, and the implications this has for identity, attitudes and intergroup relations (Liu, Sibley & Huang, 2014; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2014; Smeekes, McKeown & Psaltis, 2017). Ingroup continuity can be divided into two sub-dimensions: essentialism and narrativism. The former is a version of continuity achieved through an emphasis on the stability of an ingroups 'essence', core features such as values, norms and other cultural markers that define and identity, while the latter is a version of continuity achieved through interlinking historical events to create a consistent narrative of a group's history. According to Smeekes and Verkuyten (2014), essentialist continuity (rather than narrativist continuity) is more likely to satisfy individual's need for self-continuity and is thus likely to enhance ingroup identification.

Continuity to an ingroup's identity across time and space serves as a crucial source of stability and self-esteem for group members (Jetten & Wohl, 2012). Research on mergers and schisms has been particularly informative in demonstrating the consequences to ingroup (and inter-group) processes when change is seen as a deviation from a constructed version of identity (Gleibs, Mummendey & Noack, 2008; Sani, 2008; Sani & Reicher, 2000; Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, Monden & de Lima; 2002). Research on mergers *between groups* has illustrated how continuity to the ingroup in times of change has positive implications for how groups deal with the

challenges, and potential threats, brought on by group mergers (Jetten and Hutchison, 2011). In a similar vein, research on schisms *within groups* has also demonstrated that proposed change often becomes resisted when it is seen as moving the group away from its core values, beliefs, and inherently, it understanding of the group identity (Sani & Reicher, 2000). What these two areas of research tell us is that, whether it is change within a group or between two groups merging, continuity becomes an important factor in shaping how this change is interpreted. It further tells us that threats to continuity have both symbolic and practical implications.

Continuity is not only a psychological construct, but also underpins how we act in the world, by making social practices meaningful in the present, through their purpose for the future (Reicher, 2008). Because of this, threats to continuity becomes not only threats to 'our' sense of self as a group, but also our ability to realize the social practices that are rooted in that concept, both in the present and the future. Developing this idea further in a context of national identity, Sindic and Reicher (2009) draw on the concept of 'identity undermining' to express how threats to the ingroup's way of life are not only consequential on a cognitive dimension, but also pose threats to the active dimension of an identity. The concept of identity undermining challenges the distinction between realistic and symbolic threat, by highlighting the ways in which threats to a social group have both symbolic and practical implications. Namely, identity undermining refers to the perception that change will undermine the ability of group members to enact their identities and their "way of life". Drawing on a study of Scottish citizens attitudes towards Britain, the authors illustrate that perceptions of power and incompatibility (between the subgroups composing a superordinate group) serve as the antecedents for identity undermining. Implicit in this work is also an understanding that identity undermining becomes a threat to perceived identity continuity as well, enacted on an everyday basis through social practices, norms and values.

**Positioning continuity in a self-other context**

A growing literature has begun exploring the underlying factors shaping when continuity between a groups past, present and future enhances or undermines a social identity. Within this literature, experimental work has illustrated that the consequences of continuity for social identity is dependent on the valence of the content of the social category itself. Namely, in research on national identity continuity and historical

representations, Roth et al. (2017) illustrate that historical continuity only decreases identity threat (compared to historical discontinuity) when the group's past behavior is presented in a positive light. In contrast, when the past is remembered in a negative way, historical continuity become more threatening to the group's identity. Similar findings have been shown in contexts where stigmatizing representations of the past have been presented to present-day nationals, leading to feelings of collective angst and shame (Hanke et al., 2013; Leone & Mastrovito, 2010) but also to resistance to acknowledge and communicate about past transgressions (Obradovic, 2016). However, while most of this literature has explored the subtleties of the dynamics between continuity and discontinuity by manipulating *how* the past is remembered, less has been said about how this meaning given to the past becomes negotiated in the context of relevant others.

If history is such a powerful resource for giving meaning and continuity to an ingroup identity then we must also acknowledge that those who can shape and re-write history will be in a position of power to not only shape who 'we' are, but also what we should remember of the past and the consequences this has for how we relate to others in the present. However most literature that acknowledges this have focused on how this occurs within the group, placing less emphasis on how powerful others outside of the group become influential in this process. In an increasingly globally interconnected world, the representations of history found on a national level quickly become intertwined with the larger, global narratives of a shared history perpetuated. For example, in a study on representations of world history across 12 countries, Liu and colleagues (2005) finds that representations of history are more Eurocentric than ethnocentric and center around politics and war. Their research illustrates the importance of underlying power dynamics in shaping what is remembered and how by situating national memory work within a larger context of transnational memory work. This has implications for the extent to which a nation's version of its past, deeply embedded within a transnational context, can be seen as legitimate if it deviates significantly from the more dominant versions of world history.  Considering this, it becomes necessary to acknowledge that the consequences of perceived collective continuity for social identity must be understood from the perspective of *how* the content of that identity continuity is perceived to be defined by both self and other. This in turn will determine whether continuity or discontinuity become seen as favorable to an ingroup's self-image and future.

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To summarize, the present introduction has attempted to outline a theoretical framework for the study of social identities in times of intragroup change, by combining the insights of self-categorization theory with the work on perceived collective continuity to situate self-other relations within a temporal context, as well as a socio-political and historical one. The argument put forward in the remainder of this this paper can be summarized in the following way; because self-other relations permeate the construction of an ingroup identity, it means that the management of identity continuity also becomes informed by both self *and* other. As such, relevant others become important in shaping how a social category is defined, and whether continuity to it is desired or seen as stigmatizing.

**The discursive management of continuity and change**

*Research Context*

For purposes of illustration, the following section draws on qualitative data from focus groups conducted in Serbia. The core purpose of the focus groups was to engage participants in a discussion about Serbia's prospective membership in the European Union (EU) and to explore the meaning given to this political change and its implications for their lives and their society. The choice to explore these questions in the context of Serbia comes from the nation's unique self-conceptualization as a nation inbetween East and West. Namely, the metaphor of a bridge, or being at a crossroads, has become a popular imagery through which Serbian national identity, and history, has been positioned within the larger, European context (Russell-Omaljev, 2016; Todorova, 1998; Živković, 2011). The root of this sense of inbetweenness is often located in the history of the region and its geographical belonging to Europe alongside its affiliation to various European 'Others', such as Turkey (through Ottoman occupation) and Russia (through its religious ties). This sense of being in a state of transition, caught between East and West, has made the study of Serbian identity an interesting one for scholars of the region, and a particularly relevant one in the present, as the country moves towards a more 'Western' future through its prospective membership in the European Union (EU).

Some would argue that a European identity is not necessarily exclusive to members of the EU, and we agree with this point, however we argue that, as with any social identity, a European identity developed in the context of an 'Other'. Addressing this point, Neumann (1999) argues that "the ordering of self as 'Western' and other as

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'Eastern' in European identity formation is one way of organizing European politics." (p. 210). Similar arguments have been made by other scholars from disciplines such as history, political psychology and political science (i.e., Flockhart, 2010; Kinnvall, 2016, Todorova, 1998). Applying the knowledge of SCT we also see that any higher-order category is formed on the basis of lower-order ones, and thus could argue that the formation of a superordinate European identity has occurred by taking inspiration from the intermediate level categories in this context, such as that of the 'nation'. It is from this perspective then that Serbia offers an interesting context in which to explore the question of how collective continuity is managed in times of socio-political change and the implications this has for identity. Particularly when the starting-point is an identity that has been built on, and is experienced as, in-between two ideological, historical and political 'camps'. Considering this, we ask; how is continuity and change reconciled in a context where an image of the social self has been defined by being inbetween?

*Method*

A total of nine focus groups were conducted in Serbia between 2015 and 2016 (N=67) in seven different cities. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 57 (M=34) with occupations ranging from full time study to employment in the public and private sector. Each focus group followed the same topic guide, with six questions covering themes of Serbia's relationship with, and potential future in, the EU, as well as the nation's history within Europe and questions on domestic politics. Each focus group lasted between 21-67 minutes (M=61 minutes) and the audio-recorded sessions were transcribed and analysed in Serbian, with any illustrative quotes translated for the purpose of presentation.

Considering the emphasis on how participants construct continuity and national identity, it seemed most fruitful to apply a discursive analysis to explore how self-other relations are used, and for what purpose. In other words, following SCT (and Social Identity Theory), we acknowledge that people argue over the meaning, boundaries and prototypicality of group identities because these have powerful consequences for who is included, and how they should act (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). In order to construct a more manageable corpus for analysis, the transcripts were read and any references to 1) the EU and/or other 'external' political actors (i.e., nations, or organizations such as NATO), 2) Serbian 'domestic' actors (i.e., politicians, parties or social groups) and 3)

historical and/or political events (i.e., WWII or the democratic revolution) were extracted for analysis. Often these criteria overlapped, as will be visible from the various extracts below.

The analysis entailed following the guidelines of a particular strand of critical-discourse, which explicitly considers the role of history in contexts of communicative acts (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Namely, the discourse-historical approach (DHA) was utilized to analyse how historical contexts were used to situate self-other relations, negotiate identity, and position the ingroup in relation to proposed political change (Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl & Liebhart, 2009).

The discourse-historical approach emphasizes triangulation through the inclusion of different levels of context within which a text is embedded. These levels are further differentiated through the examination of 1) contents or topics of discourse, 2) discursive strategies, and 3) linguistic means of realizations (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). The DHA allows for a rigorous micro-analysis of discourse while simultaneously linking the strategies used, and claims made, to larger, macro-level processes such as the construction of national identity, the management of intergroup relations or the opposition to political change. The illustrative examples used below are therefore discussed both in terms of the discursive strategies and means of realization, as well as the broader, socio-political implications of these claims.

**Results and Discussion**

Three key dimensions through which the tensions between continuity and change were managed arose in the data; 1) through the use of temporal arguments, continuity to inbetweenness was constructed as impossible due to Serbia's lack of power in the present, thus highlighting the need for change, 2) through strategies of deconstruction, threats to continuity were alleviated by deconstructing the importance of 'East' in Serbian identity and thus its meaning for continuity, and 3) through constructive strategies compatibility and continuity to the 'West' in Serbian identity was problematized through historical references which constructed the West as a continued 'Other'. The final section provides the foundation for the theoretical novelty of this paper by discussing how perceived collective continuity must be placed in a larger framework of self-other processes in order to consider whether continuity is seen a positive or negative for a group's identity and sense of self-esteem.

***The growing impossibility of inbetweenness: The difference between then and now***

Being at a crossroads between East and West has been a prominent metaphor in describing Serbia's history, politics and identity ((Russell-Omaljev, 2016; Todorova, 1998; Živković, 2011).). This metaphor has embedded itself both within political and public discourse through the popular saying that Serbia 'sits on two chairs', a statement that epitomizes the current political balancing of Serbia's ties with Russia and the EU. While this sense of inbetweenness might have been sustainable in the past, the political context of Serbia has changed through its commitment to a future within the EU. Thus, with this political goal, the management of inbetweenness has come to the fore, as well as its ability to sustain itself in the future.

***1. Belgrade (1)***
*5: We're in Europe, it's completely normal that we become [part of the EU].*
*1: Absolutely, geographically yes, and we shouldn't run away from that, but we should be bold, and the way that Tito knew how to balance [politics], that'll never happen again.*
*6: I agree, but back then you had a significantly bigger state, it wasn't just Serbia, and he was able to keep up the balancing act because Yugoslavia was a significant factor in the Balkans, in Southern Europe, and now we're nothing.*

***2. Novi Sad:***
*5: We should keep both.*
*R: Is that possible?*
*5: It used to be.[…]*
*4: We should take advantage of, take money from one and the other, like we used to in the past, someone really intelligent needs to come, like we used to have, but it seems that that's not possible in the present.*

***3. Paraćin:***
*1: Today, they [politicians] are sitting on two chairs, and going nowhere.*
*3: They [EU] shouldn't be meddling in our affairs but it is problematic to be sitting on two chairs.*
*8: Especially now.*

*3: In fact, we should be only on one, but we're on two. And that's the problem. Because we're small, balancing becomes impossible.*

All three extracts above draw on temporal references as part of the strategic construction of the present as different from the past. The use of words such as 'never', 'back then', 'now', 'used to', 'was', and 'today' are all means of realizing argumentative strategies that construct the present as different from the past. In the first quote for example, the first speaker constructs EU membership as natural and inevitable, drawing on spatial references to construct similarity between Serbia and the EU ('we're in Europe'). This statement is responded to with a 'yes but' argument, where the second speaker agrees to a geographical belonging to Europe but downplays this as a determinant of political allegiance, instead emphasizing the importance of being 'bold' and balancing politically the way Tito did. This reference to Tito is however met with resistance through the use of parallels between 'then' and 'now' which emphasize a loss of regional power and influence ('now we're nothing'). Through topos of comparison and changed circumstances, the present becomes a time of dependence on others, where the ability to choose to be in-between is replaced with the importance of aligning yourself with one side, instead of run the risk of falling between the cracks. The importance of power in allowing for balancing is evident as well ('because we're small, balancing becomes impossible'), warranting the conclusion that the strategic management of political balancing is seen as thing of the past, when Serbia was both powerful and had competent leadership.

The implications of this lack of continuity to power is that there is a perceived lack of continuity to autonomous decision making and a truly Serbian perspective on politics. How can Serbia then reconcile not being inbetween? The next section focuses on one such attempt at moving away from inbetweenness by considering how participants try to re-imagine self-other relations as less positive, and thus less in need of continuity, than previously considered.

### Deconstructing the 'East' in Serbian identity: dismantling historical continuity with Russia

*4. Belgrade (2):*
*2: It's simply impossible that we join the EU and don't do what we have to in regards to Russia, to be able to join an EU way of thinking in relation to Russia.*

*4: Of course, because if they're going to let you join them, they sure enough won't let you have any independent way of thinking.*

*2: You have to respect them common foreign policy.'*

Drawing on normative language ('have to'), participants draw on the topos of consequence to argue that political change entails transformation from an independent way of thinking to a unified way of thinking about the world and the social groups within it. A common approach by individuals in tackling this tension was to draw on strategies of dismantling. These aimed to deconstruct parts of an existing national identity construct (Wodak et al., p.33) without providing alternatives. In the case of Serbia and Russia, this frequently occurred by attempting to deconstruct a sense of a positive relationship with Russia over history, by debunking 'myths' with seemingly factual claims.

### 5. Belgrade (1):

*4: I think that Russia is our biggest fake friend, the biggest fake friend we've had throughout centuries, that's a big blunder that we should be pro-Russia and that they always protect us, that they're always with us and that we should look up to them [...]*

*1: But you lose your roots. The EU destroyed your country. Germany destroyed it, which was first to support the war. Germany destroyed SFRJ [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia], it supported that. That makes her your true friend?*

*5: Who constructed SFRJ tell me please?*

*1: The same people who destroyed it.*

*5: So! Whose product was it then?*

*1: That's irrelevant, it's politics. But how can you forget just like that, that someone who was beating you, is today your friend and you're running around trying to grasp onto him... If someone hurt you once, you can expect him to hurt you again, because he doesn't care about you, he cares about his own interests.*

Within this exchange there are several important discursive elements which function to construct Russia as either friend or foe. Firstly, the use of personal references ('our', 'we', 'you', 'I') serve different functions in the discourse. For the first speaker, participant 4, the use of 'I think' when criticizing the dominant perception that Russia is a 'friend' of Serbia, denotes his awareness of the potential conflicting opinion that

he offers. As Wodak et al. (2009, p.131) argue, frequently in contexts of discussions of national identity participants tend to use the self-inclusive 'we' when making claims but revert to an 'I' position when making potentially taboo or contradictory points. As will be evident throughout the rest of the section, the continued use of 'I' when making anti-Russia claims shows the awareness of a positive representation of Russia within the dominant national narrative of history, and thus limits the extent to which participants feel comfortable to use 'we'. In response to this statement, participant 1 draws on arguments of continuity to persuade the previous speaker of the consequences of rejecting Russia.

For participant 1, the use of 'you', rather than 'we', to refer to Serbia denotes her strategic construction of a pro-European Serbia which she distances herself from. Throughout the focus group, participant 1 was vocal about her resistance towards joining the EU, and her argument about losing '*your* roots' functions to construct pro-EU Serbia as losing its roots by forgetting the history of Serbia's relationship vis-à-vis Europe. Through an analogy of friendship, participant 1 constructs Serbia's relationship to the EU as one of victim-perpetrator. When this argument is in turn resisted by participant 5 ('who constructed SFRJ please tell me') participant 1 is strategically able to dismiss this argument by dismissing it as about 'politics'. This seems rather at odds with the conversation as a whole, yet highlights the subtle differences that participants make between constructing self-other relations between nations and cultures, and those between governments. It is worth examining this in more detail by drawing on a longer illustrative excerpt:

*6. Belgrade (2):*
*2: Can I go first? I think that Serbia absolutely isn't pro-Russian, I think that the influence of Russia is blown out of proportion and that that is a fear of the West, that Serbia will, now I'm not saying we're innocent, there's an ugly expression [that's true]; we're on the fence, we want to, but we don't want to, and the Russians aren't idiots, even they're tired of us. And then we're acting like we don't want to join either but in reality we are more inclined towards the EU, and we end up looking like idiots in the eyes of both. Yes, Serbia historically has closer ties with Russia than say Croatia has had, and I agree with the decision not to implement sanctions against Russia [during the Crimean crisis] but that's not valued where you're trying to go. […]*

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*3: Those are stories from the second world war, Russians are our brothers, those are old stories, and I mean, for example, yes our brothers came towards the end of WWII and they freed Belgrade, and that's great, everyone talks about that. But no one talks about how their soldiers raped our women.*

*4: That's right.*

*2: Okay but they also helped us during World War 1.*

*3: Yes, sure they did, I'm not saying they didn't, I'm saying they did, really, a lot, but then after that it was followed by raping. […]*

*2: Russians are, apropos our balancing and Kosovo, we used Russia for as long as Kosovo was of interest to us, because evidently it isn't anymore. We grabbed on to Russia to defend us and to be our support in the UN Security Council, anyways, we asked Russia, 'please help us with Kosovo, please help us please help us' and then our domestic politics changed and Russia got pissed off. And then, Cepurin, their UN Ambassador, or whatever it's not important, said 'hold on, we can't be more Serbian than Serbs themselves'. So, we're uncommitted, we don't know what we want, we change state politics and history every ten years. We can't expect complete loyalty from Russia or the EU when we don't give anyone our loyalty.*

*4: Okay, no one is looking for a bad relationship with Russia. Why should anyone come and fill our minds with ideas that 'no those Russians are a bad people', because we obviously, as a people, like Russia, even if no one is singing their praise as a genius nation.*

*3: That relationship both with Russia and the EU comes down to what nr 2 was saying in the beginning, that we want this and we want that. We're balancing and not doing anything for anyone. But expecting everything from everyone.*

Again, we see the use of 'I' ('I think', 'I mean', 'I'm saying') to make controversial claims about Russia, before moving on to use the more inclusive 'we' to discuss the current inbetweenness of Serbia and its negative consequences. Namely, the first two speakers begin by strategically dismantling the myth of a pro-Russian Serbia as something 'blown out of proportion', perpetuated through Western, rather than Serbian, narratives, and lacking a critical lens on Russia's role in Serbia ('no one talks about how their soldiers raped our women'). This strategy of dismantling the historical significance of Russia is then built on to construct Serbian inbetweenness as a negative national uniqueness that is not only unproductive ('we're balancing and not doing

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anything') and stigmatizing ('we end up looking like idiots'), but also draws Serbia away from the possibility of actually *being* Serbia ('and then their UN Ambassador said "we can't be more Serbian than Serbs themselves".'). In other words, the discursive logic behind the discussions of participants 2 and 3 is to re-negotiate the self-other relations within a temporal context; if Russia is seen as 'never' being important to Serbia, then joining the EU and renegotiating the role of 'East' in Serbia's identity does not harm continuity, but rather shows progress.

In response to this attempt at deconstructing a sense of continuity and significance of Russia, participants draw on strategies of justification to downplay the responsibility of Russia for negative events in Serbia's past by comparing it to positive events ('okay but they also helped us') and minimising the importance of Russia without fully rejecting it ('okay, no one is looking for a bad relationship with Russia'). What is significant here is also that, while participants might have been persuaded of the more ambiguous historical relationship with Russia, this is countered by comparisons between Russia and the EU, by drawing on fictitious quoting ('no those Russians are bad people') to delegitimize the authority of the EU in making demands not only on Serbian politics, but more importantly on the way people think ('why should anyone come and fill our minds with ideas'). This comparison was also visible in excerpt 5, where negative representations of Russia are countered with negative representations of the EU ('the EU destroyed your country'). Consequently, for many participants, despite the dismantling of a positive historical continuity with Russia, there was an inability to couple, or recognize, that this made the 'West' a more 'essential' part of the ingroup identity.

### *Deconstructing the 'West' in Serbian identity: Constructing continuity to the EU as 'Other'*

In many of the discussions around political change and the normative pressure to change relations with Russia, the construction of an ambiguous relationship with Russia was contrasted with the construction of a more definite historical continuity to a negative relationship between Serbia and the EU, as can be seen in extract 5 and 6 above and here in extract 7:

### *7. Vranje*

*8: You know what, I've always been a believer in the whole idea that history repeats itself. And if you go through history, Russia never hindered you. Even if they didn't help you, the sure enough didn't hinder you.*

*5: That's what I'm talking about.*

*8: While Germany, the US, England, France, they didn't spare any ammunition, if you see what I mean. (General agreement). They screwed you over at least once or twice in life.*

The present exchange draws on strategies of perpetuation to defend a particular version of a Serbian national identity; one victimized by the West. This is accomplished by drawing on argumentative schemes of history as a teacher ('I've always been a believer in the whole idea that history repeats itself') and topos of difference, to position Russia as closer to the self ('they never hindered you') and the West (interchangeably used with EU) as 'Other' ('they screwed you over at least once'). The use of parallelism in this context of historical comparison strategically constructs continuity to self-other relations which position the EU as against Serbia rather than with it. Similar strategies of comparison were visible on other focus groups;

**8. Paraćin:**

*3: If the EU offers us more, then we should move towards the EU, but the EU hasn't proved itself to be particularly generous, nor giving, in any sense in regards to us, and those wars, and Kosovo, and everything possible. While Russia has at least, in a certain way, been with us.*

It becomes important here to take into consider the role of relevant others (Elcheroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011) in giving meaning to these various constructions of continuity and identity. Why is association with Russia so negative? As mentioned in the previous section, the choice to integrate into the EU entails adopting a common foreign policy, but also, to the dismay of many Serbs, a common way of thinking about the world. This reflects the argument put forward by SCT that categories reflect, rather than distort, social reality (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994) and that the prototypical member of a category is given the power to shape who 'we' are, how we act and how we make sense of the world. As such, the category 'European' reflects, to Serbs, a certain perspective on who belongs, and who does not, and has downstream

consequences for how Serbia has been historically positioned in relation to the European Self. Consider the following exchange:

**9. Niš:**

*6: It's simply fashionable in the Balkans to hate Serbs. Even Montenegro, which, even they hate Serbs. Even Macedonians.*
*9: But why??*
*6: Well it's simply fashionable, when they see that everyone hates you, they hate you too.*
*9: But do you, do you think we're that bad or that good that we should, I mean, what's going on here?*
*6: We're not, but it's just fashionable. They see that Europe is rewarding anyone who hates Serbs, so then they just tag along and say 'we hate Serbs too.' Europe has always looked at us like little Russia and that's the problem. Even when we weren't 'little Russians' they said we were.*
*9: I think that's out of spite against Russia. Literally.*

Through argumentative strategies of similarity, Serbia and Russia are both constructed as Other in the eyes of Europe, and these representations in turn cause a sense of positioning of Serbia as not European, and thus not recognized as belonging to the social category itself ('Europe has always looked at us like little Russia'). The idea of accepting stigmatizing representations of Serbia as a strategic tool for making progress ('They see that Europe is rewarding anyone who hates Serbs') becomes seen as a current trend in European politics ('it's just fashionable') and functions to reaffirm a sense of isolation and Othering of Serbia in Europe at large.

