STASIS AMONG POWERS:
YUGOSLAV DESTRUCTION AFTER THE COLD WAR

A dissertation presented

by

Mladen Stevan Mrdalj

to
The Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of

Political Science

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
December 2015
STASIS AMONG POWERS:
YUGOSLAV DESTRUCTION AFTER THE COLD WAR

by

Mladen Stevan Mrdalj

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities of
Northeastern University
December 2015
Abstract

This research investigates the causes of Yugoslavia’s violent destruction in the 1990’s. It builds its argument on the interaction of international and domestic factors. In doing so, it details the origins of Yugoslav ideology as a fluid concept rooted in the early 19th century Croatian national movement. Tracing the evolving nationalist competition among Serbs and Croats, it demonstrates inherent contradictions of the Yugoslav project. These contradictions resulted in ethnic outbidding among Croatian nationalists and communists against the perceived Serbian hegemony. This dynamic drove the gradual erosion of Yugoslav state capacity during Cold War. The end of Cold War coincided with the height of internal Yugoslav conflict. Managing the collapse of Soviet Union and communism imposed both strategic and normative imperatives on the Western allies. These imperatives largely determined external policy toward Yugoslavia. They incentivized and inhibited domestic actors in pursuit of their goals. The result was the collapse of the country with varying degrees of violence. The findings support further research on international causes of civil wars.
Acknowledgements

Perhaps the most daunting task in writing this dissertation was to list all the people who supported me in many different ways to get to this point. I dread the possibility of omitting someone and I apologize in advance if that is about to happen. I will blame it on my memory which has, most certainly, been affected by this project.

First of all, my gratitude goes to the members of my committee. Prof. Amilcar Barreto has been an insightful mentor and has become a good friend. Prof. Schmitt’s pieces of advice on how to remove the writers’ block and overcome psychological hardships have been most useful. I am grateful for that. Prof. Biermann’s expertise on Yugoslavia and the end of the Cold War helped me feel more secure about my logic and conclusions, even where we disagreed. His help mostly focused on the chapter about the end of the Cold War. All three of my advisors were incredibly patient and kind and I am deeply thankful for their support.

My family deserves many apologies for my long absence from their lives. No Skype could replace my physical absence. My mother Donka provided a flawless, rock solid support. My father Stevan provided me with various lessons of fundamental importance. My brother Srđan has never lost his cheerfulness and optimism, which was my major source of inspiration while he valiantly battled numerous obstacles in my absence. I am proud of his achievements, the next one hopefully being to quit smoking. I am sure that it is as difficult as finishing a PhD. My kumovi (Novotni, Ljubojevići, Stanići and Dobričići) as well as cousins in Serbia and Croatia — I am sorry I missed some births and many birthdays, happy and sad occasions. I hope I will be able to make up for that in the future.

I would not have made it in the US without Tea Temim. I am forever grateful, proud and happy we forged such a deep friendship. A group of Serbian friends in Boston provided
emotional and intellectual support too precious to describe in words. Tamara Pavasović honored me not only with her friendship and intellectual support, but also with being a godfather to her daughter Sofija. Vladimir Bošković effectively helped battle loneliness and nostalgia. Together with Danilo Mandić, they helped me access numerous books and articles that would have otherwise remained inaccessible. I am grateful for Ivana Pavlišin and Moshe Shalcon's friendship that enriched my life in Boston (and New York!). Ivana Đuretić was an irreplaceable member of our group and a great roommate. I would have been even more nostalgic in Boston had it not been for a remarkable group of people affiliated with the Serbian church and folklore group “Gračanica”: Đorđe and Ankica Koldžić, Dunja and Dejan Stanković, Dragana and Marijana Bogavac, Neško and Srđa Nicković, Jelena and Branko Glišović, Dragan Gatarić and all others. Saša Lekić was the first person to extend his hand to me. I am grateful to him and his family, including his uncle Steva.

