



Réseau
transatlantique
sur l'Europe politique



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Extending the Kin-state Policies via the European Parliament

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ABSTRACT

By looking at Croatia's kin-state policies, the author argues that the dynamics within triadic nexus, which includes the EU's member state and a candidate state, need to include the policies kin-state pursues within the EU institutions. Since Croatia joined the EU, it sought to reframe the EU's policy and align it with the Croat community's interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), often against the interest of BiH as a whole. That is particularly evident in the activities of Croatian members of the European Parliament. The author has analysed their contributions to the Resolution on BiH in 2014 and 2016 and compared it to Croats' policies in BiH. The results suggest that Croatia is utilising its position within the EU to extend its kin-state policies, and, overall, the EU's framework does not account for this possibility. That leaves the candidate country in a weaker position against the neighbours and their transborder co-ethnics who reside in the candidate state.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to extend Brubaker's theoretical framework to capture the dynamics within triadic nexus between the EU member and a candidate states by looking at the case of Croatia. Triadic nexus explains the relations between the kin-state, transborder co-ethnic community and the state in which transborder community resides (Brubaker 1996; Smith 2002; Bose 2002, p. 259; Pettai 2006).

The mismatch between cultural and political boundaries and the process of accommodating cultural communities into newly established states across Eastern Europe throughout the 1990s had left millions of people outside the national territory (Waterbury 2010). The states to which the latter seemingly belonged by its cultural affinity sought to extend the policies to include those co-ethnics left across the border (Brubaker 2010, p. 55; Stjepanović 2015). Citizenship policies were the most explicit form of establishing bonds with transborder communities, and more than 28 million people across Eastern Europe acquired non-resident kin-states' citizenship (Pogony, Kovács, and Körtvélyesi 2010). However, the neighbouring states, concerned with the sovereignty and potential irredentist claims against its state, disapprove what they believed constituted an encroachment into their domestic political system (Pogonyi 2011, p. 694). The tensions among many states across East Europe ensued, most dramatically across South-East Europe where the co-ethnics's irredentist claims contributed significantly to conflicts between the states and within the states (Bose 2002; Brubaker 1996; Caspersen 2009; Fraser 2013).

Brubaker argues that the political contestations within each triadic nexus field are contingent and intertwined with the developments in other fields. Hence, the policy dynamics within each field—kin-state, transborder co-ethnic minority, and the neighbouring state—should not be looked in isolation from the dynamics in other fields of political competition. In this paper, I explore Croatia's kin-state policies and explain political dynamics that contributed to establishing Croatia as the kin-state and eventually led Croatia to claim responsibility for their co-ethnics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and impact the policy dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina

(BiH). I argue that the kin-state policies significantly changed after Croatia joined the EU, primarily because Croatia utilised its position within the EU institutions to pursue the policy aligned with Croat community interests in BiH, often against the interests of BiH.

Croatian kin-state policies developed in three phases: involvement phase, transformation phase and Europeanisation phase. The policy developments throughout the involvement phase were a result of Croatia's nationalising state policies. That was a period in which Croatia defined itself as a state of and for primarily ethnic Croats. It extended the citizenship policies to include ethnic Croats across the globe, and especially in neighbouring BiH. Naturally, this had created tension with BiH, at the time when BiH was already disintegrating. Throughout the transformation phase, Croatia aligned its kin-state policies with the international framework under significant international pressure. By that time, the international community had already developed a framework for the appropriate pursuit of kin-state policies, primarily as a response to a growing tension across East Europe. As a candidate for EU membership Croatia was required to align its policies with the normative framework.

Throughout the third phase, the Europeanisation phase, which covers the period since Croatia joined the EU in 2013, Croatia has focused on reframing the EU's policy towards BiH hoping to align it with Croat policy in BiH. As a candidate country, BiH would be expected to accept the EU's policy and subscribe to Croat interests in BiH, even if those are often in collision with the country's interests. Interestingly, Croatia does not act in opposition to the EU's normative framework on the kin-minority issue. The EU's normative framework does not account for how its member states exercise the EU's influence to impact the triadic nexus dynamics. Three phases of the Croatian kin-state policies will be elaborated in the following sections.