## The only thing that is continuous is rupture; defining the meaning of 'us' and the limits of continuity

Serbia, a nation constructed on a historical narrative of being between East and West, is clearly facing tensions in the present, leaving many citizens asking, if we are neither East nor West, what are we? The meaning of social categories is crucial in determining the ways in which social identity processes are realized. In a country like Serbia, the continued management of identity through negating what 'we' are not, has led to less focus on defining what we are. I therefore conclude the current paper by considering

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one particular extract, and what it can tell us about Serbian national identity and the importance of collective continuity.

## 10. Belgrade (1):

*4: I think the killer here is that every 10 years our elite changes, and our value systems, and that causes you to always, and that's what I've been saying, we might be able to run our own state if we didn't change our basic value system where you first have a King, and then everything changes.*

*2: But territorially you've moved around a lot more than an English person [...]*

*1: He created his system and to this day it remains in its original character. [...]*

*4: I think the problem is that we don't have, some well-known standards, to say 'that's our value system, that's our elite', instead everything changes here. When the government changes, everything changes. Like I said, one minute we have a monarchy, the next communism, then we're pro-democracy.*

*1: But what does that tell you? That' we're an unstable people.*

*5: That we're an uneducated nation. [...]*

*6: Let's compare us to the English. England traces its roots back to the middle ages, and all that has remained, has stayed continuous, without occupation of over 500 years. Here, you were annihilated for 500 years, and your state was only created in the 19ᵗʰ century. In the 19ᵗʰ century, we were, compared to Europe, set back, even if we might have been ahead of them in the past, if we look at history. We're lagging behind a whole century, with regards to everything, and our national consciousness is endangered.*

Underlying this exchange is an attempt to strategically defending the lack of political, democratic and regional progress of Serbia, by drawing on temporal comparisons ('always', 'one minute – the next') to argue that Serbian history is defined by ruptures, in comparison to the stable continuity of other nations ('England […] has remained, has stayed continuous, without occupation'). This constructive strategy functions to justify the current international status quo and Serbia's low position in the hierarchy of nation by emphasizing the legitimacy of past events in setting Serbia back ('we were […] set back, even if we might have been ahead of them in the past'). It also attributes blame for this lack of progress on the Ottoman occupation ('annihilated for 500 years')

which not only made Serbia lag behind, it also diluted, and endangered the national consciousness and character of Serbs.

This quote, alongside the previous excerpts included in this paper, seem to illustrate that what defines the Serbian category is a continued history of ruptures, caused by various relevant Others (the EU, Germans, the Ottoman Empire etc.) which has resulted in a sense of instability and undefined belonging. Continuity and discontinuity seem to exist as two different levels; discontinuity to the narrativist dimension of history (the interlinking of events of the past) alongside an attempt to protect the essentialist dimension of history (values, norms and beliefs) which is seen as 'endangered' because of these continouos ruptures. This data therefore paints a more complex picture of role of continuity/discontinuity for social identity by supporting the argument that valence becomes crucial in determining the way forward (Roth, et al., 2017). In addition, the present paper builds on this work by situating valence, or the meaning given to continuity as either positive or negative, within an interdependent self-other context. It not only matters how Serbs see their history, but how relevant others recognize that same version of history as legitimate and valid.

Percieved collective continuity to a state of inbetweenness, defined by participants as rapid changes in ideology and system of rule, is seen as stigmatizing to Serbia's image as a modern and developing nation because it is moving towards a European future without any clear definition of its national self.  This sense that the only thing that is continuous is rupture further reinforces participants fear of being unable to both define and maintain a 'real' Serbian identity. Consequently, when supranational integration is seen as joining a higher-order category which is built on the basis of lower-order categories (Western nations) it becomes potentially undermining of the Serbian national identity. As such, conclusion follows that if we want to be European, we have to become more like 'them' and less like 'us'. Ironically, and perhaps counter-intuitive, for many participants this change and discontinuity was welcomed.

**Conclusion**

Many readers familiar with the recent history of Serbia, including its communist past and unique leadership of Tito, the rise and fall of Yugoslavia and the aftermath of the 1990s for both the country and the region, will find the lack of references to these events stricking. One might ask whether this is because of the questions asked, or the

present climate of the country. It is likely a combination of both. Yet what this paper also brings to the fore is the importance of understanding that the management of a sense of collective continuity is as much informed by what is selectively remembered as well as what is conveniently forgotten. The benefits of data from group discussions has particularly highlighted this by illustrating how participants question and challenge each others representations of self-other relations across time and their role for present day politics. Absences of historical events and figures are equally as important as presences because they demonstrate the constructive nature of continuity. As Reicher (2008) argues, essentialism and constructivism go hand in hand; it is the continued revision of meaning that allows us to construct, and experience, our identities as stable over time. Yet identities, as well as collective continuities, are not only shaped by the self, but also by relevant others.

Within the current paper, the data presented and analysed shows that discussions around EU integration in Serbia become situated within a larger discourse on how a European future for Serbia 'fits' with an inbetween past, and the perceived stigmatization that this past casts on the Serbian identity. Integration into the EU, while seen as simultaneously threatening to a positive Serbian identity and its ability to be recognized as such, is also seen as potentially positive, by creating a discontinuity to a history of inbetweenness and opening up a space between the cracks where a true Serbian identity can be carved out.

Combining the theoretical insights from self-categorization theory with the work on perceived collective continuity has allowed us to illustrate that the consequences of ingroup continuity for social identity depend on how the social category is defined by self and other. As such, there are important limits to the perceived benefits of collective continuity, as well as the dangers of discontinuity. While valence becomes crucial in shaping whether continuity is seen as enhancing or undermining of a social identity, this valence itself becomes negotiated within a context of self and other, underlined by important power dynamics.

Without the constraints of relevant others, we would not have representations of the past that were stigmatizing, nor experience our identities as such. Yet it is precisely because self-other relations are intertwined that these dynamics exist and become consequential for intragroup processes. Therefore, maintaining a positive identity can sometime become contingent upon the ability to disconnect it from its past, particularly if there are limited options to challenge how its is remembered by more powerful others.

Consequently, we must situate collective continuity in an intergroup context, asking not only about the meaning that we attribute to our past and its continuity in the present, but also the implications of how others remember our history and the role these representations play in shaping our self-categorization process.

# PART III: CONCLUSION

# Chapter 8: Conclusion

## 8.1 Aims of the thesis

In this thesis I examined the role of history, power and national identity in the process of supranational integration. I did so by focusing on Serbia, a prospective member of the European Union, exploring how elite and lay representations of socio-political change became intertwined with discourses on maintaining continuity to the nation-state, its history and identity. The focus on Serbia was motivated by a desire to critically examine the process of 'becoming' a member of a supranational group as it occurred, and to answer the question of how, and why, seemingly positive political change towards democratization and integration might be resisted or seen as undermining for a particular nation.

More specifically, the thesis focused on investigating how ingroup continuity was managed and maintained in times of socio-political change, and the focus on Serbia provided an ideal setting which to study this. As discussed in Chapter 1, Serbia's national identity and history is one built on a sense of inbetweenness, situating the nation, both geopolitically and symbolically, at a crossroads between East and West. Within this context, movement towards joining the European Union has by many been seen as a moment of choice where one road is chosen, and the crossroads is abandoned. This has in turn led to a tension, both politically and publicly, between wanting to join the EU for civic reasons, but resisting it for cultural ones (as illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5).

There were a few aims that grounded this thesis; firstly, on a purely topical level, research on EU integration and identification with a European community has predominantly focused on existing EU member states, or non-EU countries of high economic power in Europe (i.e., Norway and Switzerland). Less has been said about how issues of identification, history and international relations shape the path toward accession as it is occurring, specifically in low-power countries. Therefore, one of the aims of the thesis was to provide evidence of how these processes are experienced as they are happening, and how they are made sense of by elites and citizens. Secondly, on a theoretical level, the thesis aimed to contribute to the literature on perceived collective continuity and its role for social identities by situating the negotiation of change and perceived historical continuity within a self-other context.

With this focus in mind, temporality became a central element in designing the thesis and applying the theoretical framework, aimed at extending our understanding of perceived collective continuity as encompassing both self and other as well as the various temporal dimensions of these categories. In other words, the analyses in the various empirical chapters focused explicitly on how present politics and intergroup relations became situated within, and constructed through, temporal links to the past, or anticipations for the future. Lastly, the application of a mixed-methods design aimed to provide both an understanding of content and context through the depth and richness of the qualitative data, and how this meaning in turn informs and shapes the relationships between processes of identification through the quantitative data.

## 8.2. Summary of findings

The research questions guiding this thesis were;

*How is collective continuity managed by politicians and the public in times of socio-political change, and what are the implications for national identity?*

1. *What role do social representations of history play in how citizens make sense of present socio-political change, and what are the implications of this for how they represent the future? (Chapter 4)*

2. *How is a sense of compatibility between Serbian identity and EU belonging constructed by entrepreneurs of identity to either promote or resist change?*
   *- Which discursive strategies have become the most successful within political discourses? (Chapter 5)*

3. *What are the lay understandings of supranational integration in the context of Serbia joining the EU, and how do these relate to identity and intergroup threat? (Chapter 6, Study 1)*

4. *What is the underlying role of power dynamics in shaping a) fears of the undermining of Serbian identity by EU accession, b) perceptions of prototypicality of the category 'European', and c) the perceived compatibility of national and supranational identification? What are the consequences of these processes for attitudes in favour of EU accession? (Chapter 6, Study 2)*

5. *How is the desire for collective continuity reconciled with a stigmatizing past?*

The main aims of this thesis were addressed in four empirical studies, combining both qualitative and quantitative data. Chapter 4 analysed iterative focus group data collected with four different groups of participants in four cities in Serbia over a one-year time frame. The focus of Chapter 4 was to examine how historical representations were drawn on to construct continuity to ingroup identity and in turn make sense of political change. Moving from public to political discourse, Chapter 5 drew on a diachronic data set of political speeches from 1990-2015 focusing on exploring how political leaders have framed their support for, or resistance, to political change through identity-related arguments. Chapter 6 in turn combined both qualitative focus group data and quantitative survey data in a sequential exploratory design, to explore lay discourses around European identity, national identity and EU integration, and then to test the emerging relationships on a larger sample of participants. Lastly Chapter 7 provided an analysis of the discursive management of continutiy in times of change, illustrating the limits of continuity when the past is seen as stigmatizing by both self and relevant others. While the chapters drew on different data sets, both top-down and bottom-up discourses on national identity and political change, the findings from each illustrate that there are clear tensions between aligning ingroup identity with EU integration and maintaining a sense of continuity in the process. A summary of each chapter's findings is given below.

Chapter 4 provided a first, exploratory and in-depth analysis of lay representations of national identity, history and politics in relation to the EU. The thematic analysis gave an illustration of the core underlying tensions present in the beliefs and attitudes of a selected group of Serbs in regards to their country's current political situation and how these in turn can be tracked back to the core tenants of a Serbian national identity. The underlying tensions between being a victim, both domestically and internationally, while also re-affirming a sense of agency through themes of resilience and resistance, showed the struggles individuals experienced when trying to reconcile the need for external help to improve Serbia, and the perception that help itself was coming from a historical enemy of Serbia.

Chapter 5 focused on how political leaders, both in power and in opposition, have strategically positioned themselves as entrepreneurs of identity in order to gain public support for their political agendas. The discursive analysis of key political speeches illustrated the creative ways in which politicians navigated the many tensions arising from attempting to move away from the stigma of the 1990s and re-integrate Serbia

into an international community, by decoupling a civic Serbia from a cultural one, in order to attribute change to the former, while protecting the continuity of the latter. It echoed the findings from Chapter 4 highlighting the important role of Kosovo in providing a symbolic continuity to a national identity and history, which in turn became rooted in the geopolitical conflict regarding Kosovo's independence, within which Serbia was seen to take one side, and the EU another.

Taking into consideration the findings from the previous two studies, Chapter 6 was intended to explore some of the key ideas that emerged with regards to national identity, history and power in the context of EU integration. The collection of focus group data with a larger sample of cities and participants compared to Chapter 4 was intended to allow for saturation in regards to the themes that emerged when discussing Serbia and the EU. The qualitative data, while mirroring some of the themes from Chapter 4, focused more on the dynamics between dual identification as both Serbian and European, and the relevant 'Others', which were seen to shape what both social categories meant. Combined with the quantitative component, Chapter 6 illustrated that future-oriented fears of powerlessness and identity undermining were significant in predicting lower support for EU membership, highlighting support for the importance of exploring identities as in the process of 'becoming' (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). The findings further illustrated that subgroup dynamics within the superordinate context mattered for processes of dual identification, where those who were seen as more powerful were also seen as more representative, and the lower in power Serbia was seen, the less representative it was, and the less compatible Serbian and European identities were. Lastly the findings from Chapter 7 illustrated the limits of current theorizing on perceived collective continuity as the case of Serbia shows the complex ways in which historical continuity, and whether it is seen as positive or not, becomes negotiated within a self-other context, where it matters not only how we remember our past and its implications for national identity, but also how we percieve relevant others to remember it.

## 8.3. Contributions

There are a number of contributions from this PhD, both empirical and theoretical, as discussed in turn below.

### Empirical/Methodological contributions

The use of qualitative data to explore social psychological phenomena has been a common tool within the social representations theory, but less so with research using social identity approach. The difference between the theories is that while social identity approach is a process-driven theoretical framework, social representations theory has mainly been used to provide in-depth understandings of how meaning is constructed and negotiated in a social context. In this thesis, the use of focus group data allowed me to combine the two by considering how social knowledge and social identities become co-constructed. The qualitative data allowed us to remain close to the 'social' in social representations by illustrating how representations of historical continuity and identity were collaborative achievements. Some important empirical and methodological contributions which resulted from this theoretical approach are discussed below.

*The shifting perspective on Serbian identity*

One important empirical contribution of this thesis is to the domain of research on Serbian identity. Much of this research has emphasized that Serbian identity is built on a victimhood narrative, including some emphasis on resilience, but mainly highlighting how Serbs have continuously claimed a sense of victimhood internationally, particularly after the Yugoslav wars. While this thesis did find support for that, it illustrated that this victimhood narrative was not intended to construct Serbs as helpless victims, but rather it was used as a strategic tool to shift responsibility and accountability for lack of progress to 'Other' actors; whether domestically (politicians) or internationally (the EU). In doing so, individuals managed to position themselves as the true bearers of a Serbian identity which was being threatened both from within, and by external forces. Thus, the qualitative data, particularly from Chapter 4, shed some nuance on this literature on Serbian identity by emphasizing the importance of current socio-political affairs in how identity is negotiated and constructed. Furthermore, the findings from Chapter 6 and 7 also show the nuances of Serbian identity by bringing to light the critical attachments to Serbian history and identity in present-day discussions of the nation. In particular, Chapter 7 illustrates not only that Serbs are aware of the negative representations attached to their history but have also, to some extent internalized these and began to question the importance of maintaining a sense of continuity with the past. Instead, historical discontinuity with Serbia of the past, particularly the narrativist dimension of history (i.e., the interlinking of historical

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events into a continuous narrative) was considered potentially stigmatizing and undermining of the ability of Serbs to progress and redefine Serbian identity in a more positive light.

*The contributions of critical discourse analysis to the study of national identity*
Chapters 5 and 7, drawing on speeches by politicans and discourses on identity, history and politics amongs Serbs in a group setting, bring important methodological contributions to the study of historical continuity and national identity.

In Chapter 5, the use of a diachronic data set of comparative speeches from the same context illustrated how discourse on change becomes contextualized and embedded within pre-existing public and private narratives. Firstly, the initial survey conducted to sample the speeches showed that certain political events which internationally have been considered crucial for the region, are seen as less so within the eyes of the public. For example, the 1989 speech in Gazimestan by Slobodan Milošević, seen as the match that lit the fuse in the Yugoslav conflict, was not considered one of the most important events in Serbia's recent history by the individuals surveyed. While the insignificance of this event might come from an attempt to forget, or supress it, due to its negative implications for Serbia, it nevertheless tells us that it is crucial, when conducting research on political speeches, to consider not only which speeches have had a global impact, but more importantly, which speeches are relevant in the minds of ingroup members. In addition, the limitations on locating speeches also brought to the fore the troubles that researchers may experience when trying to explore official, or institutionalized discourses on the recent past in post-conflict settings, as these records might have been lost, destroyed or purposefully distorted. Nevertheless, the findings from the study contribute evidence for the use of a discourse-historical approach towards critical discourse analysis, where context is given a central role in shaping what is said, and why. Namely, the findings illustrated that Kosovo, as a the root of the Serbian nation, has been continuously drawn on by all sides of political debates to purport their agenda, showing the symbolic power behind the historical narrative rooted in the geopolitics of Kosovo.

Chapter 7 further showed how a critical discourse analysis can provide an important methodological tool for analysing how individuals construct self and other, social categories and continuity through dialogue. The use of a discursive analysis of focus group data, unlike a thematic analysis in the previous chapters, gives an insight

into the functional role of meaning-making in regards to history, and the ways in which communication is a form of practice where individuals, as part of the same social group, negotiate who they are, who they used to be, and what that means for the political choices the group should make in the present and future.

*The relevance of mixed-methods research*

Chapter 6 focused on contributing to the limited output of mixed-methods papers in social psychology, showing how qualitative data can be powerful in informing quantitative studies in crucial ways. Firstly, the qualitative findings aided in the development of contextualized and situated survey questions. The survey design for the quantitative component would not have been as appropriate or specific had it not been informed by the qualitative data collected prior to it. For example, an important contribution of the survey design was the use of an item to measure meta-representations, which has mainly been discussed in context of qualitative research (Hopkins, 2011; Howarth, 2002). While there are tools for exploring meta-stereotypes and meta-perceptions (i.e. Matera, Stefanile & Brown, 2015), the former tends to assume these will always be negative, while the latter has to some degree exhibited more neutrality in valence, but has also been inclined towards utilizing negative statements as part of measuring meta-perceptions. In contrast, within Chapter 6 we did not start from the assumption that meta-representations would be inherently negative, but rather from the assumption that they would be consequential for the process of identification. Secondly, the qualitative study also informed the analytic strategies taken towards the exploratory data of the survey, by highlighting key threads linking the relationship between power, identity and belonging in significant ways. While the survey data was correlational, and so no causal claims made, it nevertheless was able to provide an added dimension of support for some of the theoretical arguments of the thesis. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data to address different dimensions of the same phenomenon lended strength to the thesis and the specific findings in Chapter 6.

In addition to the methodological contribution of this chapter, it also offered important empirical insights into the process of understanding why Serbs might be resistant towards EU integration, directly measuring what Serbs think others think, in a context where the literature on Serbian identity has constantly emphasized the presence

of an 'Other' (i.e., 'the Western Gaze', Greenberg, 2010; Subotic, 2011; Todorova, 1997).

**Theoretical contributions**

Beyond the empirical and methodological contributions of this PhD, there are a number of theoretical contributions that can be taken from the thesis to inform theory on social identity, ingroup continuity and subgroup/superordinate group dynamics.

*A temporal context for the study of social identities*

Firstly, an important theoretical contribution of this PhD is the emphasis on temporality in allowing us to both study and theorize identities as processes. The importance of time has featured in previous social psychological work (Arrow, Poole, Henry, & Moreland, 2004; Gleibs, Mummendey & Noack, 2008; Levine, 2003) and this thesis build on this by re-affirming the importance of a temporal context in understanding social identity processes. That is, while previous research and theorizing has brought temporality in to explore change over time, the present work brings in temporality as an argumentative dimension through which claims to historical continuity are made. The use of iterative focus groups (Chapter 4), diachronic speech data (Chapter 5), an explicit distinction between *current* and *future* power dynamics (Chapter 6) and the analysis of the use of temporal arguments in discussions of historical continuity and political change (Chapter 7) contributes to the literature on perceived collective continuity, by providing insights on how social identity processes become crucial in shaping how change is understood and whether it is accepted or rejected.

In Chapter 4, temporality featured heavily in shaping how political elites, as entrepreneurs of identity, were able to construct change as compatible with continuity and how change, over time, moved from 'being' a possible alternative for the future, to 'becoming' the dominant route to progress. The chapter contributes to our understanding of some of the barriers that entrepreneurs of identity might face when proposing political change, by becoming constrained by pre-existing and legitimized identity discourses that have developed over time. Namely, the example of Kosovo highlights the challenges pro-EU politicians faced when attempting to decouple the question of Kosovo's independence from the question of EU accession, a task which, as seen in Chapters 4 and 6 (focus group discourses) has had limited success.

Chapter 5 and 7 also emphasized the idea of temporality in relation to identity (Condor, 2006) by considering how there might be several dimensions of the same identity managed within one particular speech or discussion, and how managing continuity becomes possible by focusing on core elements of continuity while attributing change to peripheral, less 'essential' aspects of a social category. A temporal dimension to the discursive management of identity allows us to track the movement of an identity project from 'being' a possible version to 'becoming' the present, taken-for-granted construction of who we are. In turn, applying a temporal dimension in this way, both theoretically and methodologically, provided an opportunity for truly analysing identities as processes.

Lastly, in Chapter 6, while the emphasis was on the role of power in self-other processes (as discussed below), the inclusion of a temporal dimension to power showed the nuanced ways in which it relates to identification and political attitudes. By distinguishing between perceptions of power in the present and perceptions of power in the future, as part of the EU, the chapter shows how there seem to be different dimensions out power playing out in a temporal context. Namely, perceptions of current power-dynamics influenced process of identification with a superordinate group while perceptions of future power-dynamics more closely related to attitudes towards political integration itself. As such, an important contribution of a temporal perspective on social identities is that it shows how other, core related phenomena, can have different consequences for intra-group processes when different temporalities are made salient.