There are people I met at Northeastern who made Boston my second home. Jarvis Chen became something between a brother and a friend. We shared food, problems and joys. The rumor about us also sharing bed is true, but that was solely due to a commuting issue. He is a fountain of inspiration and energy. Ian McManus and Liliya, my best friends among vegetarians (and vice versa), have been a constant source of optimism and good mood. Ian was also the first American I talked to without feeling a cultural barrier, which meant the world to me. Sheila Kohanteb and Nico hosted numerous dinners and get-togethers, filled with their cheerfulness and Sheila’s culinary wizardry. Sheila introduced me to Northeastern’s summer program which enabled me to have a summer income and get free flights to my home. I will never be able to repay her for that. Veronica Czastkiewicz has been an indispensable friend and a colleague. She used to be my favorite Polish-American. She can only blame herself and her wonderful husband
Craig for losing the top spot in favor of their beautiful son Mateusz. Tugba and Mustafa Isiker and Duygu Sener always made me feel like home. Gorgeous Ali Isiker is the newest addition to this wonderful team. Claudia Larson’s unique sense of humor will surely make her a stand-up comedy star, if she ever decides to quit academia. It sure did brighten up many of my gloomy days in Boston. David Smith, Jennapher Lunde Seefeldt, Youly Diamanti Kara, Johannes Eijimberts, Dustin Turin, Yipin Wu, Diane Bulpett, Julie Garey, Ben Larsen and Sidita Kushi all have contributed significantly to my great experience in Boston and I thank each and every one of them, sincerely hoping to stay in touch.

I would also like to thank the following professors: Gordana Rabrenović, Denis Sullivan, Ioannis Livanis, Denise Garcia, Natalie Bormann, Woody Kay, Liubomir Topaloff and John Portz. Last, but not least, Barbara Chin's administrative skills and human qualities made my life and work easier. I wish her a joyful and healthy life in retirement. I would also like to thank all my former students, too numerous to mention here, but some of them did grow into friends: Cory O’Hayer, Keith Hill, Julia Patten, Becky Gerstein. Sincere apologies to the ones I omitted.

Various other people have helped me on different occasions and I would like to acknowledge them here. Late ambassador Thomas P. Melady and his wife Margaret kindly helped me adjust to the American life and culture during my first visit to the U.S. in 2006. Tom passed away not long ago, but I will forever be grateful to his support and mentorship. Tijana Milošević, Marko Klašnja and Pavle Milekić helped me write my applications for graduate studies. Komnenović brothers hosted me numerous times in Washington, D.C. I cherish our friendship despite our ideological and political disagreements. Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc has been a friend and a valuable help, as well as Vladimir Petrović, Marina Ilić and Bojan Milenović. Prof. Dejan Jović from Croatia has been one of the most insightful interlocutors about former
Yugoslavia and remains one of the preeminent thinkers on the subject. I learned a lot from him and I take pride in considering him a friend. I am also grateful to Azem Dervišević, whom I met in Boston. We spent countless hours discussing war and politics in Yugoslavia which informed my views on conflict escalation tremendously. Nedim Hogić is a multi-dimensional intellectual force I have been lucky to meet and add to this list.

I owe my continued intellectual and emotional evolution to Laura D'Addese. Her contribution to my success is a variable that cannot be properly conceptualized and operationalized. She has set the standards for support, love and care that can hardly be matched by anyone.