The paper is based on the analysis of kin-state policies of Croatia, and the data includes, besides the secondary literature, a) extensive use of official documents; b) interviews with high-ranking politicians from Croatia with different political affiliations; c) the contributions Croatian members of the European Parliament made in framing the European Parliament's Resolution on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014 and 2016. Latter is particularly interesting as it highlights how

the kin-state can utilise the EU's internal institutions to pursue its kin-state policies. While there has been limited research into how ethnic minorities cooperate within the European Parliament (EP), the scholars have not yet explored how member states can enhance its kin-state policies through EU institutions and particularly within the European Parliament (Waterbury 2016).

By exploring Croatia's case, I argue that the triadic nexus that includes the EU member states and the candidate countries has to include the policies member states pursue internally across EU institutions. By looking only at the relation between the three fields—kin-state, transborder ethnic minority, and the neighbouring state—scholars can easily miss to account for the utmost important policy, the EU policy, to which the candidate countries must subscribe. Policymakers should also establish mechanisms which prevent member states from pursuing such policies. Otherwise, kin-state policies pursuit through EU institutions can jeopardise the EU's policies among candidate countries and eventually hamper the citizens' trust towards the EU.

Since each candidate and potential candidate country will join the EU individually, there is a reasonable concern that each candidate country would be expected to subscribe to additional conditions required by its neighbours. Such concerns are most noticeable in cases where bilateral relations include transborder ethnic communities. Some examples include Macedonia with sizeable Bulgarian minority, Serbia with Croat, Hungarian and Romanian minorities, and Moldova with significant Romanian population (Waterbury 2014). Each member state can seek additional assurances for its transborder ethnic community and condition the candidate state's accession to the EU subject to the requested policy's approval.

INVOLVEMENT PHASE

Back in the 1990s Croatian kin-state policies were part of an internal politics of the newly independent Croatia that sought to establish the new state's boundaries. The government led by Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica, HDZ), right-wing nationalist party, had to define the physical border, the citizenry and the new state's identity.

In the early 1990s, still within Yugoslavia, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Croatian Constitution. The Constitution echoed the broad political discourse, clearly defining Croats as a titular nation within Croatia, the status previously held by Serbs and Croats. Serb communities within the country strongly opposed the article establishing the country as “a national state of Croatian people and members of other nations and national minorities” (Ustav Republike Hrvatske 1990). Hence, the conflict erupted, and slowly became a full-fledged war with Croatian authorities on one side and Serb communities in Croatia, supported by the Serbian authorities, on the other side (Caspersen 2009; Ramet 2006).

The situation signalled to the Croatian authorities that the compromise about Croatia’s future within Yugoslavia was unattainable. Following the independence referendum, the Croatian Parliament declared Croatia as a sovereign and independent country. Three months later Croatian Parliament decided to cut all legal ties with other republics and provinces of Yugoslavia. On October 8, 1991, Croatia introduced the Law on Croatian Citizenship (LCC). LCC aimed to constitute a new state’s community—the Croatian nation.

The LCC was established on two critical legal principles: legal continuity with the previous republican citizenship and Croat ethnicity (Omejec 1998, in: Koska 2012, p. 9). Two principles divided the Croatian population into several categories. The holders of the former Socialist Republic of Croatia’s citizenship formed a category of automatically included citizens. The second category was formed of national minorities, with a residency on the Croatian territory, but did not possess its republican citizenship. These were formally excluded from citizenship access unless they were ethnic Croats (Bakotić 1992a; 1992b; Štikš 2015, p. 21; Iordachi 2004, p. 120). The ethnic Croats, regardless of residency, including those who resided elsewhere, and in this paper’s interest those who resided in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), were all invited to join the state by acquiring the citizenship (Koska 2012b; 2012a).

The LCC, in principle, prevented non-Croats, and encouraged ethnic Croats, regardless of their residency and other citizenship they might have held, to join the new Croatian nation. The LCC was a product of nationalising state, as envisaged in the new Constitution. The state that

aimed to become of and for a particular, ethnically defined nation. Hence, the homeland to all ethnic Croats, wherever they might have resided.