*The role of power in self-other processes*

The role of power in shaping processes of identification, superordinate belonging and how history is remembered permeated all empirical chapters of this thesis and featured either implicitly or explicitly within the analysis of the data. Most evident is the role of power in Chapter 6. A key contribution of this chapter focused on illustrating the complex dynamics that permeate superordinate membership by showing that there are two processes that come into play; one is the process of the subgroup relating towards the superordinate group, and the other is focused on the dynamics between subgroups *within* a superordinate group. The findings in Chapter 6 highlight that the construction of the meaning of a superordinate group is not devoid of the subgroups that compose it (similar to the argument of both CIIM and IPM) but also

that this meaning-making process is inherently bound up with questions of intergroup power-dynamics. Perceptions of power, both current and future, can be instrumental in shaping how low-power groups construct a sense of belonging within a larger, common ingroup and the extent to which they perceive that others recognize this belonging as legitimate. These findings extend beyond the Serbia-EU context and can be considered useful in understanding other examples of subgroup-superordinate group dynamics. Namely, theories such as the Common Ingroup Identity Model and Ingroup Projection Model could benefit from considering how power relations inform both the meaning given to a superordinate category, and the process of identification with it.

In addition to Chapter 6, Chapters 4, 5 and 7 show how power permeates intra-group discourses on identity, history and change through the presence of meta-representations. The concept of meta-representations, or what we think other people think was part of most focus group discussions but also political speeches. Examples of politicians and citizens engaging in imagined dialogue with relevant others shows their awareness of the role of more powerful others in influencing how they remember the past, how they construct their identities and how political change is defined. These findings in turn emphasize the importance of situating identity processes in relation to self-other dyamics, as is discussed below.

*Insecure nationalism: the complexities of historical continuity for national identity*
The previous two subsections address contributions to the literature on social identities and intergroup dynamics by emphasizing how these processes play out across time and in context of asymmetric power dynamics. In turn, these contributions come together to provide insights into the most important contribution of this thesis, namely to the literature and conceptualization between historical continuity and national identity. A key finding from the thesis is that the negotiation of both continuity and identity occur in a context of self-other, where questions of power are central. Yet this finding also places limitations on the extent to which historical continuity becomes feasible, and desirable, for the negotiation of a positive national identity when the role of relevant others is given explicit acknowledgement in this process.

Chapter 7 in particular provides support for the need to extend the work of historical continuity by considering the ways in which the past is remembered in relation to, rather than isolation from, relevant others. Historical continuity, its valence and therefore role for national identity becomes shaped by what is remembered and

how, as well as how we perceive others to remember it. More specifically, historical continuity, particularly in times of change, can become strategically constructed through temporal references, a dimension of analysis, which is underexplored in both social identity and social representations research. This emphasis on placing historical continuity in a context of self and other, where meta-representations become crucial in shaping the extent to which historical continuity is seen as potentially stigmatizing, highlights the important role of relevant others (particularly more powerful others) in recognizing identity claims or potentially undermining them, and thus becoming stigmatizing.

The question of how collective continuity is managed in times of socio-political change could only be answered by situating a seemingly intra-national political process of change within the context of the interface between the nation and other nations. This context, in turn, was 1) conceptualized through a self-other framework, where national identity negotiation was seen as inherently bound up with the conceptualization and management of an 'Other' (or at times, 'Others') and 2) situated temporally, by considering how the past and future came to bear on the processes of identification and attitudes towards politics in the present by providing a sense of attachment to, or alienation from a particular social group. These contributions were discussed more specifically in Chapter 7, which emphasized how insecurities in the content of social categories, and an inability to agree on what it means to be 'us', has implications for joining a larger, common ingroup. In other words, if 'we' are unable to define what makes us distinct and unique, then how will we be able to keep that alive and sustainable once part of a larger us, which can permeate the boundaries of our national ingroup, and allows us not only to physically leave the group, but potentially to psychologically exit it. Several key themes of this PhD thus seem to support the notion of a growing sense of what might be called 'insecure nationalism' in Serbia.

Firstly, as EU integration entails a removal of the boundaries between nations, it also makes them less taken-for-granted, and, therefore, problematized as a part of answering the question 'who are we?'. In Serbia in particular, the inability to agree on whether Serbia integrates with or without Kosovo becomes one dimension through which a sense of insecurity around the national category manifests itself.

Secondly, the conditionality placed on the country as part of the integration process emphasizes the necessary changes required to join, but also inadvertently communicates a sense of inferiority and lagging behind on the part of Serbia, a meta-

perspective which permeated much of the discussions of EU membership and identification. This sense of stigma became at the root a debate about agency and dependence, where EU integration and the enforced changes that came with it removed a sense of agency from Serbia in 'fixing itself' and instead being 'forced to do the right thing'. This, coupled with a perception of change as not only shaping our institutions and the civic domain (the dominant way it has been presented by political supporters of EU integration), but as affecting the mentality and everyday expressions of banal nationalism of Serbs (Billig, 1995), caused feelings of threat and resistance to the EU.

Lastly, and most crucially, awareness of political changes implemented for the betterment of Serbia and its European future led to debates about whether these changes were actually necessary, and if so, whether there was something inherently wrong with Serbs. Frequent expressions of critical nationalism, of negative attitudes towards 'other' Serbs and the country's institutions, and of essentializing the Serbian mentality as inherently different from its neighbours in Europe, culminated in conclusions that it would perhaps be better if Serbia joined the EU and ceased to exist. This, it seems, was at the core of the cause of a sense of nationalism combined with psychological insecurity. As a theoretical contribution, the concept of 'insecure nationalism' can be defined as a consequence of a growing blurring of the national boundaries between 'us' and 'them' brought on by global changes coupled with a growing intra-national divide between 'us' and 'them'. In other words, while the world is becoming increasingly integrated, nations can become increasingly internally divided, due to polarising population stance toward recent socio-political history (in the case of Serbia), historical colonial legacy (in the case of the UK), or other representations of national uniqueness. At the core of this idea of insecure nationalism then, is a rupture to a sense of perceived collective continuity: as much a rupture between the past and the present, as a rupture between citizens. As chapter 7 has illustrated, the comparison between the past (Serbia as geographically larger and powerful as part of Yugoslavia) and the present (Serbia as powerless and no longer able to balance political allegiances) has implications for identity; an identity built on inbetweenness was possible to the extent that Serbia was powerful. As it is no longer in a position of power today, both the image of the nation, and its identity, has begun to dismantle.

**Societal Relevance**

Taking the specific perspective of Serbia in investigating the social psychology of supranational integration, from the specific perspective of Serbia necessarily places limits on the generalisability of the empirical findings and the basis for claims about universal psychological processes, a significant focus within social psychology. However, as Reicher (2004, p. 926) argues;

*[a] stress on contextual variability and an opposition to the idea of behavioural universals is in no way opposed to the notion of a general human nature. However, it is based on a very different conception of that nature and of how its generality reflects itself (and hence is to be found) in our behaviour.*

Thus, the relevance of these findings to contexts beyond Serbia comes not from predicting that the processes of identification, integration and intergroup relations will be expressed in other contexts. Instead, it is most fruitful to locate these findings as unique expressions of broader trends of national political psychology within global contexts. It is in this vein that I will draw links between the findings of this thesis and broader social and political trends we see beyond this particular region.

To begin with, the current thesis has illustrated the a social and political psychology of supranational integration becomes crucial as it allows us to dig deeper into the more societal and cultural dynamics that shape how political change is understood in relation to nation's identity. It further illustrates that social psychological process at a national level (i.e., at the level of the ingroup) become shaped by, and negotiated within a context of, relevant others. Feeling European, being able to be Serbian in Europe, whether historical continuity to the Serbian past becomes desirable and whether EU integration is seen as beneficial, all these processes unfold through self-other relations. In other words, research on historical continuity and national identity, needs to account for the importance of relevant others and the perceived meanings they give to the ingroup and its history.

More concretely, the changing face of nationalism in internationally connected worlds needs to be addressed, rather than ignored or dismissed as archaic expressions of prejudice. Within Serbia, the attempts of politicians to alleviate fears of 'cultural' change by distinguishing between a cultural Serbia and a civically changing Serbia has not resonated with its citizens, and has instead caused fears and insecurities about the extent to which these changes will permeate everyday life. This has led to a growing disconnect between the public and the political, and a situation which either will lead

to the growing political apathy or a context ripe for a more populist leadership. Similarly, across Europe, the growing support for populist parties and right-wing parties is likely linked to the fact that these groups address the growing intersections of the national and the international, albeit often in a radically biased way. When futures are seen as uncertain, and individuals feel insecure about their social groups (vis-à-vis others) in the present, the past becomes an increasingly powerful and uncompromising source of stability.

Lastly, albeit slightly targeting a different audience, the understanding of the dynamics between identifying and being identified in contexts of dual identities and subgroup – superordinate group dynamics, can have important practical implications for programs intended to integrate not only nations into supranational unions, but individuals moving from one country to another. While less situated within the acculturation literature, this thesis does inform intergroup relations within this context by emphasizing how self-other dynamics shape intra-group processes, and how attachment and belonging is managed dialogically. Among policymakers, an awareness of how integration into a new social group, whether a new host country or a new supranational group, entails the dialogical management of the identities of both those who join, and of those who are already 'there', will be useful in considering how to devise integration strategies that meet the needs of both minority and majority groups.

**Limitations and future research**

The research presented in this thesis has a number of limitations which can in turn be considered as providing promising avenues of future research. As each empirical chapter addressed the specific limitations of that method or research design, I will focus here on more general limitations and future directions of research.

The first limitation lies in the use of national identity and history as defining lenses through which individuals make sense of EU integration. Although the qualitative studies attempted to address the complexity of representations associated with EU integration in Serbia, it is likely that the framing of the project itself limited the extent to which other possible representations of the EU were presented. However, it becomes important here to take into consideration the specfic historical context of Serbian national identity in accounting for these decisions. Namely, during the fall of Yugoslavia, national borders between the various nations composing Yugoslavia were

draw along ethnic lines; citizens of Serbia were ethnic Serbs of an Orthodox faith. Thus, what is quite distinct for Serbia, and the region at large, is the intimately close links between national, ethnic and religious identity. As such, in many focus group discussions, being Serbian entailed being an ethnic, Orthodox Serb and thus constructing a very exclusive national category. Awareness of this in turn informed the decision to focus on national identities as it encompasses several other crucial dimensions of identification.

Nevertheless, other dimensions might become important, such as regional identities or generational difference. The thesis did try to unpack some of the potential differences across northern and southern Serbia in Chapter 4, however the lack of specific focus on regional differences in discourses limited the extent to which meaningful comparisons could be drawn. One avenue for future work within the study of historical continuity in times of socio-political change is to consider the significance of region and age in shaping attitudes towards integration. For example, within the focus groups participants did discuss their perception of generational differences in both how a Serbian identity was seen, and also whether EU integration was considered beneficial, with older generations being more sceptical than younger ones towards the change. This in turn supports existing literature (Fligstein, 2010).

A second limitation, but also a very fruitful potential avenue for future research on collective continuity, identity and change, is the role of emotions. The exploration of how emotions permeate political thinking and decision-making has been linked to identities (Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2009) and this link should be explored not only in relation to politics but also towards historical continuity. Within this thesis, feelings of shame from stigmatization, of fear and of uncertainty were present in the qualitative data, but emotion was not explicitly considered as a significant dimension through which issues of identity and politics were understood. Chapter 7 came closest to focusing on emotions by considering how valence shaped discussions around historical continuity or discontinuity.

Another limitation lies in taking a single national context as the focus of this study. Although focusing on a single national context was a strength in providing an in-depth understanding of the complex ways in which Serbian individuals (and politicians) make sense of supranational integration, it does limit the extent to which these findings can be generalized across national contexts. As mentioned previously, it is likely that issues of power relations, identity continuity and intergroup histories,

though all important to consider, manifest themselves differently in regards to the domestic and international politics of other nations. Nevertheless, while the meaning given to these various concepts might differ, the process of growing intra-national divides and their expressions in reaction to larger, global political processes, can be seen in countries such as the UK, the USA, and also the Netherlands, Germany and Greece. Therefore, it is likely that, while the specific themes expressed in this thesis are unique to the Serbian context, the issue of managing a sense of perceived collective continuity and of positioning this in a globalizing world will have relevance for understanding intergroup and intra-group dynamics within other countries, a possibility worth exploring in future research.

**Conclusions**

The aim of the present thesis has been to answer the question of how continuity is managed in times of socio-political change and what the implications are for identity. It has done so by examining the role of history, power and national identity in the process of supranational integration, focusing on the context of Serbia and its prospective membership of the European Union. The first part of the thesis (Chapters 1-3) provided the empirical, theoretical and methodological contexts of the thesis and introduced the importance of a theoretical understanding of national identity as a social category negotiated in a context of self and other, given meaning through historical representations and narratives of continuity between the past, present and future. The second part of the thesis (Chapters 4-7) presented the empirical studies intended to address the research question in specific ways by analysing both lay and political discourses around continuity and change, as well as testing some of these relationships on a larger sample of the Serbian population. The findings from this middle section of the thesis emphasized 1) how history becomes an important resource in shaping a national identity and in turn how political change is understood in relation to this history, 2) how national identity features prominently in discussions of the present and future of the nation and can constrain which strategic constructions of change become legitimate and valid, and finally, 3) how power plays a crucial role in shaping a sense of belonging to, and willingness to join, a supranational union. The third, and last, part of the thesis (Chapter 8) discussed the empirical, theoretical and societal contributions of these findings and how to address relevant limitations in future research.

In conclusion, the social psychology approach towards supranational integration offered in this thesis illustrated when, why and how international integration (or change) is perceived to mean becoming less like 'us'. It did so by exploring and analysing how the management of the tensions between continuity and change can have implications for identities by bringing into question their meanings and thereby their stability and cohesiveness. In contexts of national identities, this can in turn lead to a sense of insecure nationalism, where intra-national divides emerge based on questions of who we are, brought about by larger, global changes taking place around us. Taken together, the thesis illustrated the usefulness and necessity of considering the psychosocial dynamics related to collective continuity, intergroup relations and social identity processes in explaining international processes. Yet it also highlights the limits of this literature in its application in contexts where historical continuity can be seen as stigmatizing to national identities not because of how the ingroup remembers the past, but because of how this process of constructing the past becomes negotiated by both self and other. Thus, perceptions of stigmatization, of a lack of recognition of a positive history and thus positive national identity, become attributed to more powerful others who are also seen as the gatekeepers of the superordinate category within which the group is trying to negotiate a place and space.

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet for Focus Groups

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before deciding to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information. Feel free to discuss issues with anyone, and if there is anything which is not clear or any questions you have, feel free to ask. Take your time reading, and don't feel rushed.

**What is this research about?** The research that you are asked to be a part of is on the topic of EU integration in Serbia. You will be asked to answer a series of questions related to EU integration, Serbian politics and the influence of political change on people in Serbia.

**Who is doing this research?**
The research is being conducted by me, Sandra Obradovic, as part of my PhD dissertation in Social Psychology, under the supervision of Dr. Caroline Howarth at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

To get in touch with either of us, I have provided our email addresses below:
Researcher: Sandra Obradović – S.Obradovic@lse.ac.uk
Supervisor: Caroline Howarth – C.S.Howarth@lse.ac.uk

**Why have you asked me to participate?**
I have asked you to participate in this study as you live in one of the cities chosen for inclusion in this study.

**What will participation involve?**
Participation in this research will be in the form of focus groups. Together with another 5-7 people, you will discuss certain topics and questions that will be provided by me. All I ask you to do is state your honest opinion about these topics and engage in discussion with the other participants. This research is about understanding your opinions on certain topics and so I ask you to be as honest and truthful about it as possible.

**How long will participation take?**
The focus groups will run between 1 – 1.5 hours in order to cover all the topics.

**What about confidentiality?**
The group discussions will be audio-recorded, however you will remain completely confidential from the moment the session is over. Your signature will only be used as part of the informed consent and once the session is over, each participant will be assigned an anonymous number and will not be mentioned by their real name in any subsequent publications of the data.

**If you are willing to participate, then please sign a Consent Form. You can keep this information sheet for your records.**

# <u>Consent Form</u>

**Researcher:** Sandra Obradović, PhD Candidate in Social Psychology, LSE.
Email: S.Obradovic@lse.ac.uk

**Supervisor**: Dr. Caroline Howarth, Assistant Professor in Social Psychology, LSE.
Email: C.S.Howarth@lse.ac.uk

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**To be completed by the Research Participant**

**Please answer each of the following questions:**

Do you feel you have been given sufficient information about the
research to enable you to decide whether or not to participate           **Yes     No**
in the research?

Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the research?        **Yes     No**

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary, and that
you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason            **Yes     No**
and without penalty?

Are you willing to take part in the research?                            **Yes     No**

Are you aware that the interview/focus groups will be audio recorded?    **Yes     No**

Will you allow the research team to use anonymized quotes in             **Yes     No**
presentations and publications?

Will you allow the anonymized data to be archived, to enable secondary
analysis and training future researchers?                               **Yes     No**

**Participant's Name:**_____

**Participant's Signature:**_____ **Date:**_____

If you would like a copy of the research report, please provide your email or postal

# Appendix 2: Topic Guide for Study I

**FG Round 1:**

**General Questions to Start Discussion**

1. There have been many discussions about Serbia joining the EU. What have been some of the benefits and some of the downsides discussed?
2. **Identity / Compatibility**
3. What is your opinion about Serbia joining the EU? Are you for or against it?
4. **Meta-perspective**
5. Do you think Serbia is welcomed in the EU, from the perspective of other member countries?
6. **Politics**
7. Serbia has (or has had) a close relationship with Russia, which has at times conflicted with its pro-EU politics. Do you think that Serbia should be more political oriented towards Russia or the EU? Or both, if possible.
8. In many media reports, EU membership and the question of the status of Kosovo have been placed in opposition. Do you think accepting Kosovo's independence is worth it if it would guarantee Serbia membership into the EU?
9. **Future**
10. When the year 2020 comes, the year by which politicians predict Serbia will have finally become a member, what do you realistically think the situation will look like?
11. Considering the past 25 years and everything that has occurred in Serbia and the region, do you think that the people, as a nation, has changed in comparison with the past?

**FG Round 2:**

**General Question to Start Discussion**

1. When we last met in April I asked you if you thought Serbia joining the EU was a good idea, has your opinions changed at all since then?
2. **Identity / Compatibility**
3. Do you consider Serbian culture as compatible with European culture?
4. Do you think Serbia's way of life is representative of a European way of life? How are they similar, and how are they different?
5. **Meta-perspective**
6. Do you think that the majority of Serbia is pro- or against EU integration?
7. **Politics**
8. Since the EU integration process came on the Serbian agenda, there have been various government in Serbia in support or against the process. Who are some of the most important politicians in this process?
9. do you feel like you can trust politicians in Serbia?
10. **Future**
11. If Serbia becomes a part of the EU in the future, do you think anything will change [in Serbia] and if so, what exactly?
12. Do you think people in Serbia have a voice in shaping Serbia's future and politics?

**FG Round 3:**

**General Question to Start Discussion**

1. Within our last two FGs there's been a lot of talk about the politics around Kosovo. What is the historical significance of Kosovo?
2. What are some media sources (whether it is print or broadcast tv) which you use and consider to be unbiased in their news-reporting?
3. **Politics**
4. What role do you think the media has is in shaping the political attitudes and opinions of people in Serbia?
5. This year there is an election on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, do you plan to vote and if so, why?
6. **Meta-perspective**
7. Prompts 1 and 2: Texts from FGs in South (Niš and Vranje) introduced in North FGs (Novi Sad and Belgrade) and vice-versa to stimulate discussion (specifically, the prompts selected included both commonalities and differences to the discourses of the FG itself, and was intended to function as a way of engaging with the perspective of an 'Other')
8. **Future**
9. If you had the possibility to imagine the future of Serbia, how would this Serbia look?