The LCC has become an essential tool for establishing a transborder ethnic nation. Moreover, it has become a tool for the Croatian government to claim responsibility to protect its citizens living in BiH—thus creating a triadic nexus. Croatian Constitution envisaged that the state should “protect the rights and interest of its citizens who reside temporarily or permanently abroad and promote their attachments with the homeland. Parts of Croatian people in other countries are guaranteed particular care and protection by the Republic of Croatia (Ustav Republike Hrvatske 1990, Article 10)

In April 1992 Croatia recognised BiH. In the letter conveying the recognition Franjo Tuđman, the Croatian president and the president of HDZ, stated that “the Republic of Croatia recognises the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s independence and sovereignty, as a community of the three constitutive people. International recognition implies Croatian people’s sovereignty as one of the three constitutive people in BiH” (Slobodna Dalmacija 1992b). Within the same letter, Franjo Tuđman offered dual citizenship to those among ethnic Croats in BiH who would have wanted it. Hence, he proposed both sides to negotiate over bilateral agreement on dual citizenship and establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. The exact number of Croats in BiH who hold dual citizenship is unknown mostly due to law changes resulting in inconsistent official data collection. According to the 1991 census, 760,852 Croats lived in BiH (Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine 2013). In the period between 1991 and 2010, Croatia admitted 1,109,407 applicants to Croatian citizenship, out of which, at the time of application, 678,918 had a BiH citizenship, and 834,731 applicants were born in BiH (Koska 2013).

The analysis of media from the time suggests that the Croatian government, but the opposition too, openly discussed the prospect of BiH and the position of the Croat community in BiH as the conflict across BiH ensued (Ramljak 1992a; Slobodna Dalmacija 1992a; Jović 1992; Kukoč 1992; Marić 1992; Antić 1992). Despite threatening that Croatia should engage in the conflict in BiH to protect Croat communities in BiH, Franjo Tuđman finally backtracked in 1992

after significant pressure from the international community and the ongoing war in the territory of Croatia. Hence, Croatia framed its support around diplomatic support and humanitarian aid which BiH's leadership approved (Vlada Republike Hrvatske 1992; Ramljak 1992b; Slobodna Dalmacija 1992d; 1992c). However, Franjo Tuđman continued to exercise its influence over the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine, HDZ BiH), a kin-party of HDZ Croatia, which was supported by most Croats in BiH. Croatia was officially maintaining the non-interventionist stance, and at the same time, unofficially, HDZ was pursuing an interventionist policy by exerting influence through ideological and party kinship with the HDZ BiH (Kasapović 2010b; Ramet 2006; Bieber 2001; Hoare 1997; Subotić 2016; Nikić Čakar 2011).

High-ranking political representatives in Zagreb throughout the interviews I have conducted in 2019, argued about the Janus-faced policy of Croatia back in the 1990s; "it was a mess, on one side Croats and Bosniaks were in conflict, and Croatia was deeply involved in that, while at the same time, Croatia was helping Bosniak refugees and even providing weaponry to Bosniak sides" (TG 2 2019). On the other hand, other high-ranking political representatives recognised the latter issue, of ideological and party kinship between two HDZs. The representative argued that "the position of Croatian foreign policy throughout all three periods was not about how the government can help Croats in BiH, but how can Croats in BiH help Croatia, and specifically, the HDZ Croatia" (TG 1 2019).

Once the conflict in BiH came to an end, it was Franjo Tuđman, and other members of the Croatian government, who negotiated the peace terms in the name of Croat community in BiH (ICTY In Trial Chamber 2013a, p. 143; 2013b, p. 157; Bose 2002, p. 53; Burg and Shoup 1999, p. 361). Together with Bosniak communities in BiH, Croats accepted the establishment of the Federation of BiH, and later on, the establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina made of Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska, stateless established during the conflict by Serb community in BiH. Croatia hoped that Federation of BiH would maintain a close relationship with Croatia, as envisaged in the peace treaty, which would ensure the strength of ties between the ethnic Croats

in Croatia and their transborder co-ethnic in BiH (Ramet 2006, p. 439; Narodne Novine 1999a, Article 6).

As a result of its kin-state policies, Croatia was deeply involved with transborder ethnic kin's policy development throughout BiH war. Inability to intervene in the conflict in BiH, Croatia counterbalanced by exercising influence over HDZ BiH while legitimising domestic agenda of building a state of and for all ethnic Croats. Croatian authorities will seek mechanisms to translate those, essentially ideological, party, and ethnic ties into its legal framework in the following periods.

TRANSFORMATION PHASE

The political landscape in Croatia changed significantly after the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2000. The left-wing coalition won the majority seats in the Parliament, and Stjepan Mesić, who by then split from the HDZ, and represented voters from the centre and the left, has become the new president of Croatia (Šelo-Šabić 2014, p. 75). The new government was under high pressure to tackle the issues of unemployment, poor economic performance and international isolation, all legacies of the HDZ led semi-authoritarian government (Zakošek and Čular 2004; Nikić Čakar 2013, pp. 191–192).

Croatia also was under intense pressure from the international community to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia too and to cease its financial contribution to Croat parallel institutions in BiH (Grandits 2007, p. 111; International Crisis Group 2000, p. 29; European Commission 2004, p. 12).

Stjepan Mesić, visiting Sarajevo after his election, gave an interview to *Oslobođenje* newspaper where he reiterated Croatia's commitment to reformulate the policies towards BiH and specifically towards Croats of BiH:

“[W]e are also making it known that the involvement [of Croatia] in the internal affairs of BiH is coming to an end. ... In every sense there is still a big problem of the continued existence of the remnants of Herzeg-Bosna, and Croatia cannot and should not finance these. It is clear that all of these, must be incorporated into the Federation and BiH. The remnants of Herzeg-Bosna, with which some still offer the false picture or illusion that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be divided, cannot survive.” (International Crisis Group 2000, p. 29)

The new government followed the same policy (Picula, 2000, p. 9). Croatia officially renounced parallel “special relations” with the Federation of BiH entities, and instead focused on collaborating with BiH’s state-level institutions (European Commission 2004, p. 11).

In new circumstances, Croatia engaged in building a good neighbouring relation with BiH as a whole. The two countries signed several agreements envisaging cooperation in multiple areas such as science, culture, border management, double taxation, etc. (MFA 2020; Marković and Subašić 2019). The dynamics within triadic nexus have shifted.

By that time, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) has already accepted the Resolution based on the recommendations of its advisory body, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (known as Venice Commission) on the Preferential Treatment of National Minorities by the Kin-state (Council of Europe 2003).

The recommendations were issued as a result of the request made by Romania in 2001 towards the Venice Commission to examine the compatibility of the Act on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries, adopted by the Hungarian Parliament on June 19, 2001, with the European standards and the norms and principles of contemporary public international law (Venice Commission 2001, p. 1; Herner-Kovács and Kántor 2014). Up to this date, the Resolution remains the only document setting the standards and norms for kin-state policies aimed at their co-ethnics living in the neighbouring countries within the Framework Convention of National Minorities (Council of Europe 1995; Palermo 2011).

The Resolution welcomed the “assistance given by kin-state to their kin-minorities in other states to help these kin-minorities preserve their cultural, linguistic and ethnic identity.

Kin-states [can] play a legitimate and important role in the protection and preservation of kin-minorities, aimed at ensuring that their genuine linguistic and cultural links remain strong. However, the assistance should also be accepted by the states of which the kin-minorities are citizens because the main responsibility for minority protection lies within the home country, in which the given minority lives” (Council of Europe 2003).

Scholars have recognised how the international community can impact the dynamics across triadic nexus, due to the pressure the international community can exercise towards states to accept the normative framework on appropriate kin-state policies. They argue that the independent dynamics at the international level should be analysed when discussing triadic relations, therefore advancing the notion of quadratic nexus (Smith 2020; 2002; Krasniqi 2013). The concept is useful, especially in cases where the states ought to join international institutions, particularly the EU, as Croatia’s case in this phase suggests too.

Having in mind new standards and norms, and its commitment to avoid international isolation and bring the country back to the path of European integration, Croatia has reformulated its policies towards Croats of BiH. The concern over Croats’ status in BiH persisted, but it was aligned with the CoE’s Resolution. Besides embracing the good neighbouring relations, Croatia introduced special public funds available to ethnic Croats in neighbouring countries and BiH. The funds called the minority members to apply with projects aimed at education, culture, sport and wellbeing (Narodne Novine, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2007). Unlike in the previous period, the funds were now made transparent, limited, and subject to set criteria, virtually in line with the Venice Commission recommendations (Fraser 2013, p. 227; Picula 2000, p. 9).