**Text Prompt 1, from Niš**
*In many media reports, entry into the EU and the Kosovo issue are set against each other, do you think that the recognition of Kosovo's independence would be totally worth if it would guarantee entry into the EU?*

*7: I think generally people would not accept it because,*
*9: out of spite!*
*7: literally, out of spite, and because some so-called pride. We have come to terms with the fact [that Kosovo is lost] but we wouldn't necessarily go public and say "we accept"*
*6: my friend, are you aware that 80% of the population don't know the words to the national anthem? Are you aware that 90% of people don't know the order of the colors on the flag? What territory are we even talking about?*
*4:*
*6: where nothing is certain anymore, where you lived in four countries without even crossing the street. That's all consciously and purposefully done so that you would lose your identity, and lose sense of everything around you. And that it's whatever to you whether tomorrow this place is called Bangladesh or Serbia.*
*4: that's right*
*6: or whatever.*
*4: we'd complain for a while but that doesn't matter.*

**Text Prompt 2, from Vranje**
*Do you think that the majority of Serbia is pro- or against EU integration?*

*6: I think that our younger population is more pro-EU, meaning, the more mature population, those who have already formed their lives, those who have families, I don't think they're that pro-EU, but the younger population is because they hope that they'll make more money there and so for that reason [they're pro-EU]. So the point is, they're pro-EU because they think it'll be easier –*

*4: but those kids are enticed, they don't even know what –*

*6: yes, to get a job there, to get a higher paycheck. And I think that's the basic reason why younger people are more pro-EU.*

*4: but they're only fooling themselves, because they haven't even seen how it is in Vladicin Han (city beyond Vranje) let alone how it is in the EU. But they've heard that there's money there, that life is good.*

*6: but that means, again, that's that part of the population that hasn't yet, isn't experienced, in all areas of life. It's those who don't have a mature way of thinking about life or standards of living or anything really.*

**Text Prompt 3, from Novi Sad**
*In many media reports, entry into the EU and the Kosovo issue are set against each other, do you think that the recognition of Kosovo's independence would be totally worth if it would guarantee entry into the EU?*

*6: It's been a long time since Kosovo –*

*3: Kosovo is lost*

*6: [was lost]*

*4: It was lost a long time ago*

*R: Yes, but officially?*

*2: Officially that will never happen*

*5: If we recognize it or don't recognize it, at the end of the day, no one will mind anymore, it'll be like "oh well we had to do that too, we recognized it"*

*R: Do you think that Kosovo being a part of Serbia is no longer important for people then?*

*4: It's not*

*6: No it isn't important because people have realized that it was lost a long time ago. More than 10-15 years ago.*

**Text Prompt 4; from Belgrade**
*If Serbia becomes a part of the EU in the future, do you think anything will change [in Serbia] and if so, what exactly?*

*4: Nothing will change. Maybe some, the system will improve a little, some laws might actually be respected. Maybe … I don't know, but maybe … we've gotten so used to the system functioning to screw you over, so I don't know, it will be extremely hard…*

*1: maybe some institutional apparatus will improve, reducing the number of forms for everything, so that you can, I don't know, get your ID card within 5 minutes or something like that … you know, those kind of smaller things, but again, you know, it's all about the mentality…*

*2: But surely those are thing we can do ourselves?*

*1: It seems that we can't …*

*4: You know why I think it'll be a problem for people to become part of that system, of proper laws, because when Serbs go anywhere, then they people there go "ooooh, your're such animals look at how you're acting", and maybe that's right in relation to some of their criteria coming from an orderly Western country*

*1: I swear to God there are many of them who are just as bad when they go –*

*4: no, no, no, im not saying – but when a Serb goes there he immediately tries to think of a way to screw the system …. How am I supposed to judge him when he's gotten used to, since birth, since his first encounters with the state and system, which the system exists not as it should, to help him, or solve his problems, but to take his money and create problems or screw him over?*

# Appendix 3: Thematic Codebook for Study I

| The Myth of Origin | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Narrating the battle of Kosovo* | | |
| Institutional representations of 1389 | Coded when participants discussed how schools described the events of 1389 and narrated the battle. | "2: Generally, in school you learn most about that part of history.<br>1: Yeah, the Kosovo battle.<br>2: And what happened after."<br>(Niš, 3) |
| Kosovo battle 1389 as a myth | Coded when participants referred to the Kosovo battle explicitly as a myth rather than a series of historical events | "2: and after this many centuries, it [Kosovo] still belongs to you.<br>1: yeah that's what's been developed as part of the Kosovo myth."<br>(Belgrade 2) |
| Kosovo battle as beginning of historical victimhood | Kosovo battle narrated as the last time Serbia was a kingdom, was powerful, after which decline began as it fell under Turkish slavery for several decades | "2: But there's a reason for that. We were under Turkish rule for so long, that whenever you worked, you worked for someone. We've used to cutting corners because we've always had to give [what was ours] to someone who won us and then we've learned that over centuries and you can still feel it to this day."<br>(Novi Sad, 3) |
| *The Political Reality of Kosovo* | | |
| Kosovo as a burden on Serbia | Coded for when participants discussed Kosovo as a burden on Serbia, whether financially or internationally. | "4: We've had it up to here with Kosovo.<br>2: It's because the biggest embezzlements took place on Kosovo, and it's –<br>3: like a bottomless pit."<br>(Niš, 2) |
| Kosovo is objectively lost but not recognized | Coded when participants contrasted the de-facto and de-jure status of Kosovo recognizing the many markers of its independence while resisting to officially recognize it as such. | "1: You know how it is, theoretically that sentence 'Kosovo isn't Serbian' no one will say it. But everything else goes. So what do you then have to gain from not saying it in public when you have a border, they have officials, I mean, we've recognized Kosovo we're just not saying we have."<br>(Belgrade, 3) |
| Kosovo 'temporarily' lost | Coded for when participants discussed the loss of Kosovo in a wider temporal context, by either admitting it is lost for now, but has a long history of being Serbia, or anticipating that it will be taken back and become Serbian again in the future. | "2: I don't think anyone's ever had a problem saying Ksoovo is lost, but it's what follows that that matters. You can always add 'currently'. Which means, there's always some potential, today's current constellation of the world, Europe, so it's simply realistic for now, but I don't think anyone thinks that it's anything final."<br>(Belgrade, 3) |
| Physical border as a divider between Serbia and Kosovo | Coded for when participants talked about the role of the border between Serbia and Kosovo, often in a negative and definite way as separating the one from the other. | "6: that kind of border doesn't exist between Scotland and England. And then the EU is all about removing borders and yet it's creating them, within Europe."<br>(Niš, 1) |
| *Symbolic Meaning of Kosovo* | | |

| Kosovo as the foundation of Serbia | Coded for when participants discussed the historical foundations of Serbia as rooted in the physical territory of Kosovo, and the place as a heritage of Serbia nation building. | "5: It's the cradle of Serbia somehow, it's always been Serbian, you fought wars for Serbia with the battle of Kosovo and so that's why it matters. History ties you to it, as a beginning." (Vranje, 3) |
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| Kosovo as the root of national identity | Coded for when participants discussed Kosovo in relation to national identity, such as its role in shaping the mentality of Serbs, the collective consciousness or values and norms. | "3: It's the source of modern-day Serbian national identity, that's where it started, it's a key territory which was under Serb rule and from where, whether Serbia expanded or shrunk, it always moved…" (Novi Sad, 2) |
| Kosovo's meaning as religious | Coded for when participants discussed the religious ties of Serbs to Kosovo due to the many churches and monasteries build and preserved on the physical territory. | "3: We have a lot of monasteries there, the sacred Serbian Pec Patriarchy which is, from the 13th Century. When the US wasn't even discovered, we had churches down there. 2: Generally it's through religion that people feel connected to the territory, more than anything." (Niš, 2) |
| Kosovo as place of Serbian sacrifices | Coded for when participants discussed the many historical battles and sacrifices Serbs made to keep Kosovo part of Serbia. | "2: A lot of blood was spilled there, I don't know how many but about a third of the population died there, and so, I think that the root is so deeply planted that we're very tied to it." (Vranje, 1) |
| Tension: De facto vs. de jure status of Kosovo | While coded across various other codes, this code includes larger sections of focus group data which address the tensions between various codes related to the de facto vs. de jure recognition of Kosovo and how participants argue about it. | "2: We've already recognized Kosovo, on our TV Hasim Taci is called the prime minister of Kosovo, we have officials who – 1: and we negotiate with **their** government 6: none of that ever matters unless you add your signature to the official document, so they have to go there, we'll never recognize it. 1: well that's like she was saying, de facto or de jure really." (Belgrade, 1) |
| **People vs. Politicians** | | |
| *Politicians as immoral* | | |
| Politicians are criminals | Coded for when participants discussed either directly the idea that politicians were thieves, gangsters or criminals, or indirectly referred to them as such through references to criminal activity or other examples of breaking the law. | "1: Good governance means a person cannot be bought. To be honest, meaning you don't have to be some expert, but you have to be honest. [That's] the principle behind good governance, meaning good domestic governance. But the host shouldn't steal from his own home. […] If I steal from my own home, let's say a TV, then my wife and kids won't have anything to watch. Meaning, they need that TV. 5: you've got that right, with this political system now we've managed to do nothing, we're even going backwards."(Vranje, 1) |

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| Political apathy among public | Coded for when participants discussed themselves and other citizens as politically apathetic and disconnected from anything political. | "2: I'm slightly pro-EU because I think the benefits outweigh the costs.<br>1: no one asks us what we think, it doesn't matter if we join no one asks us anything.<br>2: well yeah, now no one asks us and we don't care." (Niš, 2) |
| Political active citizens are corrupt | Coded for when participants discussed how citizens who got politically involved ended up becoming corrupt through association with political parties and the pressures these place on citizens. | "1: You know who cares about politics? Those people who can benefit from it. Who'll get a job, or cut the line, those are the people that care about politics. Those of us who care about politics, they're the biggest thieves." (Novi Sad, 3) |
| Politicians bribe voters | Coded for when participants explicitly spoke of examples of politicians paying for votes either directly with money or by offering other resources/services. | "3: I talk about all these things by way of example. I have a friend, he was, when Dinkic was giving 1000 Euros, he said, I'm going to vote for Dinkic, I get 1000 euros, my grandmother does, an my mom. He didn't get anything, he got some 5,6,7000 dinars [equivalent to 5-60 Euros]. After that it was Toma Nikolic. Now it's Vucic, and now I don't even know any longer who it is." (Niš, 2) |
| Serbian politicians as puppets for foreign powers | Coded for when participants discussed how foreign influences and powers were controlling Serbian politicians, making them make decisions that didn't benefit the people but bigger international companies or other countries. | "6: And then at one moment, Vucic will be let go as well, and someone else will be brought to power, when he's finished the job that he has to finish for them. And we're going to think 'oh finally Vucic is gone' and someone else will come and it'll be the same." (Belgrade, 1) |
| **People as bearers of 'real' Serbian values** | | |
| Serbian people 'collectivistic' | Coded for when participants discussed Serbian people as collectivistic, as taking care of each other and sticking together through thick or thin. | "2: Nowhere else [in Europe] do you have that possibility that, as you said earlier, live a social life. And socialization is a disaster over there. While here you can go and talk to your neighbours, go out with friends for a coffee, a drink, whatever, regardless of how much money you have or don't have, you can always go out and enjoy yourself." (Vranje, 2) |
| Meeting Serbs reduces stereotypes | Coded for when participants discussed how encounters with Serbs for non-Serbs usually disconfirmed their negative stereotypes about Serbia, often made in relation to statements about how politicians or the government is to blame for stigmatization of Serbia. | "7: I think when people come here and see what it's like, that they like and it and find it a pretty country. People are hospitable and kind and that's probably what matters the most for those who visit." (Novi Sad, 2) |
| The Serbian mentality | Coded for when participants explicitly talked about the Serbian mentality and what it meant, how it differed from that | "2: Well take for example, sorry to interrupt you, but take for example Sweden. At home they have three trash cans, one for plastic, one for this, one for the rest. |

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| | of others, or the consequences of it for behaviour. | 1: and what's so bad about that?<br>2: hold on, no that's great. But our mentality just isn't like that!"<br>(Vranje, 2) |
| Ideological changes threatening collectivism | Coded for when participants discussed how changes, both political and ideological, were threatening Serbian collectivist values, often constructing this process as top-down enforced. | "2: We were there for the last of communism, that's now a whole other story but again, it was a system. You had a school program, which now you don't, now you watch Big Brother instead. I mean, everyone doesn't have to have a university degree, I'm not saying that, but everyone used to have something that brought them together, at least that's what I think." (Belgrade, 1) |
| Degradation of cultural values | Coded for when participants discussed how cultural and traditional values, specifically, were being degraded and replaced by more individualistic and materialistic values. | "3: We just need some time, when things become a bit more stable I'm sure the right way of thinking will return.<br>1: We're going more towards the US than the EU. For your 18th birthday, all of us got, I don't know, golden jewellery as memorable gifts. Now everyone in Belgrade is getting breast implants. Girls are literally getting credit cards to get their whole bodies lasered."(Niš, 2) |
| Anti-establishment mentality | Coded for when participants discussed their political attitudes and do so through an 'anti-framework', defining who they were against (rather than for), which was often the current government or the power-structure and system in general. | "1: I might go and vote for whoever really, someone totally different<br>6: I'll vote for the minority party<br>1: that's what I wanted to say. Purely so my vote doesn't end up in the wrong hands."<br>(Novi Sad, 3) |
| **Institutional Censorship** | | |
| Media manipulating public opinion | Coded for when participants discussed the role of the media in shaping public perceptions of current events and also their opinions on them, often in a very negative way. | "4: People buy it all, especially the most uneducated people.<br>1: that's true, that's what I was going to say.<br>4: they just eat it all up." (Novi Sad, 3) |
| National media censured by political parties | Coded for when participants discussed how media outlets in Serbia were controlled by political parties (or individual journalists were controlled) and so they were forced to censor their news reporting | "4: And those media companies all cater to the politicians who are in power<br>2: of course<br>4: otherwise they wouldn't survive<br>1: I think this is a new level of censorship worse than ever before. For f\*\*ks sake they even censor agricultural shows! They let him go, did you know that? The guy who ran the show 'Good Earth' on B92, who said they imported I don't know how many thousand tons of cows and thereby threatened livestock in Serbia. They fired him. (laughter)"<br>(Belgrade, 3) |

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| Politicians 'spin' reality in their favour | Coded for when politicians are discussed in relation to their appearance in newspapers, on TV or other media outlets and how the things they say are always favourable to their political position (but not necessarily true). | "4: I'm sorry, of course you have freedom of speech here. You do, on the news and any other TV show. But with that it's important to note that they appropriate every news for their needs. You see? They twist it. As Nr 2 was saying, we're starving and he [Vucic] says 'I know that'<br>3: 'I know better than you how hungry you are!' (Vranje, 3) |
| **Public stripped of agency** | | |
| Citizens unable to bring about change | Coded for when participants discussed change for the better and its possibility in the future as 'stories' or 'dreams' that only fools believed in and that citizens of Serbia had no in-put into. | "3: Okay sure there are some people who still believe in ideals, there are enough idiots out there who think they can change something here."<br>(Novi Sad, 3) |
| Serbs as disenchanted people | Coded for when participants discussed Serbs as generally disenchanted, disengaged and disappointed with the present-state of politics, often in a post-90s comparison framework. | "3: Don't you agree that there's a sense of depression about the whole idea of Serbia in the EU?<br>2: yes<br>4: of course.<br>3: What did we even know about it when it first started happening?" (Novi Sad, 2) |
| Local rather than national political focus | Coded for when participants discussed political engagement as a strategic choice for local change, to either help a friend get elected into local office or to support the party of a liked local politician. | "5: I voted to support our local mayor, because that man is the first one in a long time to do anything for this city.<br>3: And I went to school with him." (Vranje, 2) |
| Collective mobilization oppressed | Coded for when participants discussed how collective action such as protests, strikes or other campaigns in opposition to the government were suppressed or silenced. | "5: What are we doing, as a society, to change all of this?<br>4: nothing<br>2: well okay I went to protest the other day, against the Belgrade Waterfront project, and they had arranged trams to block our view so that other people couldn't see us, us 500 or so people. And successively they just pushed us away from the street for heaven's sake."<br>(Belgrade, 1) |
| Political system to blame for corrupt citizens | Coded for when participants argued and rationalized their own or others corrupt behaviour as way of adapting to the system, rather than a choice. | "2: Explain to me then, if it's the people that's the problem, how one of our own lived here and then moved to Canada and the completely adapted to that system, and is living a good life. That tells me that it's not the people, but the system. You're just a screw in the system." (Novi Sad, 3) |
| Politically divided people | Coded for when participants discussed their nations politics, and their own interpersonal discussions of politics, as divided between Russia and the | "3: I honestly have no idea whether the majority is for or against EU integration<br>1: I think the majority is undecided, because people change from today until tomorrow, they change their opinion." (Belgrade, 2) |

| | EU or divided whether they want to join the EU or not. | |
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| **Negative Stigma of Serbs** | | |
| Lack of critical thinking | Coded for when participants discussed how the general population, or the average citizen, was easy to manipulate because they do not think critically or question information. | "1: People don't stop to think, it's like what they hear goes into their head and that's it. There's no, at least in my opinion, critical thinking.[…] people have gotten used to not being critical. It's a habit here." (Belgrade, 3) |
| Ingroup criticism | Coded when participants openly criticizes not politicians but Serbian citizens for their behaviours, attitudes, lack of education or other characteristics which they saw as causing Serbian to be either stigmatized or lag in progress. | "3: now, how would our country look if now, the law was equal for all? So that it's not only, who are you and what are you, but if you get pulled over, and you're a minister of some government department, then you should be treated like me. That's fist. That's basic. But in Serbia that's very hard. |
| Politicians portray negative image of Serbia internationally | Coded when participants discussed how the image Serbian politicians portrayed externally was very negative, and how they were to blame for any negative representations outsiders might have of Serbs and Serbia. | "5: But it comes back to what she was asking, what does the EU think of us? When they see him [prime minister] with a button missing on his shirt, two different socks, help me God, doesn't know English, it's sad. What should they think about us?" (Vranje, 1) |
| Politicians self-stigmatize own people | Coded when participants discussed how negative representations of Serbia were being perpetuated by politicians themselves, criticizing the Serbian people for acting in certain ways. | "4: that whole topic earlier, whether Serbs are hardworking, Germans are geniuses and all that, that story's been forced upon us by Vucic, that's his story and I don't hear any normal people, I've never heard it from them, but from him all the time. Those phrases 'oh, well that's Serbia for you, that's the Serbian mentality.' The man insults his own people. " (Belgrade, 1) |
| Justifying corruption if beneficial | Coded when participants talked about corruption not being all that bad if it led to positive outcomes for the people, not just for individuals. | "1: Take Palma. He steals but at least Jagodina [his city] is booming. We need someone like that." |
| **Lack of normalcy** | | |
| Communism as 'stable' past | Coded when participants talked about the communist past as a time of stability, whether in terms of employment, culture, national rule or everyday life. | "1: Think about old Yugoslavia, to the time of Tito. We didn't need Europe and they didn't need anything of ours, but again we simply functioned so much better then, this one big state, with Belgrade as the capital." (Belgrade, 2) |
| Lack of institutional order | Coded when participants talked about, either directly or indirectly, the lack of institutional order in Serbia, the lack of good regulation and the appropriation of good | "5: I'm absolutely pro-EU, I am. But like he said earlier, we're definitely not ready for it. We don't have any pension schemes, we don't have women's rights, children's rights, we don't have any kind of protection […] our hospitals are falling apart and we have no funds to help them." (Vranje, 1) |

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| | regulations, often giving personal anecdotes. | |
| Lack of national progress | Coded when participants talked about the present, and anticipated future, lack of political and social progress in Serbia. This often was discussed in context of expectations for the future of the nation. | "3: As far as the rest of it, I'm not living any better now than I was in 2000, nor 2006 not 2008, 2012. The last 15 years it's been the same and nothing has gotten better, whatever party in power, whether left or right-wing. Vucic, Milošević, Seselj, they're all the same, and me as a regular citizen I've experienced no improvement from it, from their rule. " (Niš, 3) |
| Good life depends on leaving Serbia | Coded when participants talked about leaving Serbia as the way to achieve success in life, to gain access to more opportunities for self-improvement and development. | "5: our educational system is a disaster in comparison to Europe. So that's why so many people leave. And standards of living and everything in combination." (Vranje, 2) |
| Need for better laws | Coded when participants talked about how change in behaviour came from better regulations, and punishment, and therefore Serbians laws needed to become harsher, so that people's behaviour would improve. | "1: They say that over there, there are laws that you can't throw trash on the street, but here people do. And when you once fine him he might get a bit distressed and change his ways." (Niš, 2) |
| Tension: The people or the system to blame for lack of progress and stigmatization | While coded across various other codes, this theme includes larger sections of focus group data which address the tensions between various codes related to placing accountability and blame for Serbia's lack of progress and its international stigma, either with the people, as being inherently 'bad' or with the system and politicians. | "1: it's basically the question of the chicken and the egg; is it that we don't have what they have [in the West] because we're like this, irresponsible and what not, and not capable of working, or is it the opposite?" (Belgrade, 2) |
| **The Nation and the EU** | | |
| **Cultural mismatch with EU** | | |
| EU as bringing capitalist values | Coded for when participants discussed how the EU was a union built on capitalist values, which give status and preference to money above all other values. | "6: During communism we had titles that mattered, doctors, lawyers, engineers, but today you can be shit, a whore, a monkey, a thief, as long as you have money? You're a king. 8: That's right." (Niš, 1) |
| Serbian social life as richer than in EU | Coded for when participants discussed Serbian social lives as stronger as and richer than those of EU countries, emphasizing Serbia's cultural emphasis on enjoying life and socializing, in contrast to the EU where the emphasis is on work. | "1: All over Europe, in some of those countries, they say 'we don't have any kinds of lives, we work 10 hours a day, go home and sleep and that's that. Good for you for being able to socialize, go out, we don't have that'. So that's better here." (Niš, 2) |

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| Hard to make Russia 'the bad guy' | Coded when participants discussed that Serbia cutting social and political ties with Russia (because of the EU) would be difficult, particularly for the public, to accept. | "4: No one is looking for a bad relationship with Russia. Why should anyone force-feed your mind with things like 'no Russia is a bad nation', since we obviously, as a people, like Russia…" (Belgrade, 1) |
| Western values as individualistic | Coded when participants discussed Western values as potentially conflicting with Serbian values. | "1: that's coming from the West, and those influences are felt more and more.<br>2: well yeah, before marriage, marriage used to be whole. Whatever a husband or wife did, divorce wasn't an option. Now it's all about you." (Vranje, 2) |
| EU as limiting banal practices | Coded when participants drew on changes to banal practices (parking your car, going to lunch during week-days, making plumb brandy, roasting a pig in your backyard) etc. as potentially being undermined or threatened through increased EU regulation. | "4: Our people, an average citizen with a High School education says "we'll get this and that [benefits], that's great!" but when you tell him "you can't park your car wherever you want man" then it's "oh, what, the EU? What's the point?" (Niš, 1) |
| **Loss of sovereignty in the EU** | | |
| EU burdened by Serbia | Coded when participants talked about the EU being financially burdened by Serbia as a poor and dependent country, and the stigma that arose with this perception. | "4: We're in a state of crisis, and then we wouldn't bring [anything], because we can't bring anything to an already orderly state, nothing positive, we can only be yet another problem for them which they have to finance." (Belgrade, 2) |
| EU wants to exploit Serbia | Coded when participants discussed Serbia's role in the EU as one of a country being exploited, politically, financially, socially, both now and in the future. | "6: We'd like to have a good economic cooperation with Russia, which doesn't suit the EU because then we'd be doing okay and they wouldn't be able to keep us in their control, that's how it is. They're conditioning us to take as much as they can and to be able to monopolize control here."<br>(Vranje, 1) |
| EU abusing power over prospective members | Coded when participants talked about EU conditionality as a type of normative power to coerce Serbia into making changes, even when these were counterproductive. | "1: I think we're very specific in regards to that question, Serbia concretely, because so many conditions have been placed on Serbia which haven't been placed on any other members until now, and there's no end to it. I don't know why, I'm assuming it's about some political games but generally a lot is being asked of us." (Novi Sad, 1) |
| Serbia financially dependent on EU | Coded when participants discussed being financially dependent on the EU and therefore being unable to make decisions without the EU's approval, or resist EU integration as a whole. | "2: The core of the story is that we're so small that we can't act independently and be so financially dependent on the EU at the same time, it's done. We're conditioned and controlled, our budget is filled with EU money." |
| Serbia as cheap labour for EU | Coded when participants discussed being a source of cheap labour for the EU, in terms | "4: So I think that, there's not a lot to gain there, we'll be cheap labour, and maybe, |

| | of companies either investing in Serbia and paying Serbs less than for example Germans, or by getting to buy produce or machinery for a cheaper price than domestically. | maybe get some relief from okay being able to travel without applying for visas." (Niš, 2) |
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| Serbia a 'colony' in Europe | Coded for when participants explicitly referenced Serbia being a 'colony' in the EU. | "2: We gave foreign companies access to come search for minerals in Serbia, knowing very well we have them. And they found them and said 'these are ours'. So basically we're just one big colony, and in the world, at large, people just go where the colonies are better." |
| Serbia should change itself | Coded when participants discussed Serbia's responsibility in bringing about change for itself, rejecting the need for EU integration or rejecting the need for external help, instead emphasizing that Serbia's problems were hers, and should be dealt with internally. | "1: Why are you against it [EU integration]? 2: Because whatever problems we have we can figure them out ourselves, within our country, we don't need anyone from the side to come and tell us what to do. " (Vranje, 1) |
| EU membership not worth it at any price | Coded when participants discussed EU integration as a process which needed to be reflected on, not blindly entered. | "6: I haven't changed my mind since we last spoke, I mean in general it's a good thing but not at any price. I mean, I said it last time too. All these pressures being placed on us now, it's below the belt." (Novi Sad, 2) |
| EU as a power-hierarchy led by West | Coded when participants discussed the EU as a hierarchy where Western countries were afforded more power, privileges and rights than non-Western and recent EU members. | "1: It's well known that there's a first, second, third, fourth, fifth league within the EU, with the first being German, France, and the rest are below.] 2: And we expect that." (Belgrade 1) |
| Negative experiences of recent EU members | Coded when participants discussed their impressions of how people from Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania (as recent members of the EU) felt about the changes taking place as part of the EU, often positioning these as negative. | "1: I don't know but if you'd ask an average Romanian or Bulgarian if something has improved for the better since he joined the EU, I assume the answer will be negative." (Novi Sad, 1) |
| **Serbian politics historically positioned against the EU** | | |
| Losing Kosovo due to foreign pressures | Coded when participants discussed that Kosovo was either a pawn in a larger international power struggle or that it had been lost because of international pressures on Serbia to give it up in order to not face repercussions. | "7: I think we can all agree that this is something that's being forced upon us from the side, regardless of whether we want to recognize it or not. And whatever the people think, who cares." (Vranje, 3) |
| West has caused a lot of damage for Serbia | Coded when participants discussed how the West had caused a lot of damage for Serbia, either through historical references or discussing the | "5: And, they've brought a lot of damage onto our country, I mean those Germans, English, the French also, they've also devastated us, I don't know what happened with them. But we |