The first call was published in 2003, making more than HRK 35 million (around £4 million) available to Croats in BiH and in the neighbouring countries (Narodne Novine 2003b; 2003a). In the following year, the call included only Croats in BiH (Narodne Novine 2004). Additional funds were granted for capital projects in healthcare, to healthcare insurance for Croatian citizens residing in BiH and refugees within BiH. In the period between 2000 and 2012 (excluding 2001

for which data is not available), Croatia has distributed more than HRK 1.3 billion (more than £147 million) to Croats in BiH (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Croatia 2020) .

The transborder ethnic ties were formalised through electoral policies too. Croatia awarded full voting rights to all Croatian citizens living anywhere in the world, regardless of the kind or longevity of ties they may have with the country (Kasapović 2010a, p. 22). Kasapović (2012) argues that principled reasons used to justify legalising diaspora voting rights and institutionalisation of special electoral models, as well as the patterns of political representation in the Croatian Parliament, were subordinated to the interests to symbolically integrate the Croats from BiH in the political system of Croatia who would then, as a sort of generic voters, secure safe votes, and bonus seats for the HDZ. Available data confirms Kasapović's argument (State Electoral Commission of the Republic of Croatia, 2020).

Croats from BiH make up to 90% of participating voters in parliamentary elections among voters who reside outside Croatia. The data confirms strong attachments between Croatian citizens residing in BiH and, in particular, the HDZ in Croatia. Between 1995 and 2016, voters from BiH were awarding more than 75% of votes to the HDZ on average, at the parliament elections. For example, in 2000, 90% of Croats residing in BiH, who participated in the election, have voted for HDZ, and in 2015, 88% voted for HDZ. All seats in the Parliament, but one, throughout the whole period between 1995 and 2016, for representatives of Croats residing outside Croatia, were awarded to HDZ.

In the period up to 2011, the electoral policies were also reformulated, confirming further new approach to the sovereignty of BiH and policies towards Croats in BiH. Since 1995 voters residing outside Croatia were entitled to special representation that included the election of 12 representatives. In 1999 the electoral law was changed, and the country was divided into ten constituencies, each awarding 14 seats in Parliament, plus a special constituency for Croats residing outside Croatia (Narodne Novine 1999b).

The number of representatives for the latter was not fixed. The non-fixed quota was introduced due to public pressure and political pressure from the opposition parties that were dissatisfied with the fact that the previous way of voting did not ensure equality in voting rights since diaspora votes weighted more than votes cast by voters in the country (Kasapović, 2012, p. 785).

The following formula was applied to determine the number of diaspora representatives: The total number of votes cast in the diaspora constituency should be divided by the average number of votes needed to obtain one mandate within the country. The quotient determined the number of seats in the Parliament, allocated according to the D'Hondt method to the electoral lists that passed the threshold (Narodne Novine 1999b, Article 44).

The introduction of the non-fixed quota resulted in a considerable decline in the number of diaspora representatives: from twelve (1995) to six (2000), four (2003), and five (2007). Participation became a vital variable, and voters' mobilization had to be maintained to increase the probability of getting additional MPs.

Another dispute about the representation of voters residing outside Croatia, between HDZ and other right-wing parties on the one side, and Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the other left-wing parties, on the other side, erupted in 2010 (Kasapović, 2012, p. 785). The dispute was part of the constitutional change's talks, initiated due to membership in the EU. The two sides reached a compromise, and the special representation of voters residing outside Croatia became fixed and included 3 MPs, regardless of participation (Narodne Novine 2010a, Article 4; 2010b, Article 45). Hence, there was no need for massive scale mobilization of Croats residing outside Croatia, and already in 2011 participation went down to only 5%, with only 6.2% of Croats in BiH participating (Kasapović 2012, p. 780).

To compensate voters residing outside Croatia and confirm Croatia's support, the HDZ-led majority in Parliament passed the "Law on the relations of the Republic of Croatia with Croats abroad" (Narodne Novine, 2011b). The Law had significant implications for future relations with

Croats from abroad. Law on the relations between Republic of Croatia and Croats abroad suggested that Croats abroad are “equal part of one, single and undividable Croatian people. Care for Croats living abroad is an essential part of the Croatian foreign and interior policy,” and concerning Croats of BiH, Croatia will “advocate full equality and constitutionality of Croatian people in BiH” (Narodne Novine 2011b, Article 6). Central State Office for Croats abroad has been established to coordinate and instigate the policies towards Croats abroad.

As shown, Croatia has reformulated the policy towards Croats in BiH in the second phase. The ties between the kin-state and transborder ethnic community have been institutionalised and became transparent. That contributed to improved relations with BiH too.

Croatia stepped back from supporting the HDZ BiH-led irredentist strategies within BiH and aligned its policies with CoE’s recommendations. The financial contributions were made transparent, the voting rights have been confined, and finally, the pursuit of policies has been centralised by establishing the Central State Office for Croats abroad. The dynamics within the triadic nexus were shifting, and the relations between the three sets of actors changed.

EUROPEANISATION PHASE

By 2012, the Central State Office for Croats abroad was functioning, and all issues related to Croats in BiH have become a part of the Croatian foreign policy. From 2013 Croatia officially became a member of the EU, and its foreign policy was Europeanised: Croatia was able to exercise its influence over EU policies development, and it became a more powerful player within the international system, especially, in comparison to the rest of the region, including BiH.

Croatian foreign policy towards BiH was ambiguous. HDZ, together with other parties from the right, argued that Croatia needs to advocate full equality and constitutionality of the Croatian people in BiH, as envisaged in the “Law on the relations between Republic of Croatia and Croats abroad.” The other side, SDP, joined with other left-wing parties, accepted the responsibility to protect Croats in BiH too, but they argued that the only way to help Croats in

BiH is to ensure the overall development of BiH, and avoid confrontations with BiH, that could, consequently, worsen the situation for Croats in BiH. The awareness among political representatives over the mutually reinforcing dynamics within triadic nexus has been clearly expressed.

The first disagreement surfaced after the newly elected president Ivo Josipović; previously an SDP member decided to visit Sarajevo and apologise for crimes committed under Croatian auspices in BiH. HDZ government officials and their supporters within Croatia were infuriated. Other right-wing parties organised gatherings condemning presidents' statement, calling for impeachment. Some were suggesting that Josipović disobeyed the Constitution. To government's surprise, polls showed that most voters stand in support of the president's move (Goldstein 2018; Net.hr 2010).

To counterbalance the president's move the government drafted and the Parliament passed the "Declaration on the support towards Croat people in BiH throughout the process of constitutional changes" (Narodne Novine 2011a). The Declaration was not legally significant; it was merely a symbolic expression of support. In the next election SDP, together with partners, won the majority and formed the government. The foreign policy towards BiH became uniformed, focused on BiH rather than on Croats in BiH (Weber and Bassuener 2015).

The main concern for the new government was how to assist BiH on its path to the EU. That was part of the broader agenda of bridging the divide between the whole region and the EU. Croatian authorities thought they could contribute by promoting regional cooperation and interests of the respective states within the EU's institutions. BiH was a prime concern, especially after the delay in implementing Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and BiH, caused by European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decision in Sejdic-Finci case (European Commission 2015, p. 4). ECtHR suggested that the process of electing the three-member Presidency of BiH was discriminating other ethnic groups aside from the three constitutive groups—to be eligible the candidate must declare as either Bosniak, Serb or Croat. Approval of SAA was subject to the implementation of the court's decision. BiH authorities could

not agree on how to implement the decision due to the broader disagreements on the Constitution. The SAA was put on standby, leaving the country without EU perspective and susceptible to other significant powers within the international community.

As it became evident that BiH authorities would not implement the decision any time soon, Croatia engaged at the EU level to find a solution, as two high-ranking officials in Croatia confirmed throughout the interviews (TG 1 2019; TG 2 2019). Croatian authorities were concerned over the long-lasting impact the possible engagement by other significant powers among the international community could have on the EU and BiH's future relations.