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| | aftermath of the NATO bombing, WWII, Yugoslavia etc. | know who's in charge there, who's puling the threads, it's the US." (Niš, 2) |
| EU disproves of Serbian ties to Russia | Coded for when participants discussed similarities between Serbia and other 'Eastern' states; whether Russia, Turkey or other Balkan countries which were seen as East to 'West' and not recognized in a positive way by the EU. | "6: Europe has always seen us as 'little Russia' and that's the problem.<br>9: I think that Europe's doing that out of spite –<br>6: It is out of spite, against us." (Niš, 1) |
| Stigmatizing representations of Serbia in the EU | Coded when participants discussed how they thought the EU viewed them, representations which were often very negative. | "2: And the Brits, and Swedes, and them, they all look at us like citizens of some third-world country, in every way.<br>1: yeah probably<br>3: they think we're these savages.<br>1: that's right." (Novi Sad, 1) |
| Religious and historical ties with Russia | Coded when participants spoke about Serbia's ties to Russia either through references to orthodox Christianity or a shared history or friendly relations. | "6: you just can't compare. Do we, here, meaning any one of us, personally like Russia more because they're orthodox or because they defended us by beating up our Slovenian 'brothers', or this or that, or think they're our friends, whether they are or aren't, that's fine. Whatever the reality of it is, that's how we feel." |
| **Positive civic changes as part of EU** | | |
| EU can limit corruption in Serbia | Coded when participants talked about how EU integration could improve Serbia by limiting the amount of corruption in the government and the country at large. | "5: I'm saying I would expect it to have some influence, by either changing the political landscape, to force you to do the right thing, I think that makes sense, but maybe I'm totally uninformed." (Vranje, 1) |
| EU as a source of order and stability | Coded when participants discussed the civic benefits of EU integration as those which can bring about more order and stability to Serbia as a nation but also in the sense of everyday interactions with institutions such as schools, hospitals etc. | "2: I think that we will critically return whenever we join the EU, whether that's in 5, 10 or 15 years. The German's are serious people, not like us. […]<br>6: meaning, everything, to fix every state institution, to give disability rights and services to people, all of it. Until the last one, if even a single one isn't changed, we won't join the EU. That's how they work. |
| Financial security (for individuals) within EU | Coded when participants talked about the EU as potentially improving the financial status of individuals in Serbia but also for Serbia as a whole, by bringing in more investments and thus raising salaries. | "6: When you start a family there, it's currently a lot, it's currently because of that, because of the financial situation, they live much better lives that we do, and so in that sense I think it would be useful. Nothing else." (Vranje, 2) |
| Serbia as lagging behind in making progress | Coded when participants talked about Serbia as lagging behind in terms of making process, and how joining the EU was a way to make up for lost times, to become an equal to other European countries | "1: I think it would be better to join. Our country is just, I mean, we're always late in making the right decisions, in choosing the right side, but, it's not too late, and I still think that it's the right side to choose. (Niš, 1) |

| Questioning the idea of the EU as progress | | |
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| EU as utopian illusion | Coded when participants discussed how the EU was/is portrayed as utopia, entry into which will solve all of Serbia's problems, but either criticising this idea or rejecting it completely. | "5: A lot of it is because of lack of knowledge, people don't know why we're going there, what we'll do, why it would be good for us. People just think of it'll be better like in all other EU states there, but then look at Greece falling apart…" (Novi Sad, 1) |
| EU countries not superior to Serbia | Coded when participants argued that the EU was not superior to Serbia because it was financially better off | "2: They throw around words like 'European values, European values' but no one really tries to explain – 5: what that means 4: Something better than what we have here, but what that is no one knows." (Belgrade, 1) |
| EU fragile union | Coded when participants discussed the instability of the EU, the potential that it might fall apart and the many internal divides and tensions within the union that made it appear fragile. | "6: The EU itself is falling apart, we'll have nothing to gain from joining. 1: by the time we join it'll no longer exist. 6: Industry at zero, everything's at zero and yet we want to join." (Novi Sad, 3) |
| Tension: Integration with Independence | While coded across various other codes, this theme includes larger sections of focus group data which address the tensions between various codes related to how Serbia could manage to join the EU but remain independent (and keep its sovereignty) in the process. | |

# Appendix 4: List of 20 political events used for survey in study II

Survey N = 467

1. Milošević's speech in Gazimestan (Kosovo) – 1989/90

2. First anti-Milošević demonstrations, 9th March – 1991

3. The beginning of sanctions against Yugoslavia – 1992

4. Signing of the Daytona agreement; end of war in B&H and Croatia – 1995

5. Student demonstrations after voting scandal (voting manipulation) – 1996

6. Beginning of Kosovo war – 1998

7. NATO bombing of Yugoslavia – 1999

8. UN Resolution 1244 and the end of the Kosovo war – 1999

9. Murder of Ivan Stambolic – 2000

10. 5th October demonstrations – 2000

11. Murder of Zoran Djindjic – 2003

12. Election of Boris Tadic – 2004

13. Apology for atrocities in Croatia – 2007

14. Kosovo declaring independence – 2008

15. Signing of SPSS agreement with EU – 2008

16. Official apology for Srebrenica – 2010

17. Presidential election of 2012 – 2012

18. EU talks begin; Official candidacy status given – 2012

19. Political dialogue between BG and Pristina begins – 2012

# Appendix 5: Participant Demographics for Qualitative component of Study III

*1. Snapshot FG compositions*

| FG (City) | Participants | Median Age |
|---|---|---|
| Belgrade (New Belgrade) | 8;  3 Female & 5 Male | 30 |
| Belgrade (Old Town) | 6; 4 Female & 2 Male | 35 |
| Belgrade (Vračar) | 9; 3 Female & 6 Male | 23 |
| Čačak | 7; 5 Female & 2 Male | 54 |
| Niš | 9; 5 Female & 4 Male | 29 |
| Novi Sad | 7; 1 Female & 6 Male | 31 |
| Paraćin | 8; 1 Female & 7 Male | 31 |
| Surdulica | 5; 3 Female & 2 Male | 31 |
| Vranje | 8; 2 Female & 6 Male | 39 |
| **Total:** | **67; 27 Female & 40 Male** | |

*2. Detailed participant demographics*

| Participant | Gender | Age | Occupation | City |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Male | 55 | Business owner | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 2 | Female | 28 | Student (PhD) | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 3 | Male | 27 | Insurance Agent | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 4 | Female | 28 | NGO Employee | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 5 | Male | 25 | Engineer | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 6 | Male | 29 | Student | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 7 | Male | 26 | Engineer | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 8 | Male | 27 | Journalist | Belgrade (New Belgrade) |
| 9 | Male | 28 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 10 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 11 | Female | 27 | Retail Worker | Niš |
| 12 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 13 | Female | 27 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 14 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 15 | Male | 28 | Electrical Engineer | Niš |
| 16 | Male | 26 | Medical Technician | Niš |
| 17 | Female | 50 | Office clerk | Niš |
| 18 | Male | 31 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 19 | Female | 35 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 20 | Male | 31 | Accountant | Novi Sad |
| 21 | Male | 31 | Taxi Driver | Novi Sad |
| 22 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Novi Sad |

| 23 | Male | 28 | Lawyer | Novi Sad |
|----|------|----|--------|----------|
| 24 | Male | 34 | Waiter | Novi Sad |
| 25 | Male | 30 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 26 | Female | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 27 | Male | 36 | Unemployed | Vranje |
| 28 | Male | 57 | Self-employed farmer | Vranje |
| 29 | Female | 55 | Casino Employee | Vranje |
| 30 | Male | 47 | Lawyer | Vranje |
| 31 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 32 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 33 | Female | 28 | Secondary Teacher | Surdulica |
| 34 | Male | 28 | Unemployed | Surdulica |
| 35 | Female | 35 | Secondary Teacher | Surdulica |
| 36 | Female | 28 | Librarian | Surdulica |
| 37 | Male | 36 | Farmer | Surdulica |
| 38 | Male | 35 | Lawyer | Belgrade (Old Town) |
| 39 | Female | 35 | Lawyer | Belgrade (Old Town) |
| 40 | Male | 36 | Lawyer | Belgrade (Old Town) |
| 41 | Female | 34 | Lawyer | Belgrade (Old Town) |
| 42 | Female | 32 | Lawyer | Belgrade (Old Town) |
| 43 | Female | 38 | Lawyer | Belgrade (Old Town) |
| 44 | Female | 50 | Veterinarian | Čačak |
| 45 | Male | 49 | Electrical Engineer | Čačak |
| 46 | Male | 57 | Agricultural Engineer | Čačak |
| 47 | Female | 52 | Secondary teacher | Čačak |
| 48 | Female | 53 | University Professor | Čačak |
| 49 | Female | 58 | University Professor | Čačak |
| 50 | Female | 47 | Unemployed | Čačak |
| 51 | Female | 22 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 52 | Female | 23 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 53 | Male | 22 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 54 | Female | 24 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 55 | Male | 22 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 56 | Male | 22 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 57 | Male | 22 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 58 | Male | 23 | Student | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 59 | Female | 32 | Teacher (University) | Belgrade (Vračar) |
| 60 | Female | 34 | Lawyer | Paraćin |
| 61 | Male | 32 | Economist | Paraćin |
| 62 | Male | 30 | Archaeologist | Paraćin |
| 63 | Male | 31 | Unemployed (lawyer) | Paraćin |
| 64 | Male | 30 | Economist | Paraćin |
| 65 | Male | 32 | Small-business owner | Paraćin |
| 66 | Male | 31 | Legal Aide | Paraćin |
| 67 | Male | 30 | Computer Engineer | Paraćin |

# Appendix 6: Topic guide for qualitative component of study III

General, warm-up question

1. *There have been many discussions about Serbia joining the EU. What have been some of the benefits and some of the downsides discussed?*

Personal opinions

2. *What is your opinion about Serbia joining the EU? Are you for or against it?*

Meta-perspective

3. *Do you think Serbia is welcomed in the EU, from the perspective of other member countries?*

International relations

4. *Serbia has (or has had) a close relationship with Russia, which has at times conflicted with its pro-EU politics. Do you think that Serbia should be more political oriented towards Russia or the EU? Or both, if possible.*

Domestic policy

5. *In many media reports, EU membership and the question of the status of Kosovo have been placed in opposition. Do you think accepting Kosovo's independence is worth it if it would guarantee Serbia membership into the EU?*

Anticipations for the future

6. *When the year 2020 comes, the year by which politicians predict Serbia will have finally become a member, what do you realistically think the situation will look like?*

Reflecting on the past

7. *Considering the past 25 years and everything that has occurred in Serbia and the region, do you think that the people, as a nation, has changed in comparison with the past?*

# Appendix 7: English version of survey for quantitative component of study III

*Overview of measures:*

1. Open ended (Serbia reps and EU reps): 2 Questions, 2 free-text answers
2. National ID: 5 Questions; 5 items
3. European ID: 5 Questions; 5 items
4. SDO: 1 Question; 8 items
5. Prototypicality and Metaprotoypicality: 2 Questions; 14 items
6. HE/HA: 1 Question; 6 items
7. Threat (symbolic 4 items; realistic 2 items); 1 Question; 6 items
8. Political attitudes / policy support: 1 Question; 7 items
9. Future power in the EU (previously perceived powerlessness): 1 Questions; 5 items
10. Personal control: 1 Questions; 4 items
11. Power-positions within Europe: 1 Questions; 7 items
12. Political orientation: 2 Questions; 2 items
13. Demographics: 6 Questions; 6 items
14. Subjective Societal Status: 1 Question; 1 item

**Open-ended questions:**

Representations of Serbian identity:

*Thinking about Serbia, please specify what things (images, ideas, beliefs, values etc.) come to mind when you think about what it means to be Serbian. Feel free to write down as many / few as you wish.*

Representations of Europe:

*Thinking about Europe and the EU, please specify what things (images, ideas, beliefs, values etc.) come to mind when you think about what it means to be European. Feel free to write down as many / few as you wish.*

**National Identity: 5 items, 7-point Likert scale**

1. To what extent do you feel Serbian? (1= Not at all, 7= Completely)
2. To what extent do you feel strong ties with other Serbian people (1= No ties at all, 7= Extremely strong ties)
3. How similar do you think you are to the average Serbian person? (1= Not at all similar, 7= Extremely similar)
4. How important to you is being Serbian? (1= Not at all important, 7= Extremely important)
5. When you hear someone who is not Serbian criticize the Serbs, to what extent do you feel personally criticized? (1= Not at all criticized, 7= Extremely criticized)

**European Identity: 5 items, 7-point Likert scale**

1. To what extent do you feel European? (1= Not at all, 7= Completely)
2. To what extent do you feel strong ties with other European people (1= No ties at all, 7= Extremely strong ties)
3. How similar do you think you are to the average European person? (1= Not at all similar, 7= Extremely similar)
4. How important to you is being European? (1= Not at all important, 7= Extremely important)
5. When you hear someone who is not European criticize the Europeans, to what extent do you feel personally criticized? (1= Not at all criticized, 7= Extremely criticized)

**SDO-D: 8 items, 7-point Likert scale**

For all statements, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

*1=Completely disagree, 7=Completely agree*

1. Having some groups on top really benefits everybody **(reverse-code)**

2. It is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom **(reverse-coded)**

3. An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom **(reverse-coded)**

4. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups. **(reverse-coded)**

5. Groups at the bottom are just as deserving as groups at the top

6. No one group should dominate society

7. Groups at the bottom should not have to stay in their place

8. Group dominance is a poor principle

**Prototypicality and Meta-prototypicality: 14 items, 7-point Likert scale**

**Prompt:** *Bring to mind individuals who were born and live in the greater European area. In your mind, how "European" are people who belong to the following countries? That is, how strongly do you identify them with Europe and all things European?*

*1= Not at all European, 7 = Extremely European*

1.Turkey

2. France

3. Germany

4. Romania

5. Serbia

6. Ireland

7. Spain

*Now think about one of these countries, Germany, and the perspective of German people on Europe. According to Germans, how "European" are people who belong to the following countries? That is, how strongly would Germans identify the following groups with Europe and all things European?*

*1= Not at all European, 7 = Extremely European*

1. Turkey

2. France

3. Germany

4. Romania

5. Serbia

6. Ireland

7. Spain

**HE-HA: 6 Items, 7-point Likert scale**

*Prompt: Now think of the European Union (EU). How much do the following statements characterise the EU? Please indicate whether you agree or disagree that the following statements accurately describe the EU.*

*1=Completely disagree, 7=Completely agree*

1. Differences in status between national groups are fair

2. For unfair reasons, certain nations have poorer living conditions than other nations **(reverse-coded)**

3. The goal of the EU is to reduce the differences in wealth between European countries.

4. The EU exists mostly to maintain the existing inequalities between European countries. **(reverse-coded)**

5. The EU works toward equality in the wider world.

6. The EU is a way of continuing Europe's colonial power in the wider world **(reverse-coded)**

**Threat: 6 items, 7-point Likert scale**

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*1=Completely disagree, 7=Completely agree*

Symbolic

1. Becoming part of the EU will allow Serbia to keep its specific and separate identity
2. If Serbia becomes part of the EU, Serbian values will be corroded by alien values which are imposed on them. **(reverse-code)**
3. Becoming part of the EU will help Serbia to preserve its identity more than if Serbia stands alone.
4. If Serbia becomes part of the EU it will undermine the Serbian way of life (**reverse-code**)


Realistic

1. Joining the EU creates a threat to Serbia's economic progress. **(reverse-code)**

2. If Serbia joins the EU, its economic conditions will only improve.


**Political Attitudes: 7 items, 10-point Likert scale**

Considering the following political goals (both domestic and foreign), please rate the importance of each, ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (highly important).

*1= Not at all important, 10 = Highly important*

1. The fight against corruption

2. Improving the health care system

3. Gaining EU membership

4. Increase the protection of human rights

5. Continue to ensure Serbia's rights to Kosovo

6. Judicial reform

7. Educational system reform


**Future power in the EU (Perceived powerlessness): 5 items, 7-point Likert scale**

*1= Completely disagree, 7= Completely agree*

1. If the Serbs really wanted to, they could get their way in determining EU policies. (reverse-code)
2. The Serbian interest will play a part in determining EU government decisions. (reverse-code)
3. Decisions in the EU are based on what Western European countries want, irrespective of what others want.
4. When push comes to shove, Western European countries always get their way in EU policy.

5. Western European people too often take advantage of their stronger power to make their point of view prevail in the politics of the EU,

**Personal control: 4 items (from the Pearlin Mastery scale, 7-point Likert scale**

*1= Completely disagree, 7= Completely agree*

1. What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me (reverse-code)

2. There is little I can do to change many important things in my life

3. I can do just about anything I set my mind to (reverse-code)

4. There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have

**Power-position within Europe: 7 items, 7-point Likert scale**

*It is said that different countries hold different levels / positions of power in Europe. For the following countries, rate each on a scale of 1 (Powerless) to 7 (Too powerful).*

*1= Powerless, 7 = Too powerful*

1. France
2. Germany
3. Romania
4. Ireland
5. Spain
6. Serbia
7. Turkey

**Political orientation: 2 items, 4-point Likert scale**

1. In terms of economic issues, would you say you are (1= Very left wing; 4= Very right wing)
2. In terms of social issues, would you say you are (1= Very liberal, 4= Very conservative)

**Demographics: 6 items**

1. Gender (please choose)

Male / Female

2. Age (fill in text box)

3. Education (according to JUS -

4. Occupation (choose from options below)

| Manager | Professional (e.g., doctor, lawyer, accountant, professor) | Technician or associate professional (e.g., computer programmer, medical technician, paralegal) | Clerical support worker (e.g., secretary, payroll officer) | Service and sales worker (e.g., restaurant waiter, store assistant) | Skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers (e.g., farmer, park ranger) | Craft and related trades works (e.g., electrician, carpenter) | Plant and machine operator or assembler (e.g., skilled factory worker, textile machine operator, driver) | Elementary occupations (e.g., cleaner, food preparation assistant) | Armed forces occupation (e.g., army private, commissioned or non-commissioned officer) | Do not know / Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

5. Income:

Please state your monthly income by choosing from the following options;

- a.     below 20,000.00 RSD
- b.     from 20,000.00 to 30,000.00 RSD
- c.     from 30,000.00 to 40,000.00 RSD
- d.     from 40,000.00 to 50,000.00 RSD
- e.     from 50,000.00 to 60,000.00 RSD
- f.     from 60,000.00 to 70,000.00 RSD
- g.     from 70,000.00 to 80,000.00 RSD
- h.     from 80,000.00 to 90,000.00 RSD
- i.     from 90,000.00 to 100,000.00 RSD
- g.     over 100,000.00 RSD

13.6. Region

Considering that Serbia is divided into 7 admiNištrative territories, please indicate which one you belong to/ live in.

a. AP Vjovodina

b. Beograd

c. Northern Serbia

d. Eastern Serbia

d. Sumadija

f. Southern Serbia

g. AP Kosovo and Metohija

## 14. Subjective Societal Status: 1 item

*Imagine that this ladder pictures how Serbian society is set up. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off – they have the most money, the highest amount of schooling, and the jobs that bring the most respect. At the bottom are people who are the worst off – they have the least money, little or no education, no job or jobs that no one wants or respects. Now think about your family. Please tell us where you think you would be on this ladder. **Fill in the circle that best represents where you would be on this ladder.***

# Appendix 8: Detailed Demographics and Procedural Details for Study I

| Focus Groups | Duration | Number of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Belgrade (1) | 87 mins. | 8 (5 M & 3 F) |
| Niš (1) | 66 mins. | 9 (5 M & 4 F) |
| Novi Sad (1) | 53 mins. | 7 (6 M & 1 F) |
| Vranje (1) | 75 mins. | 8 (6 M & 2 F) |
| Belgrade (2) | 67 mins. | 8 (5 M & 3 F) |
| Niš (2) | 59 mins. | 6 (5 M & 1 F) |
| Novi Sad (2) | 33 mins. | 6 (5 M & 1 F) |
| Vranje (2) | 78 mins. | 7 (5 M & 2 F) |
| Belgrade (3) | 77 mins. | 5 (2 M & 3 F) |
| Niš (3) | 47 mins. | 4 (4 M & 0 F) |
| Novi Sad (3) | 65 mins. | 6 (5 M & 1 F) |
| Vranje (3) | 67 mins. | 5 (3 M & 2 F) |

| Participant | Gender | Age | Occupation | City |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Male | 55 | Business owner | Belgrade |
| 2 | Female | 28 | Student (PhD) | Belgrade |
| 3 | Male | 27 | Insurance Agent | Belgrade |
| 4 | Female | 28 | NGO Employee | Belgrade |
| 5 | Male | 25 | Engineer | Belgrade |
| 6 | Male | 29 | Student | Belgrade |
| 7 | Male | 26 | Engineer | Belgrade |
| 8 | Male | 27 | Journalist | Belgrade |
| 9 | Male | 28 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 10 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 11 | Female | 27 | Retail Worker | Niš |
| 12 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 13 | Female | 27 | Unemployed | Niš |
| 14 | Female | 24 | Student | Niš |
| 15 | Male | 28 | Electrical Engineer | Niš |
| 16 | Male | 26 | Medical Technician | Niš |
| 17 | Female | 50 | Office clerk | Niš |
| 18 | Male | 31 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 19 | Female | 35 | Architect | Novi Sad |
| 20 | Male | 31 | Accountant | Novi Sad |
| 21 | Male | 31 | Taxi Driver | Novi Sad |
| 22 | Male | 30 | Unemployed | Novi Sad |
| 23 | Male | 28 | Lawyer | Novi Sad |
| 24 | Male | 34 | Waiter | Novi Sad |
| 25 | Male | 30 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 26 | Female | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 27 | Male | 36 | Unemployed | Vranje |
| 28 | Male | 57 | Self-employed farmer | Vranje |
| 29 | Female | 55 | Casino Employee | Vranje |
| 30 | Male | 47 | Lawyer | Vranje |
| 31 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |
| 32 | Male | 28 | Military Employee | Vranje |

# Appendix 9: Focus Group Transcript for Study I

R: *There have been many discussions about Serbia joining the EU. What have been some of the benefits and some of the downsides discussed?*

1: we're hoping for benefits but we're not sure

3: we're striving towards joining the EU and praying to God that we never join the EU, that is the position of our government

1: for the politicians it currently suits them to be leaning towards the EU but to never join because then all those thieves would go to jail

6: well those negative things that come from joining the EU aren't made public (general agreement)

6: or a person has to, on his own, that is people, eventually figure out those negativities and that first and foremost comes from the experiences of some other nations that recently joined the EU, like Croatia, Bulgaria. First and foremost Slovenia and Bulgaria

3: Croatians are yet to –

6: Slovenes are actually the ones expressing most negative sentiments and consequences

4: we know they're smarter than us

R: one positive thing that's been mentioned is the opening of borders

6: well essentially –

3: the borders have always been open

6: We don't have that, regime, the borders are open even more now and that international trade is absolutely free. So as far as permanent capital is concerned, in entering our country, everything is open. So as long as there are investors who want to invest in Serbia and everything that means, in my opinion, from that perspective we don't even need the EU if that's the whole point of joining the EU. On the other hand, the only thing that I can personally conclude to be negative is that our state, and the people isn't mature enough to enter that system which is dictated by the EU, primarily in relation to the material status of the population because in relation to that status people here are living on the edge of existence. But, for example, there in the EU the standards are different and the regulations are different and it's a lot more precisely regulated, from work, workplace and all that. Here, that is harder to implement, that is, to uphold the laws that are implemented in European countries, that are in the EU's borders, meanwhile here this cant be fixe because laws are being implemented hastily and these laws are not adapted to our circumstances, above all our social opportunities and the general possibilities of citizen, institutions and in general the state of our State. So that, any law that is adapted if it is in accordance with the regulations or laws in the EU has a certain version in our country so that in practice it cannot be 100% applicable, it has a lot of holes, many things are not covered and some provisional laws signed aren't even compatible or implementable here. So the law is just there an ineffective. And these are some, in the sense that we are not yet ready to join that EU system, but on the other hand that economic cooperation with EU countries, do we

have open borders, and then the question becomes whether we even should join that system. I mean, I am for the unification of countries and not ripping them apart and creating new countries and all that, so that is why I respect the integrity of all countries, the borders of every state, and for respecting people and nationality and religion and all that. But that's not an reason for not having borders between neighboring countries at all.