According to those officials, what later became known as the German and British initiative was essentially draft of the Croatian proposal to design a tailor-made approach to BiH. The idea behind the proposal was to set the court's decision aside and continues with the SAA process, and to come back to it only later in the process. Croatian authorities understood other EU members states would distrust any initiative towards BiH coming from Croatia, due to the Croatian policies from the earlier involvement phase. Hence, Croatian authorities presented the proposal to Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Foreign Minister, and Philip Hammond, British Foreign Secretary at the time, who accepted it. They asked BiH leaders to provide written commitment to engage in reforms linked to the outstanding socio-economic issues. In return, Steinmeier and Hammond would ask the EU to put the SAA in force (UK Governemnt 2016; Jukic 2014; Weber and Bassuener 2015).

Within the European Parliament (EP), Croatian Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) also focused on framing policy towards BiH. The data suggest the prime concern for Croatian MEPs was the interests of Croats in BiH, rather than the interests of BiH as a whole. Many MEPs from across the political spectrum within the EP have recognised and condemned such an approach (RTL 2017; Weber and Bassuener 2015). Still, other than oppose it, they could not do anything more to prevent the Croatian MEP's activities.

The process of adoption of the two EP Resolutions on the European Commission Report on BiH in 2014 and 2016 displayed a disproportionately high level of amendments submitted by Croatian MEPs (European Parliament 2015a; 2017a). The analysis showed that while Croatian MEPs hold less than 1.5% (11 out of 751) seats in the EP, they have proposed over 15% of amendments (37 out of 240) to the draft Resolution 2014 (European Parliament 2015b). For the Resolution 2016, Croatian MEPs, while keeping the same share of seats within the Parliament contributed to the process by submitting over 26% of amendments (78 out of 288) (European Parliament 2017b).

A closer look at the amendments suggests that the Croatian MEPs were essentially endorsing Croats' policies in BiH, even if, at times, the policies were in opposition to previous resolutions of the EP. Several categories emerged through content analysis of the amendments submitted by Croatian MEPs: a) calls for equality of all people, including the constitutive peoples; b) calls for decentralization of the country; c) calls for electoral law changes; d) calls to ensure broadcasting in three languages of the three constitutive people; and e) calls to grant all constitutive people's education in their language (European Parliament 2015a; 2017a).

Later, for example, implies the two-schools-under-one-roof policy endorsement, the policy that requires distancing of children from a different ethnic background, for which the EP and European Commission have expressed concerns, and the Constitutional Court of FBiH found it in breach of Constitution (European Commission 2016, p. 25; 2020, p. 5; 2018, p. 18; 2019, p. 9; Vrhovni sud Federacije BiH 2014). The Foreign Affairs Committee of EP did not accept most amendments, but their submission highlights Croatian MEPs' broader policy goals.

The amendments are framed around Croats' policies in BiH, developed since 2013, broadly declared in 2013 Declaration and explicitly specified in 2015 Declaration issued by Croatian National Assembly in BiH (Hrvatski Narodni Sabor, HNS) (Hrvatski narodni sabor 2013; 2015a). HNS is essentially a non-governmental organisation that brings together all Croat representatives from BiH at all level of government, including those who serve in Croatia, regardless their formal belonging to one of the founding parties, but subject to accepting the

policies of HNS (Hrvatski narodni sabor 2015b; 2011). Virtually, all those Croat representatives who frame their political goals around ethnic representation and who subscribe to nationalising policies are members of HNS, which is essentially under the dominant influence of HDZ BiH.

Croatian MEPs' overall goal is to depict Croats of BiH as a disenfranchised and discriminated minority within BiH. One amendment goes as far as asking the EP to condemn, "the abusive domination of any ethnic group." By framing the issue of Croats as a minority issue, Croatian MEPs seek to incorporate the issue within conditionality policy of the EU. Otherwise, the EU has no power to demand constitutional alignments within the BiH.

Summarising my argument, the Croatian MEPs' activities suggest the return of the Janus-faced approach in the foreign policy of Croatia. While it maintains a good neighbouring policy, and even initiate the EU policies that seek to ensure the development of BiH, Croatia, at the same time, is involved in the activities that threaten to undermine the Constitution of BiH.

In doing so, Croatia does not act in opposition to the EU's normative framework on the kin-minority issue. The EU's normative framework does not account for how its member states can exercise the influence within the EU to impact the dynamics within the triadic nexus. Even the scholar who advanced the quadratic nexus, look at the international community as another independent field. However, in the case of Croatia, the international community, mainly the EU, cannot be looked independently, as long as Croatia has an impact on the EU policies.

The dynamics within triadic nexus, therefore, have shifted significantly. Firstly, as shown, Croatia can navigate the EU's policy, and it can eventually block each sequence of the BiH's European integration path that requires a unanimous decision within the EU. Slovenia, for example, has blocked Croatian accession, until Croatia submitted to Slovenian requests. European Commission lacked the authority to prevent Slovenia's initiative. Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, Croatian president in the period 2014–2020, advocated that Croatia should condition Serbia's accession to the EU (Milekić 2016; BBC 2016). Croatia can apply the same approach in case of BiH.

Secondly, Croats in BiH, should they have support from Croatia, can extend their requests towards Sarajevo through the EU institutions, and undermine the institutions of their home country. The example of Željana Zovko, Croatian MEP, clearly illustrates such a possibility. Before becoming the MEP, Željana Zovko worked as an ambassador of BH in Italy, and she held several other high-profile positions within the BiH's diplomatic or government service (Zovko 2020). After becoming MEP, she was excessively working on BiH-related issues within the EP and has contributed to framing amendments to the Resolution on the European Commission Report on BiH, trying to align the EP's policy with the interest of Croats in BiH, rather than BiH as a whole. Apart from additional institutional venues available to Croats in BiH, Croats in BiH have also become citizens of the EU. They are entitled to all the rights and benefits stemming from their citizenship status, and consequently, their commitment for the BiH to join the EU is not as vital as it may be for the other communities within the BiH.

Thirdly, the position of BiH within the triadic nexus has weakened to unprecedented levels. Throughout the post-war transition, the international community, and the EU have contributed to the state building of BiH and the Federation of BiH (Bieber 2011; Juncos 2012). The EU has contributed to several reforms within BiH, such as the police reform, which sought to strengthen the central state institutions. The EU has also initiated several key processes aimed to settle the disputes between three constitutive communities within BiH. At this stage, BiH's counterpart within triadic nexus, Croatia, whose interest is intertwined with Croats of BiH, is a legitimate actor within the EU. BiH remains subordinated to the EU policies due to its willingness to join. The only available alternative, except to engage in a comprehensive diplomatic activity, is to maintain the existing disputes within BiH with Croats of BiH.

CONCLUSION

Like other newly established states in the 1990s across East Europe, Croatia also captured the transborder ethnic community and included them in its legal framework. In the first phase, the involvement phase, Croatia was deeply involved in policy dynamics across BiH, by maintaining special relations with the Croat community in BiH. However, in the later phase, the

transformation phase, Croatia had to reformulate its policy mostly due to the international pressure and align its policy with the Venice Commission's normative framework.

The third phase, the Europeanisation phase, which covers the period when Croatia joined the EU, while its transborder community remained in the territory of BiH, Croatia's kin-state policies departed from other countries across Eastern Europe, primarily because its transborder community remained within a candidate country. While seemingly extending support for the BiH as a whole, Croatia was extensively pursuing its kin-state policies across the EU and the European Parliament.

Therefore, I argue that the triadic nexus, which includes the EU member state, and a candidate country must include the policy member state pursues across EU institutions. Such circumstances significantly alter the dynamics across triadic nexus, as the member states have available mechanism to put additional pressure on candidate country through the EU's policies, to which the candidate country must subscribe. Even if the final draft of EUP Resolution does not include the amendments proposed by Croatian MEP, the analysis does highlight a new venue for kin-state to pursue its policy.

Future research should investigate other kin-state countries whose transborder communities reside in a candidate country and their policies across EU institutions. If other states utilise its membership to advance the transborder community policies, triadic nexus needs to be extended to include EU institutions. There is also a need, in that case, to appropriately address the issue, ensuring the candidate country's prospect to the EU membership and preservation of the normative framework established by Venice Commission.

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