R: *What are your personal opinions about joining the EU?*

4: I'm against

6: I'm against too

7: I'm against too

4: we're all against

8: I'm against too

1: why?

5: I am not against it, I'm for it. But like he said, we are absolutely not ready for it. We don't have fund for pensions, we don't have women's rights, family rights and protections, we don't have protection for anyone

1: men

(laughter)

5: I'm sorry, men. Our hospitals are in ruins, we don't have funds that can cover all of that, it's all in ruins, schools, all institutions, I mean nothing. When you look at that western system or the conditions the EU is placing on us which we cant fulfill for many years to come, because all of that has to be deal with, those laws like you were saying –

6: and besides that –

5: if you just went to one hospital, sorry, just one hospital, you'd start crying.  It's all old and rusty, it's, I just start from there, from those instruments they use, that's all, just start from there. Go to any school, okay those who are in middle school, in the last few years, they're okay. But you have, I mean, something that's so far from a normal level where a child is supposed to spend its day. I'm just telling you, 2-3, uhm, some 2-3 sectors for the protection of women, who aren't protected by any laws, and all of that has to be completely different to be in the EU. We don't have that level at all. No way

8: nor will we ever

5: I think so too, no way, we wont.

6: Serbia as Serbia, you can live a nice life. Serbia has certain natural resources, from which we could extract enough money to live a normal prosperous life in this country and a good solid life for citizens. First and foremost, Serbia is a semi-industrial country, a farming country, so w have great capacity in that sense, only that that's now stalled a little and those sectors are on the verge of collapsing, but, this means that we are not some industrial country but we do have something, so Serbia simply has to be better organized for it to prosper

5: that's right

6: and then there are plenty of, uhm, natural resources that could be used for tourism. You know, we have many beautiful mountains, lakes, spas, and all of that can be used,

there's just a lack of money right now. I think that people, who is for the EU and who is pro joining the EU are so for the reason that they hope that the EU will finance something here, recover something, get something going, and that's that only, in my opinion, story that people, that is, individuals, fall for; 'oh now it'll be ideal once we join the EU' which I don't think it can be and which we've seen from those countries that are in the EU and then they till don't function as they should. On the other hand –
R: they do these surveys every year where they ask people if they are pro or against, and the majority are pro. But form what i see in my FGs most people seem to be against, or at least have a negative perception and attitude towards the Eu.
6: Well exactly like he said, that's more of a political tension and that's being placed in the media, as if the people are absolutely for EU integration but actually it's just so they [politicians] can gain political points and conceal the various things they've done to come into power and how their have managed to get their ideological equals into certain high positions, whether it's in the government or the party in power.
5: but you see, you say that people don't expect that, but my opinion is different. Safety, lawfulness, order, normalcy, security that tomorrow you'll be able to live a humanitarian way of life and expect a normal retirement with a pension and that everything is covered by the law. We currently don't have that.
6: yes but let's say –
5: but listen –
3: but we need to begin from ourselves. The EU cant come here and be like "oh, its gonna change my mentality", that has to start from us. So, everything start from here.
5: my consciousness, but you see that has to change –
6: but look, let's take you as an example, what would EU membership bring, how would you prosper from it?
5: but no, I'm saying that I expect it to because they would probably have some influence, or the political structure would change or there would be some –
6: but will that, that change in structure –
5: if someone makes you work properly, I thinks there's some idea behind that that's my opinion, but maybe I'm totally uninformed
6: is the question about the style of governance of some financial one?
5: both, one influences the other
4: over there the Bulgarians are bragging, Romanians, everyone (sarcasm)
5: we'll that's because they're all miserable like us –
4: so what did the EU bring them?
5: okay, but no he said it nicely, we're not mature enough for it, that's definitely true
6: we're not
5: but we expect to be in a minimum of 10-20 years
1: the Bulgarians have now, for example, enacted a law, but in English because they didn't have time to finish the translation before joining the EU (laughter)
4: and then they have salaries of 150 euros a month, that's EU for them.
6: You know what's typical with us? Let's say, in order to enter the EU, we're selling successful companies for small change, and to whom, if not individuals from countries that are part of the EU. And then they monopolize. They control the monopoly. So in

that business, even they themselves, here, wherever foreigners have come and bought companies, they've created a monopoly. In Serbia. And in Serbia, we currently don't have fair economic competition.

4: I'm against joining, im against the EU because it never brought anyone anything good.

1: yes, yes it did, the Germans

2: that's not the problem –

4: all the countries that have entered the EU have only served as guinea pigs, for land waste and for –

2: for monopoly, basically for monopoly.

4: and for the sale of their goods. We're eating Danish cheese, we're eating this from Spain –

2: but no one else is to blame for that. For you and me, no one else is at fault just because we're stupid and voted for that politician who will make that –

3: who voted?

1: irrelevant. The current situation, as it is, is solely our problem.

R: participant nr 2, did you respond?

2: I'm against it, against

1: why are you against it?

2: because all the problems that we have we should deal with ourselves, within our country and we don't need anyone to come from outside. So if that's the government that I have then someone else who is the same will come and bring –

1: they cant change the government. The EU is constructed in such a way that it cant, for some domestic politics it cant get involved. The state still has its own independence –

4: that doesn't agree with them –

1: but it's still a part of some larger union. Indirectly, that's something different, in indirect ways. But directly, that doesn't exist. They can give recommendations for something but whether we're going to implement that or not, that's solely our choice. Now, just because a lazy waiter come from the EU and has worked in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, irrelevant, and says 'I think that the hotel here should make bigger windows and have bigger curtains" and the director of the hotel, because he doesn't know that it's a waiter from the EU and not the director of hotel services, changes the windows and curtains -

4: and ruins the hotel

1: and ruins the hotel. Why? Because someone else told him to.

3: but that's what im saying, we need to start from within.

2: from ourselves, yes

1: we were talking earlier when you arrived about the good things about the EU

3: there are good thing

1: but there are also many examples of bad things, for example the prohibition of making rakija

(laughter)

3: and the piglets?

(laughter)

3: we wont give them up

6: because over there, see, in the EU, the average citizen has such a good salary that he simply doesn't have to mow his own lawn. He has the possibility to pay someone to do it for him. He simply doesn't have the need to, like we do, as he said, make rakija to be able to make a living off of that rakija, to collect the fruit and to bother with making it, to make some money to support his family. And let's not talk about slaughtering animals, pigs –

4: yes

1: the problem here isn't so much the law, they aren't that incompatible with the EU, there are, from country to country the laws aren't the same, in Spain and Norway, they're not the same.

(general agreement)

1: here the problem is the enforcement of laws

2: yes

1: and that's the biggest problem. The application of the rule of law and so on. Another thing, we have a very big, we have a very big problem with bringing about laws. And then once we do, we don't enforce them if we see that they don't suit us, so we have no chance of –

5: how do you expect a country that has been financially ruined, ruined by war, ruined by everything and anything, that it will be okay within a year?

1: no one expects that

5: so that, but no, no, that has nothing to do with joining the EU, absolutely -

6: it does have something to do with the EU because in the current state that we're in they won't accept us. So that's just empty words "it'll happen today, it'll happen tomorrow, or this year, or in this many years, we've received a date."

5: so that means then that –

6: so you can freely say that Serbia –

4: never –

6: until it fulfills all the conditions to join the EU, the EU might fall apart.

5: that's right

6: those are just political games, political games, and it's general knowledge that in Serbia, the various political parties that come into power are financed by certain countries within the EU that have certain interests and people from those countries come and buy our successful firms, and that's a known fact. That they're more interested in that, than helping us, that's basically it.

3: to profit

6: to profit

3: clear as the sky

4: we're just another market for them, nothing else.

6: and if this keeps up Serbia will literally have to sell itself and will become –

4: bankrupt

6: bankrupt. To be a visitor in your own country and to depend completely on the EU. Meaning, from a cup of milk to bigger products.

1: EU integration doesn't sit well with scam artists. The smugglers and scammers in our country are currently in positions where they manage to provide for 11 people.

2: but there are many people that live off of –

1: scamming. I know, they benefit from it.

R: *Do you think Serbia is welcomed in the EU, from the perspective of other member countries?*

4: such hard questions.

1: depends on who you ask, whether its Croatia or Germany or England. I think the Bulgarians would be the first to vote for us (laughter). What does Sweden think about Serbia joining?

R: I don't know, I don't think it has an opinion

6: the question is, do they even know that we exist at all?

4: how can they not know, they give us 12 points every Eurovision song contest! (laughter)

3: do they know? They don't care, they live a good life there. We have talk about it because we're bothered by it.

5: yes

3: I've learned that one man can be the Minister of Industry, then the next term he's the Minister of Health, then the Minister of Defense, and you know, you have one man that can be everything. Give me a break!

1: and no one bats an eye. Here the situation's just like that, everything goes. Our problem isn't the EU, we're just like that –

4: let me tell you, no one from the EU wants us there. No one.

5: I think so too.

3: they're smart people, they need –

1: I think that there are companies that want us in the EU

4: which ones?

2: I think so too, because –

1: if they can influence government decision-making –

4: they see Serbs as an inferior race, they think we're illiterate, lack culture and have bad traditions, bad morals, so the worst

2: I also think they have –

6: on the other hand I think that it doesn't suit them for other reasons, because the Serbian people are highly intelligent, very able and hardworking, very –

5: adaptable

6: that too

5: and know how to persist

6: resourceful, and them over there they've used to living under some stable freedom and we have, because of our normal intelligence and the conditions we've faced, we have a lot of flexibility when faced with every situation –

4: you can adapt to survive, that's right

6: and I think, that we don't suit them for that reason

3: well yes because they're frivolous

1: yes but the situation here has forced you to know everything

3: of course, that's why you have a sense of awareness

1: you have to know how to play basketball or football and to run away from bombs, it's not normal

4: but why then are you surprised when one man can be a minister of everything, hold all those positions?

6: our education is so strong compared to theirs that our child, let's say after 8 years of school, had a much stronger knowledge-base than their 8th year students

1: but we have problems at university level, because it's not focused enough

6: that's right

1: we're still broadly focused

6: we're TOO broadly focused

1: and maybe that's good. Sometimes it can be good. In 99 for the army, that proved to be good.

R: *Serbia has (or has had) a close relationship with Russia, which has at times conflicted with its pro-EU politics. Do you think that Serbia should be more political oriented towards Russia or the EU? Or both, if possible.*

1: both Kosovo and Serbia and Europe

(laughter)

1: who are you rooting for?

7: well we cant whore around and be with both Russia and Europe

6: I think that we shouldn't be too orientated towards Russia, nor exclusively pro-European. We should have an absolute correctness, and as good a cooperation as possible, with Russia and with EU countries, not only with the EU but with the rest of the countries in Europe and other continents. I even think that it's a mistake to think that we are exclusively turned towards Russia. I don't see a reason for Russia, firstly there are some points of similarity, they're an orthodox country too, I don't see a reason why we shouldn't have good cooperation with Russia in every situation, on the other hand, I don't see why we shouldn't also cooperate with other countries that are around the EU. And with those of different religion in our surroundings, for example Albania, and I don't know who.  For example, these Muslim countries, I don't see why not. That's the thing.

1: but you need to have boundaries, how far should a man be able to enter –

6: of course –

1: whoever is with him, but still to keep their own –

2: just to –

6: on the other hand –

3: use them, it doesn't suit them if –

6: on the other hand, no one should wrongfully be sing or influencing you, to condition Serbia to, like currently with the Ukraine crisis, that Serbia should block every cooperation with Russia –

5; yes

6: that to me is abusing one state

4: nowhere. Russians aren't up to any good, and these guys too, no, with no one.

2: we just need a Putin here

4: We need Tito to come back

5: I'm for a relationship with Russia, but you know why? To create some counterweight in the world, the way it used to be. A strong Russia, which was ruined just like Serbia, so what I mean is, then you used to know who was powerful in the world, and I'm for that.

3: I'm more pro-Russian –

2: that's true –

5: to return that balance. So that the West doesn't direct our lives, not just for us but everyone. Because if its equal everywhere then there wont be so much domination, so I think that should be brought back. So that Russia could be what it once was. I'm still for Russia.

2: more so, yeah, because they've managed to create a dictatorship then, and I think they're more strategically on our side than the EU.

1: who? And on what basis have we concluded this, besides the fact that they're orthodox?

3: nothing, just that

1: I mean, we're speaking freely here, I'm more for cooperation with Russia

6: me too

1: there is a counterweight in the world and that's BRIC, brazil, Russia, India and China.  We're also in a situation currently where there is no room for us –

2: yes

1: that's the situation, we're small, we're irrelevant and we just need to keep our asses from –

4: do you know who's bombarded Serbia the most?

2: who?

4: the Russians

1: bombarded who?

4: our people

1: yes in WWII

4: Belgrade was ruined more by the Russians than the Germans

2: okay well now –

5: we're talking about the present

1: irrelevant

4: and the Russians have always caused more devastation –

1: that's irrelevant, and whatever the situation is like right now, why didn't the Russians stop 99? Why didn't Russia, I mean in some ways we have –

3: there's nothing there

1: but again I think it's more rooted in some personal relations, perhaps between the president or prime minister –

3: that's it, personal relationships –

1: and then when Putin was here for example, he was greeted by Dacic

2: yes

1: more closely than with the rest, even if Toma (Nikolic) was kissing him 17 times

2: yes

5: let me ask you something, the war ended after how many months in 99? How did they not help us?

2: after 78 days

5: wait, weren't they standing behind us the whole time, the figures? Yes they were. That's how I've understood it. What do you think would have happened if they war went on much longer, like it was planned, for the troops to enter, don't you think they would have reacted? That they would have allowed that?

1: hold on, hold on. Just so we're on the same page here. We're talking about the troops entering or whether they wouldn't have entered? They didn't enter only because of the fact that they signed the capitulation

3: they didn't enter, actually, because it wasn't their plan

1: we signed the capitulation so that they wouldn't have to enter –

5: that's right

1: and the Russians, without it –

5: I'm just asking whether you think they wouldn't have reacted if much worse things started happening to us?

1: no way

6: I agree

3: if they saw some benefit to it, they would have come, if not –

8: and with that, when we signed it, or when we as a state reacted, I recall there was a referendum or something like that, we don't want foreign troops in our country, then people didn't have a legal basis for entering our country. For that reason what happened to us happened, they respected our wishes or whatever of not wanting help, that's how I've understood it, and because of that we got what we got. And then, when 99 started –

2: for a week –

8: I mean if you just watch a few o our movies –

5: I don't think you're right, because they, no one is that foolish to drag themselves into a war.

8: hold on, I think they wanted to, that they were preparing to bring their troops when we signed it.

1: and nothing ever materialized in regards to that, why? For 15 days my father went to Kosovo, and I know how he cried when we was leaving and I know how he was when he came back. What happened down there, and who was selling cigarettes to Russians and who was trading with them, and how were the Russians greeted and how were the Americans greeted? And after 4 months, how was the relationship between Serbs and Kosovars and the Russians and the Americans? Those are two completely different armies, two different systems, meaning, we're not talking about why is leaning towards whom, whether Serbia is leaning towards this one or that one, but rather one system and another system. So we're comparing incomparable things. Do we, that is, us here at the table, whether we personally like the Russians more because they orthodox and because they fought our Slovenian brothers, or whether we think they're our friends or not, it doesn't matter. They consider it to be that way, whether that's how it was, -

5: that's another story

1: that's a whole different thing

5: but our opinion is –

1: everyone has a right to their own opinion –

8: you know what, I've always been of the opinion that history repeats itself, and if you go through history, the Russians never hindered you,  even if they didn't help you, they surely never hindered you.

5: that's what im saying

8: while the German, French, American, English, who didn't hold back on any ammunition and those things, if you see what I mean?

1: yes

2: yeah yeah

8: they screwed you over at least once or twice in life –

1: do you know of a situation where the Germans screwed with us? When the Germans agreed to something with us and didn't respect that agreement and instead screwed us over?

3: we're always pro-German! Between the EU and Russia, I'm pro-German!

8: you know what, 100 to 1, our 1 to 100, that's how I see it –

1: there are documents –

8: even if it were 10 to 1

1: it's not important, it was 10 to 1 everywhere, and for Serbia someone signed on for that. It's irrelevant, I mean completely irrelevant. But they didn't screw us over, we didn't agree on anything other than that [which happened]

3: they just overwrote it (laughter)

1: but hold on, no one forced you to kill, did the Cetniks and Partisans capture and kill 140 Germans in Villamovci, they divide them into groups of 70, and the Cetniks handed theirs over, and took supplies, food and ammunition, everything they needed [from Germans] while the Partisans shot [them]. And because they shot 70 Germans, Kraljevo happened. And in Kragujevac what happened happened.

5: look, she's neutral, and she nicely asked what opinion we think the EU has of us, which I was saying earlier. That whole system, has a very negative opinion about us, over there, that we're an inferior race, that we're illiterate, someone who you can simply wipe off the map. Russians don't have that kind of opinion about us.

1: we don't know –

5: I'm assuming.

1: how many Russians do you know?

5: what he said –

1: how many Russians do you know?

5: I'm talking about this in relation to history, what he's been talking about this entire time. If they didn't help you, they were always there –

6: in regards to history, Russia's never helped us

1: never

5: but I'm just –

6: and she could have in many key moments, and she didn't

5: I'm going to explain to you –

3: in the second world war –

6: let's say for example, the NATO bombing, they could have helped us a lot by using their veto –

3: using their veto

6: and it wouldn't have come to, so many -

5: well there are conditions –

6: innocent victims

7: it didn't come to that because the UN didn't get to attack –

1: the American started harassing us before that

7: there was no veto and they started bombing

1: that's right, but the UN could have condemned the actions. There's that too, do you know how much, how can America put pressure on a country like Russia? It's an enormous power.

5: I'm going to explain –

7: I agree that they couldn't do a lot then, we're in agreement there, that there wasn't really a situation where –

5: look, imagine a family. Husband, wife and two kids. The woman is the one that deals with the children, 'where are you going, when and how'. I'm going to paint you a picture.  A man, who is on the side, like a father, who doesn't get too involved in the upbringing of the children, leaves that to the mother, for her to deal with any problems with the children, but he's there, that figure. That's what I've been talking about this whole time, and if there's a need to react and to help and to threaten, that's what I'm talking about

1: and what if he doesn't? who then is the figure of the father?

5: he does!

1: no

5: you count on it

1: not just a little but –

5: and the world expects that figure to exist

1: just a minute, to make sure we understand each other. What is Serbia in this connotation? Russia, I'm assuming is the father, and Serbia is then what, the mother?

5: mother

1: and the citizens, are the children?

5: that's right

1: okay so that's the connotation. Where has the father appeared for us up until now?

5: he's there, he exists –

1: Russians have –

5: what are you talking about? She asked, and I would rather be with them, because they've been in the right, as he said earlier.

1: whether we're for them or not, that's a personal opinion

8: I like Germans, but my family the most

6: and why wouldnt we look at Germany as an example ?

1: did the Germans have, under their control., Italy?

3: it still does

7: yes

8: let me tell you, all that wealth was created, meaning, they gave them two, three financial vaccinations to recover. And this country, which is so independent, there's no way it'll recover in a few years like them, like a Phoenix bird. That's not possible, without help from outside.

1: of course

3: 'we'll give you, we'll give you a financial shot if you accept black people from Africa, we'll give you a financial shot if you accept this" – there are conditions, nothing's –

6: not even Germany recovered like a Phoenix

3: , 1: yes

6: and you're forgetting one fact, how many countries they've –

8: that's what I said

6:  robbed and how many they've plundered

8: that's what I said

1: and all of that was taken from them by Russians and Americans when they were –

6: they're not –

1: - when they entered –

3: they put some of it away I'm sure

(laughter)

**R:** *In many media reports, EU membership and the question of the status of Kosovo have been placed in opposition. Do you think accepting Kosovo's independence is worth it if it would guarantee Serbia membership into the EU?*

3: you're asking the wrong people

1: no

2: no

6: absolutely not

1: and you have five military employees here

4: it doesn't matter, it's her question

6: absolutely not

2: no way

4: no, we're all 100% in agreement on that question

1; we can put the question like this; we look at the relationship between Serbia and the EU, and we have a lot of money and some average person moves into my house. Okay, maybe I'll accept that man, and I'll give him some money to buy clothes and I teach him something and he'll go to work. If that simple man has some illness which could infect everything in my home, do I accept that man into my house or not?

3: never

6: totally normal

1: now, do we have a problem with Kosovo Albanians?

3: clear as the day is long

1: has Europe begun realizing that it has problems with Kosovo Albanians?

3: it will have a problem [with them]

1: it does

2: it already does

1: it already has a problem with them now

3: on a smaller scale yes, but it's yet to come

1: that's what my friend was talking about.. that Serbs in Sweden also have a big problem with Kosovars. All of EU, in Germany there's no telling how many of them there are. Either way, and now we come back to that original point, do you bring in an average person  who has a disease that can infect everything in your house?

6: of course not

1: would you try to save that man?

7; never

8: never

1: you'll wear a protective glove (laughter)

4: so we've made clear that this isn't even an issue

5: so that means, no one would agree to giving it up, to give up Kosovo to join the EU. If that was a condition [of membership] I don't think anyone would agree to that.

7: no but this isn't, because no one here is all that pro-EU to begin with so it's not –

1: I am, I am completely pro-Western, but only for the good things

6: in any case, that's that's a matter of –

3: it's not important here

1: I've been to those places where work is valued

4: what's valued?

1: work, not like smuggling and under the table kind of work. But work work

2: okay but that's not gonna help you if –

3: I get it

7: just tell me this, what kind of benefits does Bulgaria have now from being in the EU?

1: none whatsoever

7: and let's say, Croatia, which joined, and has closed, what, three shipyards, and they're shooting themselves in the head!

5: our country, in this world -

4: we only serve as a market to them

1: do you remember in high school when X (identified friend) was saying why does a worker here work in agriculture and drive a Yugo and have a factory, why doesn't he just work in agriculture and drive a Mercedes? That's professionalization. You're an agriculturist and you have 700 acres but you work with agriculture and you live off of that. That's nice.

5: So, all those who don't have Serbian passports should be deported and returned to Albania (parallel conversations occurring)

5: it is what it is, can't expect too much from the government.

R: *When the year 2020 comes, the year by which politicians predict Serbia will have finally become a member, what do you realistically think the situation will look like?*

3: We won't have joined the EU and we won't have changed in comparison to now.

7: because of the fact that there will be a condition placed on us to say goodbye to Kosovo, through a referendum

2: and we won't do it

7: and it'll never pass

2: and that's that.

1: which referendum up until today hasn't been tampered with?

7: you know what, they can tamper with about 5% but with 30%, they can't

3: but what will change?

1: you know that there's a central commission, no one has the right to control that commission, it has how many, 10 members, that's 10 million euro man, that's a lot of money, if every one of us, for a million, said 'write the results like this and that', that would be it. So?

7: if they're corrupt, yes, but don't been so cynical about it

1: I'm not cynical I'm being realistic.

7: I honestly don't think it would be possible.

1: What, you want to bring out the army? If your commander in chief calls you and says 'let's go', what are you going to do? And what happens? You ruin your own life

2: hold on, Nr 4 has something to say

4: the other day, on B92 (TV channel) they were saying that until 2025 there's no way the EU is expanding. So?

R: 2025?

4: yeah, it won't enlarge until then.

8: and by then lots of things will have happened and it'll fall apart

4: so that's the big question really

R: What's the situation going to look like on the political scene?

6: What political scene?

R: Here in Serbia, in 5 years' time

6: in five years we can make a comeback

4: in 555 years maybe

6: definitely by 50%, if not even more, if the state is governed properly

1: hold on a second, in relation to what standards?

6: In relation to the current situation, if the state is governed in a normal way, and if the adequate measures are taken, and if our politics, doesn't politicize everything in Serbia. Meaning, politics should deal with politics and competent people should deal with their professions, for whatever they're experts, and competent people should lead our institutions, firms, which means people who are professionals within those fields. In 5 years we can recover 50% and should first and foremost develop our agriculture, farming and tourism.

3: I don't think we'll recover, because we don't have that strength within ourselves to do so

6: we can use, if we're smart, we can use the EU, and not just them use us, in the sense of their sanctions against Russia and instead make closer ties to Russia which is a huge market.

3: and to sell what we have

6: Right, so –

3: by the books, but at most 10% [progress] but I think that'll be hard

6: Serbia isn't able to, with 100% of its capacity from its agriculture, livestock, whatever, it wouldn't even be able to feed all of Moscow. And that's a huge financial source for Serbia

[3: but it's because of that –]

6: we just need to be smart about it

[7: but it's because of that, that they've –]

6: and go towards Russia in this sense

7: of course

6: we should have a good economic cooperation with Russia, which now, morally, doesn't suit the EU because they want to keep us in their grip, and that's that

7: that's where they're waiting for you

6: which means, they're conditioning us as much as they can to be able to take everything they can from Serbia at as cheap a price as possible, for their tycoons, and to have a monopoly on everything, and that's the whole story.

3: I highly doubt that we'll be able to make use of –

6: but only under the premise that the state is governed intelligently

1: but intelligent governance means that a person cannot be bought. He has to be fair, meaning he doesn't have to be some sort of expert, but he has to be fair.

3: and how long will he survive?

2: he can't

1: the principle behind good governance, of a nation means a domesticated governance, but the man of the house can't steal from his own home. We're talking about what Nr 6 was saying –

[4: yes yes yes]

1: and we all absolutely agree with that

3: well simple common sense really

1: so, just to make sure we're all on the same page. If I steal, I don't know, a TV, from my own home, like I take the TV out of the house and sell it, then my wife and kids will have nothing to watch. Which means I need that TV.

5: you put that nicely, and with the current way of thinking in politics, we're getting nowhere, we're even going backwards. If the values change and are recognized, and the right people are put in place, we can make progress.

3: now the question is, are we going backwards, stagnating or moving forwards? We're still balancing

4: no

[1: but just so we're -]

4: no

3: we don't know –

6: we're lost in the fog

1: and maybe the problem isn't the politicians but the people. There's 8 of us here, and we're members of some sort of social group –

6: the problem, in my opinion, isn't the people, the problem is the politicians because in Serbia today, politics is a business, it a business of personal profit and personal interests, and everyone is getting involved in politics to make a profit, to get a higher position –

1: position, yes that's what I'm talking about

6: today, a successful politician isn't in the business of politics for the people

     [2: yes]

6: for the nation

     [1: but for his own -]

6: but for his own personal profit

1: and this is evident to everyone

6: and so, politics as politics, if politicians could just stick to politic and not get involved in everything else –

4: that's impossible

3: impossible

1: I completely agree, but how –

3: to not engage in politics. Be ready to be led by people more stupid than you

2: I'm mean come on, just start with our current president and there's no need to go any further

3: the president is insignificant

     [2: he's not]

3: he's insignificant, he's just a figure

2: and it's enough to see that figure and everything is clear

3: those 200 or so are more –

     [2: who's speaking of any kind of prophet?]

**1:** employees of the government are more important than him

6: the Serbian president has no influence

2: I get that, but –

6: he's just a figure –

2: a figure yes, but at least he could be a good one

5: but he's supposed to represent you, like that

6: whatever we could even bring a gypsy and it wouldn't –

5: but that's what she was saying earlier, what kind of opinion does the EU have of us? When they see him like that, with buttons on his suit jacket and two different socks, I mean I'm sorry but, he doesn't speak English, it's pathetic. And then what is the EU supposed to think about us?

3: but who should they look at? Who? I'm telling you that Slobodan Milošević was the last president that we had, after him we've had no one.

1: yeah after him we haven't –

3: after him we haven't had presidents, just figurines.

4: today I saw something on the news, saying it's 25 years since Tito died

5: 30

4 20

2: 30

1: 35

4: 35 since he passed. And he ruled 35. that's what they said.

7: yesterday it's been 35 years since Tito passed

4: and he ruled 35 years, and 35 years since his death until now, and how are we living better? What else is there to say.

8: hold on, hold on, are you trying to say that we lived better during Tito's time?

4: I did, yes

8: oh come on

4: Well you asked me, all I can do is answer

8: okay sure

4: my father was working, he was a plain old fireman

8: okay

4: he had three kids, my mom was a stay at home wife who cooked and raised us

8: okay

4: breakfast on time, lunch, she kept track of who we were and what we were doing. And he built the house –

8: tell me –

4: now we all work in this house –

8: okay

4: I don't even have, I've been married 30 years and I don't have anything that's mine for god's sake.

8: just tell me this, did you, back then, did you go on school field trips all the time? Were there call for employment for the state?

4: that should come back  because -

8: hold on, just to –

4: I would be happy if that was brought back, okay

8: does anyone work for the state for free nowadays?

4: no

8: no. that's right. Did you have a cell phone?

4: no

8: did you have internet?

4: no

8: that's right. Did you go on vacation every year? No

6: but then there wasn't even  -

8: now you have a different life, you travel –

4: I'm sorry but you're conflating –

8: but not everything can –

6: hold on, we didn't –

8: then you didn't have anything, no one had anything but now look at how good our lives are

4: since Milošević that hasn't  -

7: what do you mean no one had anything?

8: how many people –

5: hold on let me tell you something –

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2: are you trying to say that there's less of a need for –

6: but tv and technology –

5: can I say something? The amount of times ive been on vacation you don't have hairs on your head

(laughter)

8: good for you as an individual but I'm talking about generally

5: every year 10 days on vacation

8: I'm talking globally

5: yeah globally, everyone went on summer and winter vacation

8: no that's not true

5: I know what im talking about

8: and good for you as an individual, maybe you lived a good life but im talking about people in my surrounding here

4: but you're quite young. Back then we lived a safer life, you had a stable job, a lot of things were different. A lot a lot. And the technology that you mentioned doesn't depend on the president but progress in genera;

8: no no I just wanted to say that now no one is doing anything to help the government to make progress

4: that's right

8: but everyone is expecting something from the state. How many today are on welfare? Before that didn't exist

4: I would bring that all back

8: now every other person is on welfare, before that wasn't the caase

4: so are we then not in agreement that it was better before?

6: of course

5: listen let me tell you –

4: when there was work wasn't it better then? And all of that has been lost, and replaced, with that unsatisfied sentiment. That's all passed on from root to root. That you need to be a crook to live, a thief to live, all the worst and you have to live like that. That, those values didn't exist before

8:  but in the 80s was Tito in power?

4: no he wasn't

1: it changed what, every year, the government in Yugoslavia

5: for 45 years you have to work four jobs to get here. An officially this year we're either at a zero or at a loss.

8: no no I don't agree that it's but, but I believe that –

5: whatever let's just continue with the next question

R: *Considering the past 25 years and everything that has occurred in Serbia and the region, do you think that the people, as a nation, has changed in comparison with the past?*

4: yes they are

6: not only have they changed –

4: people have had to adapt to the current system, and that's where they all got ruined

6: people have gotten worse

4: no tolerance, no traditional values, everythings been lost, they've become miserable. Everything is worse, and for one simple reason, just to survive.

6: yes, existentially

4: respect has been lost towards everyone, you wont see anyone giving up their seat to a pregnant woman anymore, no way. I mean it's really sad. Before it wasn't like that

6: when we say this and they hear it in they EU they'll say 'these crazy people'

4: no no no that has nothing to do with –

6: no but think about it –

4: are you socializing with people the way you used to do?

6: I absolutely agree with all of that because, see, if you go back 25 years, our people have survived such trauma, first of all a financial crisis, sanctions, lack of ability, wars, NATO aggressions, loss of work places, the shutting down of factories, loss of territory, uhm, and all that influences, in a stressful way, a people. And it's a true wonder –

5: that we've survived

6: that our nation has persisted, that we're still exceptionally mentally healthy, of course we have our problems, with being –

7: on the brink of our tolerance

6: I think that everyone is at the limits of their tolerance because of those everyday stressors and everyday survival, we're still here. So I think that, had this happened to any other nation, that would have been a disaster.

1: but people are, more or less the same everywhere the only difference is how their circumstances have forced them to act

6: but that's only evidence of how resilient and able we are as a people. That we're ready to prevail and endure in every crisis

3: that's how we've been raised, that's what we learned

4: and now if you look back, 20 years earlier, people were social, you traveled, you had visitors –

3: but you never worried when you sat in a bar and looked at the bill whether someone else had 1000 dinars to give you or whether you'd have to pay for it all yourself

4: that's what im telling you. You were safe. You were a lot more safe even in regards to work and everything. But now, now it's just, the mantra is 'how to survive the day'

7: but it's not

4: no no, 20 years ago, you could imagine your life in the long run, you could look 10 years ahead and think about what you would be doing, right?

6: yeah

4: can you do that now? No

3: yes you can

1: why wouldn't you?

4: no, okay you can but it'll change 200 times

1: back then it was the same -

4: today you live for tomorrow

1: everything was changing

6: okay let's say, banal example, but let's say I want to get a loan, and a small one at that, for let's say a 5 year period, or even 3 years. I would have to think long and hard whether to take it for a 3 year period because it's unsure whether there will be employment and work and whether I'll be able to pay that money back, just in three years.

4: that's right

6: meaning, the current situation is so unstable because of our current financial situation in the country that you simple aren't safe in a single place of employment

4: that's right

6: and that's the biggest problem, the problem isn't whther you're gonna lose your job. You want to work, and whatever, even if you have a higher education, you're willing to work the dirtiest of jobs just to make enough to feed your family, but unfortunately you cant even find a job like that, there isn't even anywhere for you to find employment, no work place. So, currently the situation is like that that it's totally unsafe.

4: and then again we end up in those political streams, where there's no employment –

6: but on the other hand –

4: and there's no work anywhere, and you go to

6: and then she's supposed to squeeze you into some made up hob and you have only one sense of satisfaction from that, and now, whether you're politically likeminded or not, whether you support the politics that that party is propagating, isn't important at all.

1: meaning we've come to the point where our political beliefs absolutely don't matter, we currently support the governing party but we're, as a nation, completely political inactive. There's simply people for whom this is a profession, who exclusively deal with politics, like 6: was saying, that's a business, and he makes a living off of that. There are people there who are there to make a profit, I mean 'there', in whichever political party that they find themselves in, just to be clear, they're there to make a profit, to survive, but they don't do anything, they're not intelligent enough, or they're lazy –

3: oh yeah, we just make up places of employment –

4: and how are we going to enter the EU in five years? No way.

1: but who's the problem here?

3: you just make up places so that people can get jobs

1: but that's what im talking about. Who's to blame here? Is the politician at fault or the people? That boss, that director? It's impossible that there's not a single person who works along that man who is his superior, who can say 'hello, enough already!"

6: those are public, primarily public institutions. Public institutions finance themselves or they're financed by a local budget. Those aren't institutions on a stately level. But they're mainly self-funded. But municipal like municipal, there's always a state

6: not even them, and it's normal that they'd justify their vote and grab on to cliques of unemployment, and they make up places to work and finance the furnishing of those companies –

4: and all of that, at the end of the day, comes out of our pocket. Our pensions are made smaller and their pay checks just get bigger.

6: at least to have a consistent work, they're all for 6 months, a year, and then in a circle. Even place of work isn't consistent, they change the location all the time.

3: but it's no better than it was 20 years ago

5: 25. 25 years ago all the bad stuff started happening

3: but 20 year's ago Sloba (Slobodan Milošević) was alive

4: okay, she was asking about 25 years ago. Vladicin Han; Giga is ruined, Pop, Cerepana, Yumko, Simpco, all of those were giant and not a single one remains. It's all, as he said, stolen, ruined. In Surdulica, in Vranje, and think about how capable that power is to ruin everything. And then how we can say that it's better now? I don't get how it's better. Myself personally I've been looking for a job for 6 months. At the Chinese shop, the farmers marker, wherever. No one is interested, whatever your education, knowledge, schooling, not even higher-education diplomas. They're just interested in who you are, whose you are and how to squeeze you in. and how am I supposed to be doing better?

4: my life is chaos. And I've never been more afraid than now. And I'm 50 years old, and I don't know what I'll do tomorrow or for how long, or on what pension I'm supposed to live on later in life.

## Appendix 10: Table of critical discourse analysis for Study II

| Year/ Speaker | Quote | Thematic Content | Argumentation Scheme | Marco-Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. 1992 Draskovic | *After 603 years, the St Vitus Day battle is being repeated. The first battle lasted one day, ours lasted 8 days. In the other one around 1000 Serbs participated, in this one a couple of million [...] in that one, no Serbs survived, in this one, no one was killed. Because of that, the other one was physically lost but morally and spiritually won. This one led to some type of defeat, as the goals were not realized. After that moral victory Serbs endured 500 years of Turkish slavery, after this St. Vitus Day, we cannot even endure 5 years of communist slavery.* | Victimhood | Topos of threat | Strategy of constructing ingroup as victims of external other |
| 2. 1998. Djindjic | *We in the Balkans are a part of Europe, and Europe is incomplete without the Balkans. It like with a troubled child in a family. He is part of the family regardless of if the other family members want him or not.* | European belonging | Metaphor of 'exclusive club' | Strategy of constructing superordinate membership as natural. |
| 3. 1998. Marjanovic | *Kosovo and Metohija is the root and foundation of Serbian statehood and the national identity of the Serbian people.* | Identity through Kosovo | Topos of definition, Metaphor of roots | Strategy of constructing identity continuity |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.<br>2000.<br>Milošević | *Serbia has to, and deserves to, defend herself against invasions, which have been put in place through various forms of subversion.* | Victimhood | Topos of threat | Strategy of perpetuating ivictimhood identity |
| 5.<br>2004.<br>Tadic | *EU membership will help us in further economic developments, as well as guarantee security and indivisibility of our territory. For our citizens it will mean higher standards, better educational opportunities and a lot of freedom of movement.* | Europe as a political strategy | Topos of favorable time | Strategy of transforming Serbia's political and civic landscape |
| 6.<br>2008. Kostunica | *Is there a nation in the world that is being asked to renounce everything that makes it a nation, as is being sought of the Serbs today?* | Victimhood | Rhetorical suggestive question | Strategy of justification for rejecting change by emphasising continuity |
| 7.<br>2008.<br>Delic | *...yesterday's signing opens up a European perspective in our country. This was a watershed moment; we passed that rubicon, now Serbia unequivocally emerges as a full-fledged future member of the EU.* | EU as a destination | Metaphor – Rubicon ; threshold which once passed cannot be returned to. | Strategy of constructing EU as only future of Serbia |
| 8.<br>2008. Kostunica | *Kosovo – that is the first name of Serbia ... that is how it has always been. That is how it will always be.* | Identity through Kosovo | Anthropom orphism | Strategy of constructing identity continuity |
| 9.<br>2012.<br>Tadic | *I will say this is a great thing, of course it's not epic. It will be epic when Serbia crosses that border, enchanted border, and become a member of the community of European societies with the ability to use all the potential accession funds and everything that is available to any country that is a full member EU.* | EU as a political strategy | Topos of a favorable time | Strategy of transforming Serbia's political and civic landscape |
| 10.<br>2012.<br>Tadic | *The position of Serbia is crystal clear in terms of the recognition of Kosovo. Serbia is not going to recognize Kosovo's independence under any circumstances and that is all that I can say today, tomorrow and after tomorrow. That position is not changeable.* | Kosovo Politics | Temporal references, topos of similarity | Strategy of constructing identity continuity |

| Organizing Theme | References (in numbers) | Reference (in percentage of all coded) |
|---|---|---|
| EU as a source of civic improvement | 82 | 20% |
| EU as a source of inferiority | 137 | 34% |
| Rupture to collective continuity | 187 | 46% |

## Appendix 11: Coding and theme frequency for study III

| Code | Reference (numbers) | % of all codes |
|---|---|---|
| **EU as source of civic improvement** | | |
| *Benefits to EU integration* | *44* | *12%* |
| EU has better laws | 8 | 2% |
| EU entails possibility to leave dysfunctional nation | 7 | 2% |
| EU entails more freedom of trade | 6 | 2% |
| EU represents national progress | 14 | 4% |
| Want EU standards of living | 9 | 2% |
| *Limits to Serbian self-improvement* | *38* | *10%* |
| Incompetent political leadership | 15 | 4% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of accountability for the past | 9 | 2% |
| Public powerless in political decision-making | 14 | 4% |
| **Rupture to collective continuity** | | |
| ***Choosing a political 'side'*** | ***64*** | ***18%*** |
| Historic ties to Russia | 14 | 4% |
| EU enforces common foreign policy | 2 | 1% |
| EU unstable as a union | 6 | 2% |
| The West support Albanian expansion on Serb territory | 4 | 1% |
| Serbian politics straddling East and West | 38 | 10% |
| ***Every day-level change*** | ***64*** | ***18%*** |
| EU means changing mentality | 9 | 2% |
| EU places limits on banal expressions of nationalism | 6 | 2% |
| Fears of identity loss | 18 | 5% |
| Loss of collectivist values | 11 | 3% |
| Serbia incompatible with EU way of life | 13 | 4% |
| Unable to imagine the future | 7 | 2% |
| ***Losing national sovereignty*** | ***27*** | ***8%*** |
| EU makes decisions for new members | 14 | 4% |
| Losing territory over time | 6 | 2% |
| The importance of national borders | 7 | 2% |
| ***The political status of Kosovo*** | ***26*** | ***8%*** |
| Historical significance of Kosovo | 4 | 1% |
| Kosovo a 'parasite' on Serbia | 3 | 1% |
| Kosovo is de facto independent | 3 | 1% |
| Kosovo only 'temporarily' lost | 6 | 2% |
| Resistance to 'de jure' recognition of Kosovo | 10 | 3% |
| **EU as a source of inferiority** | | |
| ***Feeling subordinate & stigmatized*** | ***28*** | ***7%*** |
| Internalized stigma | 5 | 1% |
| Negative views of Serbia in EU | 23 | 6% |
| ***Negotiating accountability for stigma*** | ***47*** | ***12%*** |
| Critical of ingroup | 31 | 8% |
| Institutions causing corrupt behaviour | 12 | 3% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Institutions censor criticism | 4 | 1% |
| *Power-asymmetry within the EU* | *42* | *10%* |
| EU exploits incoming members | 12 | 3% |
| Hierarchy of countries in the EU | 17 | 4% |
| Serbia dependent on EU aid | 9 | 2% |
| Serbia implementing change mindlessly to please EU | 4 | 1% |
| *Rationalizing lack of progress* | *20* | *5%* |
| Ideological shift from communism to capitalism | 13 | 3% |
| Institutional instability | 7 | 2% |

# Appendix 12: Codebook for thematic analysis of Study III

| EU as source of civic improvement | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Benefits to EU integration** | | |
| EU has better laws | Coded when participants spoke of the benefits of EU including better laws, better social and institutional order, and the more serious implementation and respect for regulations compared to in Serbia currently. | *"Safety, legality, order, some normalcy, certainty that you'll be able to live a normal life tomorrow, a humanitarian life, and to live and expect a normal retirement with a pension and that everything is covered by the law. We currently don't have that." (Vranje)* |
| EU entails possibility to leave dysfunctional nation | Coded for when participants spoke of EU integration not as a potential route to improving Serbia, but to allow for individuals to leave a bad country for a 'better' one. | *"3: Bulgaria and Romania joined and their countries are no better off 2: There are 7 million less of them since they joined the EU, Romanians, and 2 million Bulgarians 1: Well yeah, everyone left." (Surdulica)* |
| EU entails more freedom of trade | Coded for when participants discussed EU as a benefit to trade, through the opening of trade borders, the decrease in government monopoly on prices | *"Usually around benefits people talk about, the economic benefits, the opening of trade borders and the increase in investments." (Belgrade 1)* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | in Serbia and better trade opportunities. | |
| EU represents national progress | Coded for when the EU was discussed as represented as a symbol of progress in the media and political discourse, but progress in an abstract sense, rather than concretely discussing how. | *"1: They used to talk about 'European values' as some sort of thing that was thrown around but no one really tried to explain to the people what that means. […] just 'European values' as if that's something better than what we have now." (Belgrade 2)* |
| Want EU standards of living | Coded for when participants spoke about housing, pay and access to resources which made the EU have a higher standard of living than Serbia, something that was both envied and desired. | *"6: We'll see what happens but we do want to join the EU, of course we all want, I mean, not EU as it currently is, but we want to achieve, we don't want EU with 200 Euro salaries.*<br>*3: To keep what's ours but to have better standards of living." (Belgrade 1)* |
| ***Limits to Serbian self-improvement*** | | |
| Incompetent political leadership | Coded for when participants critiqued or ridiculed either the qualifications or competencies of existing, or previous, political leaders and painted them in a negative light. | *"4: We'll be better off the day we have honest politicians.*<br>*6: Never, my friend*<br>*1: Is that even a real thing?" (Novi Sad)* |
| Lack of accountability for the past | Coded for when participants discussed both political and public lack of accountability for the past (in terms of the Yugoslav war and its aftermath) and its effects on the present. | *"4: But hold on, 'Tito did that to us'; Tito didn't do anything to us. I mean, somewhere, we, we chose those people, those that have been 'forced upon us'. I don't mean we, you and me, that we're to blame, but our people, we chose those leaders, no one else is to blame for that."* |
| Public powerless in political decision-making | Coded for when participants made claims to being powerless, either themselves or as a group, for implementing any kind of change in Serbia, or having any kind of voice in shaping how politics progress. | *"1: No one ever asked us whether we wanted to give up Kosovo or not, I don't think that's up to us. The people don't dictate those decisions. That's politics." (Surdulica)* |
| **Rupture to collective continuity** | | |
| ***Choosing a political 'side'*** | | |
| Historical ties to Russia | Coded when participants talked about Serbia-Russia relations, particularly drawing on history (WW1, WW2 etc.) or religion (Orthodox) to argue for a positive relationship between the nations, sometimes to contrast this with Western European countries (historical enemies or the Catholic majority of EU countries) | *"3: They're our brothers. (sarcastic)*<br>*2: Well okay it's not that easy, I'm no type of Russophile but again there is a certain historical and religious connection with the Russians and it's not nonsense, it's not nonsense, it's not unreasonable that that feeling towards Russia and the people of Russia exists. It didn't fall from the sky." (Belgrade, 2)* |
| EU enforces common foreign policy | Coded when participants talked about Serbia not being able to maintain its separate foreign | *"4: It's simply impossible that we will join the EU while not having done with Russia what has to be done to join the* |

| | policy agenda but rather had to assimilate to an EU perspective of foreign policy | *EU's way of thinking in relation to Russia.*<br>*2: Foreign policy.*<br>*4: Because if they let you in they surely will not allow you to have anything independently [of them]."*<br>*(Belgrade, 1)* |
|---|---|---|
| EU unstable as a union | Coded for when participants discussed the EU's internal disputes, instabilities and possible breakdowns of the union in the future | *"1: You're going to think that I'm in opposition in purpose, but it is realistic that you want to join a union that you don't even think will exist in four years?"* |
| The West support Albanian expansion on Serbian territory | Coded for when participants either drew links between Albanian and Western interests or implicitly and explicitly positioned the West as helping Albanian expansion on what they considered to be Serbian territory | *"1: We've already given them territory, and already, in the name of Great Albania, territory has systematically been taken from Serbia by the West. They're buying everything, they're buying Serbia." (Cacak)* |
| Serbian politics straddling East and West | Coded for when participants discussed how Serbia politically was on the fence between Europe and Russia, trying to balance the two or maintain positive relations with both, or to decide which side to be on. | *"1: Today they [politicians] sit on two chairs, and there's no –*<br>*3: they shouldn't get involved [EU in Serbia's relations to Russia] but it is a problem to sit on two chairs. [...] [we] should be on one, but we're on two, and the problem is that we're small, so sitting on two chairs isn't possible.*<br>*4: because it's hard for us to choose."* |
| *Every day-level change* | | |
| EU means changing mentality | Coded when participants discussed differences in ways of thinking, consciousness, world-view, and explicitly also 'mentalities' that differed from one another, in relation to for example child rearing, but also the extent to which Serbia will be able to fully and successfully implement EU-rooted changes without public resistance | *"The most difficult thing to change here is our consciousness. Here, one way of life exists and essentially no matter how much people protest they still adhere to it and it works for them... and that's that. When working hours were first introduced as 9-5, according to European working hours, people were passing out."* |
| EU places limits on banal expressions of nationalism | Coded when participants discussed how EU regulations might limit or even forbid the practice of making plum brandy or roasting a pig in your backyard, two of the most common 'traditional' everyday practices mentioned | *"4: Now you won't be able to make your own rakija, really, it's a big problem.*<br>*5: I heard that Croatia has a serious problem with making brandy now.*<br>*4: And making winter preserves, that won't be allowed."* |
| Fear of identity loss | Coded when participants discussed losing their (personal and national) identity because of recent political changes related to EU integration, as well as future possible threats to losing it. | *"1: loss of national identity.*<br>*2: We will become a colony.*<br>*3: we already are."* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Loss of collectivist values | Coded when participants spoke about how the systems of values upheld in the EU differed from the more traditional ones in Serbia, particularly in contexts of considering how these values would be lost if Serbia joined | *"7: We're much more neurotic as a people.*<br>*9: No, not neurotic but much more free in our behaviour, that's probably what's come from Europe, the behaviour of young girls and boys, everything is somehow allowed, what you previously wouldn't think to do is now possible and okay for everyone."*<br>*(Niš)* |
| Serbia incompatible with EU way of life | Coded for when participants spoke about Serbia being incompatible with a way of life, often in relation to certain behaviour or ways of being. | *"1: First of all I think there's more to be lost than gained there, because of the fact that, we're that kind of people where we're not ready to live by those rules and regulations. I don't think we'd be able to assimilate." (Belgrade, 3)* |
| Unable to imagine the future | Coded when participants discussed the future of Serbia and the expectation of it being a member of the EU in the near future | *"2: [in 2020] the finish line will be moved to 2030.*<br>*1: And then nothing will happen.*<br>*2: Everything stays the same. There will be more conditions [to meet]."*<br>*(Paraćin)* |
| *Losing national sovereignty* | | |
| EU makes decisions for new members | Coded for when participants discussed the EU as a normative and real power *over* new member-states, often drawing on recently joined member-states as illustrations of these claims. | *6: We'd like to have a good economic cooperation with Russia, which doesn't suit the EU because then we'd be doing okay and they wouldn't be able to keep us in their control, that's how it is. They're conditioning us to take as much as they can and to be able to monopolize control here."*<br>*(Vranje)* |
| Losing territory over time | Coded for when participants discussed how Serbia, across its recent and extended past had lost a lot of territory (whether due to the loss of Yugoslavia or political conflicts) but also how they anticipate losing even more territory in the future. | *"8: I think we're going to lose Vojvodina too.*<br>*2: No way*<br>*8: Everything is centralized in Belgrade.*<br>*2: I'm more afraid for Southern Serbia. People are fleeing, and those Albanians from Kosovo can come here so easily, just show their ID and enter into Serbia." (Belgrade, 3)* |
| The importance of national borders | Coded when participants discussed the role of borders in defining the nation, both in Serbia and elsewhere. Also discussion of current Serbian borders. | *"The question is, when the moment will come where the last condition will be the de jure acknowledgment, both the de jure and de facto acknowledgement of Kosovo, because you can't join the EU, objectively, when you don't have and don't know how to define your* |

| | | *borders."* |
| | | *(Belgrade, 1)* |

***The political status of Kosovo***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Historical significance of Kosovo | Coded when participants talked about Kosovo as either the root of Serbhood, using metaphors related to home or in other ways constructed Kosovo as the heart / centre of Serbia (symbolically) either by drawing on history or religion. | *"We're all descendants of Kosovo, one way or another, that's literally how it is."* *(Paraćin)* |
| Kosovo a 'parasite' on Serbia | Coded for when participants discussed Kosovo as a burden on Serbia, whether financially, internationally or symbolically. | *"1: Let's put the question this way. The relationship between Serbia and the EU, I have a lot of money and some average person comes to live in my house. Okay, I accept him, give him some money to get dressed and teach him something so he can work. But if that somebody has some kind of illness which can contaminate everything in my house? Do I accept that man into my house or no?* *3: never* *1: okay, and now do we have a problem with Kosovo Albanians?* *3: Clear as day."* *(Vranje)* |
| Kosovo is de facto independent | Coded when participants acknowledged that Kosovo was more and more its own independent country, referencing either the existence of a border control, their own Prime Minister, flag etc. | *"2: We've already acknowledged Kosovo, our media calls Hasim Tacin the Prime Minister of Kosovo* *1: and we negotiate with their government."* *(Belgrade, 2)* |
| Kosovo is only 'temporarily' lost | Coded for when participants discussed the loss of Kosovo in a wider temporal context, by either admitting it is lost for now, but has a long history of being Serbia, or anticipating that it will be taken back and become Serbian again in the future. | *"2: From the perspective of history, 50-60 years is nothing, but 100 years from now, let's say, when the global order changes and you go to Moscow or Beijing and complain about losing Kosovo, and they tell you 'well dear, you signed its independence. Bye.' That's why we should recognize it."* *(Paraćin)* |
| Resistance to 'de jure' recognition of Kosovo | Coded when participants spoke about the fact that despite Kosovo being lost, the constitution would not allow for the public, or any politician to officially acknowledge it, or, it was argued that publicly acknowledging it (via broadcast / legal changes to the constitution) wouldn't be accepted by the public. Thus somewhat of a circular argument | *"6: they should fight for [Serbs in Kosovo]. We can't because the constitution doesn't allow it, no one has a right to sign –* *1: of course yes* *6: The constitution doesn't allow it."* *(Niš)* |

| | (constitution won't allow for change by public, public won't allow for change to constitution). | |
|---|---|---|
| **EU as a source of inferiority** | | |
| *Feeling subordinate & stigmatized* | | |
| Internalized stigma | Coded for when participants voiced stigmatizing representations of the ingroup as correct (at least for parts of the population). Inclusive of the self. | *"5: The majority of the population has some kind of sense of, they can never turn us into the Swiss, our temperament is different.*<br>*(Belgrade 2)* |
| Negative views of Serbia in EU | Coded for when participants discussed how they perceived themselves to be negatively viewed in the eyes of EU member countries | *"2: And the Brits, Swedes, whatever, all look at us, not as citizens of a second class, but a tenth. In every way possible.*<br>*1: probably yes. "How miserable it must be there"*<br>*3: Well when they think we're savages."*<br>*(Belgrade 1)* |
| *Negotiating accountability for stigma* | | |
| Critical of ingroup | Coded for when participants made claims about Serbia as a whole as accountable (the people included in this) and to blame for various political and social issues. | *"1: what does that tell you? That we're an unstable -*<br>*5: That we're an uneducated people*<br>*2: that we're generally uneducated."*<br>*(Belgrade 2)* |
| Institutions causing corrupt behaviour | Coded for when participants discussed the ways in which the institutions such as hospitals, police, universities etc., were corrupt and allowing individuals to prosper via corruption, causing individuals who are law-abiding-citizens to in turn 'adapt' to the system. Justifying corrupt behaviour of citizens (not politicians) due to the actions of institutions and politicians. | *"1: Surely, people don't change that easily but simply, show different faces and characteristics depending on the external [context] and all that people have to do in abnormal conditions. And us too. We've been living 25 years in abnormal conditions and now we're supposed to be normal.*<br>*3: Tough.*<br>*1: to be nice and kind and courteous and well raised –*<br>*2: but see if we had better standards we'd probably be better.*<br>*4: one implies the other.*<br>*1: not just standards but also laws, and no corruption, you look at all we have now [negatively] and then you're supposed to be normal."*<br>*(Vranje)* |
| Institutions censor criticism | Coded for when participants discussed institutions, such as schools and the media, as being part of the overall censorship of criticism in Serbia and thereby allowing bad things to happen without taking responsibility or informing the public about the truth. | *"7: When you're living in a media war, you only see what they want you to see."*<br>*(Paraćin)* |
| *Power-asymmetry within the EU* | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| EU exploits incoming members | Coded when participants discussed the ways in which the EU was abusing its power against Serbia and other new member-states to make profits and gain institutional control | *"People from those [EU] countries to buy our firms, successful firms, and that's a known fact, that they follow their interests, not with the intention to help us, but simply, to make a profit."* *(Niš)* |
| Hierarchy of countries in the EU | Coded when participants discussed a perceived power hierarchy within the EU, with Western countries at the top, and non-Western (including Serbia) at the bottom – giving them less say in the regulation of common practices. | *"1: It's well known that there's a first, second, third, fourth, fifth league within the EU, with the first being German, France, and the rest are below.]* *2: And we expect that."* *(Belgrade 1)* |
| Serbia dependent on EU aid | Coded when participants discussed Serbia's financial dependence on the EU due to the funds / money being given to Serbia by the EU, thereby limiting Serbia's political choices (particularly choices against EU interests) | *"Again we come back to the fact that our budget is pumped with money from the EU and they dictate what we do and that's it."* *(Novi Sad)* |
| Serbia implementing changes mindlessly to please the EU | Coded for when participants discussed the contra-effect that conditionality and EU integration was having on Serbia as it was leading to the blind implementation of EU regulations and expectations without considering their appropriateness in Serbia. From very small to very radical statements. | *"6: I wouldn't be surprised if they told us 'do you accept that we rape your women in order to join the EU?' and we wouldn't even be surprised by that. Or to give our children to NATO. Nothing would surprise us anymore."* *(Niš)* |
| *Rationalizing lack of progress* | | |
| Ideological shift from communism to capitalism | Coded for when participants discussed how Serbia's ideological landscape had changed from communist to capitalist, and the implications this had for politics, social relations, cultural practices etc. | *"1: I always think about the people, and base my impressions on what's going on around me. If collective sports were once good and a team spirit was supported and nurtured and people thought, there was that system, if you had a house you gave up your apartment, and people didn't want to, that's really how it was, I know, my parents said no to an apartment from my wife's parents because they thought 'well hold on, what if someone else needs it', so the system taught you to think fairly. To think about others. Unlike now."* *(Belgrade 2)* |
| Institutional instability | Coded for when participants discussed how key institutions, such as academia, the theatre or hospitals, in local and national terms, were ruined or had cease to | *"5: I'm sorry but our hospitals are in ruins, we don't have any funds to help them, our schools are falling apart, all of our institutions. Everything. When you look at that Western system and* |

| | exist and thus did not provide a source of continuity. | *those conditions for joining the EU, we're never going to reach them.* |
|---|---|---|

## Appendix 13: SPSS Output from Quantitative Component of Study III

**Run MATRIX procedure:**

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 3.00 ****************

    Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.    www.afhayes.com

  Documentation available in Hayes (2018). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**********************************************************************

Model : 14

  Y : POL_EU

  X : FU_POW_S

  M : ST_MEAN

  W : NAT_ID

Sample

Size: 1048

```
********************************************************************
```

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

 ST_MEAN

Model Summary

| R | R-sq | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|------|-----|---|-----|-----|---|
| .4170 | .1739 | 1.7563 | 220.2326 | 1.0000 | 1046.0000 | .0000 |

Model

|  | coeff | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|--|-------|----|---|---|------|------|
| constant | 5.9320 | .1248 | 47.5435 | .0000 | 5.6872 | 6.1768 |
| FU_POW_S | -.6465 | .0436 | -14.8402 | .0000 | -.7320 | -.5610 |

```
********************************************************************
```

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

 POL_EU

Model Summary

| R | R-sq | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|------|-----|---|-----|-----|---|
| .5722 | .3274 | 6.2825 | 126.9458 | 4.0000 | 1043.0000 | .0000 |

Model

|  | coeff | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|--|-------|----|---|---|------|------|
| constant | 6.6604 | .7439 | 8.9531 | .0000 | 5.2007 | 8.1202 |
| FU_POW_S | .5508 | .0908 | 6.0652 | .0000 | .3726 | .7289 |
| ST_MEAN | -.5042 | .1578 | -3.1949 | .0014 | -.8138 | -.1945 |
| NAT_ID | .2908 | .1519 | 1.9136 | .0559 | -.0074 | .5889 |
| Int_1 | -.0998 | .0336 | -2.9734 | .0030 | -.1657 | -.0339 |

Product terms key:

 Int_1  :  ST_MEAN x  NAT_ID

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

| | R2-chng | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M*W | .0057 | 8.8409 | 1.0000 | 1043.0000 | .0030 |

----------

Focal predict: ST_MEAN (M)

Mod var: NAT_ID (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

| NAT_ID | Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.8222 | -.7859 | .0792 | -9.9164 | .0000 | -.9414 | -.6304 |
| 4.3689 | -.9403 | .0607 | -15.4792 | .0000 | -1.0594 | -.8211 |
| 5.9157 | -1.0946 | .0806 | -13.5865 | .0000 | -1.2527 | -.9365 |

***************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y ****************

Direct effect of X on Y

| Effect | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| .5508 | .0908 | 6.0652 | .0000 | .3726 | .7289 |

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:

FU_POW_S -> ST_MEAN -> POL_EU

| NAT_ID | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.8222 | .5081 | .0722 | .3741 | .6559 |
| 4.3689 | .6079 | .0623 | .4858 | .7317 |
| 5.9157 | .7077 | .0726 | .5679 | .8491 |

Index of moderated mediation:

| | Index | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NAT_ID | .0645 | .0238 | .0178 | .1119 |

********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS **********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

W values in conditional tables are the mean and +/- SD from the mean.

NOTE: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output.

Shorter variable names are recommended.

------ END MATRIX ----

**Run MATRIX procedure:**

************************************************************************

Model : 14

Y : EU_ID

X : Pow_mism

M : Prototyp

W : NAT_ID

Sample

Size: 1033

************************************************************************

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

Prototyp

Model Summary

| R | R-sq | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| .1973 | .0389 | 6.6348 | 41.7464 | 1.0000 | 1031.0000 | .0000 |


Model

| | coeff | se | t | p | LLCI | ULCI |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| constant | 7.2858 | .2979 | 24.4539 | .0000 | 6.7012 | 7.8705 |
| Pow_mism | -.4059 | .0628 | -6.4611 | .0000 | -.5291 | -.2826 |

************************************************************************

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

EU_ID

Model Summary

| R | R-sq | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|

.3543 .1255 1.7811 36.8975 4.0000 1028.0000 .0000

Model

```
      coeff    se      t      p     LLCI    ULCI
constant 3.8155  .3200  11.9222 .0000  3.1875   4.4435
Pow_mism .1097   .0333   3.2971 .0010  .0444    .1749
Prototyp -.0407  .0472  -.8624 .3887  -.1334   .0520
NAT_ID   -.3064  .0567  -5.4074 .0000  -.4176   -.1952
Int_1    .0475   .0095   4.9766 .0000  .0288    .0662
```

Product terms key:

 Int_1  :    Prototyp x    NAT_ID

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

```
    R2-chng    F     df1    df2     p
M*W    .0211   24.7664  1.0000 1028.0000  .0000
```

----------

  Focal predict: Prototyp (M)

    Mod var: NAT_ID  (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

```
NAT_ID Effect   se     t      p     LLCI    ULCI
2.8180  .0930   .0239  3.8898  .0001  .0461   .1400
4.3608  .1663   .0166  10.0180 .0000  .1337   .1988
5.9036  .2395   .0203  11.7988 .0000  .1997   .2793
```

***************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y

```
  Effect   se     t      p     LLCI    ULCI
  .1097   .0333  3.2971  .0010  .0444   .1749
```

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:

Pow_mism -> Prototyp -> EU_ID

| NAT_ID | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| 2.8180 | -.0378 | .0130 | -.0658 | -.0140 |
| 4.3608 | -.0675 | .0141 | -.0971 | -.0420 |
| 5.9036 | -.0972 | .0194 | -.1392 | -.0614 |

Index of moderated mediation:

|        | Index | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI |
|--------|-------|--------|----------|----------|
| NAT_ID | -.0193 | .0056 | -.0316 | -.0093 |

********************* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

  5000

W values in conditional tables are the mean and +/- SD from the mean.

NOTE: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output.

    Shorter variable names are recommended.

------ END MATRIX -----


**Run MATRIX procedure:**
***************************************************************************
Model : 1
  Y : EU_ID
  X : NAT_ID
  W : Prototyp

Sample
Size: 1052
***************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 EU_ID

Model Summary
| R | R-sq | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|------|-----|---|-----|-----|---|
| .3311 | .1096 | 1.8292 | 43.0134 | 3.0000 | 1048.0000 | .0000 |

Model
```
          coeff     se      t       p      LLCI    ULCI
constant  4.4392   .2629  16.8859  .0000  3.9234  4.9551
NAT_ID    -.3144   .0566  -5.5530  .0000  -.4255  -.2033
Prototyp  -.0673   .0464  -1.4503  .1473  -.1585   .0238
Int_1      .0499   .0095   5.2665  .0000   .0313   .0685
```

Product terms key:
```
 Int_1  :    NAT_ID  x     Prototyp
```

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
```
    R2-chng      F      df1      df2       p
X*W    .0236  27.7365  1.0000  1048.0000    .0000
```
----------
```
  Focal predict: NAT_ID  (X)
      Mod var: Prototyp (W)
```

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

```
Prototyp  Effect    se      t       p      LLCI    ULCI
2.8037   -.1745   .0358  -4.8782  .0000  -.2448  -.1043
5.4354   -.0432   .0275  -1.5727  .1161  -.0972   .0107
8.0670    .0881   .0384   2.2925  .0221   .0127   .1634
```

********************* ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
 95.0000

W values in conditional tables are the mean and +/- SD from the mean.

NOTE: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output.
    Shorter variable names are recommended.

------ END MATRIX -----

# Appendix 14: Map of Serbia and Focus Group Cities