In the end, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of Lacey Bradley-Storey. We were both TAing for Liubo Topaloff in the fall of 2009. She was always nice, warm, constructive and humble, bordering shy, but articulate and reliable. She was focusing on Chinese studies, visited China several times for her research and even spoke Chinese. Following her divorce, she transformed into a self-confident, stylish woman, which was an amazing thing to witness. Lacey shared her profound knowledge about problems in North-South relations within the U.S. which I found shocking and unforgettable. Her dissertation and overall competences were so great that she got a job in Washington, D.C. even before finishing her program at Northeastern. We were about to meet one time in Washington, but she had cancelled because of a tremendous headache. It turned out that the headache was a consequence of a car-accident from a couple of months before. Few days later, she passed away. Her passing deeply saddened me. She had great things lined up for her. She deserved all of them yet did not get a chance. This dedication is the least I could do to help preserve her memory.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 2  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... 3  
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................ 7  
Introduction ................................................................................................................................... 11  
Chapter 01: Hearing out the ancients ............................................................................................ 17  
  1.1. Stasis................................................................................................................................... 18  
  1.2. Causes of Stasis and Its Ultimate Form — Civil War ........................................................ 21  
     1.2.1. Aristotle: Internal Strife ................................................................................................. 21  
     1.2.2. Thucydides: Systemic Context .................................................................................... 25  
  1.3. Examples of Stasis ............................................................................................................. 28  
Chapter 02: Defining Civil War .................................................................................................... 38  
  2.1. From Politics to Political Violence .................................................................................. 39  
  2.2. From Political Violence to Civil War .............................................................................. 45  
Chapter 03: Why Civil Wars Happen: Basic Theoretical Overview ............................................ 56  
  3.1. Ethnic Groups and their Motives for Conflict ............................................................... 58  
  3.2. Opportunity ........................................................................................................................ 67  
  3.3. The Onset of Violence ........................................................................................................ 71  
  3.4. External Sources of Internal Dynamics ........................................................................ 78  
     3.4.1. External Sources and the Motivation-Opportunity-Action Components ..................... 81  
     3.4.2. Sources of External Influence: Third Actor or Systemic ............................................. 85  
Chapter 04: The Main Approaches to the Yugoslav Collapse ...................................................... 91  
  4.1. Thinking about Ethnic Conflict in Yugoslavia ................................................................. 91
4.2. Thinking about the Onset of Civil War(s) in Yugoslavia ................................................................. 99

Chapter 05: Stasis among Powers – Systemic Approach to Civil War .................................................. 106

5.1. Actor Constitution ...................................................................................................................... 109

5.2. The “Ultimate Zero-Sum Game”: Approximating “Vital Interests” ........................................... 125

5.3. “Conflict Groups” and Sovereignty ...................................................................................... 132

Chapter 06: International System and Civil War .................................................................................. 138

6.1. The International Structure ...................................................................................................... 138

6.2. Justifying Regional Focus ...................................................................................................... 154

Chapter 07: Bargaining - Integrating Stasis and International System ................................................ 159

7.1. Civil War Hypotheses: an Integrated Theoretical Explanation ............................................. 162

7.2. Variables: Definitions, Operationalizations ............................................................................ 176

Chapter 08: Research Design ........................................................................................................... 184

8.1. Philosophical Foundation ........................................................................................................ 184

8.2. Cases: Puzzles, Justification, Selection .................................................................................. 190

8.3. Focusing on the Elites ............................................................................................................. 199

Chapter 09. The Ultimate Zero-Sum Game: Ethnic Elites’ Homogenization ..................................... 204

09.1. The Existing Literature’s Shortcomings ................................................................................ 206

09.2. Kosovo and Ethnic Elites’ Antagonistic Homogenization ...................................................... 215

09.3. Ethnic Homogenization Outside of the Party ....................................................................... 232

09.4. Why Not Democratization? ................................................................................................. 245

Chapter 10. The Ultimate Zero-Sum Game: Yugoslav Ideology and Ethnic Polarization ............ 260

10.1. Theoretical Considerations .................................................................................................. 260

10.2. Overview of the Pre-modern Development ......................................................................... 266

10.3. Illyrianism ............................................................................................................................. 273

10.4. Two Croat Parties: Party of Rights and Yugoslavs .............................................................. 277
12.3. Serb-Croat-Bosniak War ........................................................................................................... 424
12.3.2. Lethal Escalation: March 1991 – July 1991 ....................................................................... 432
12.3.3. Civil War in Croatia: August 1991 - April 1992 ................................................................. 436
12.4. Serbian-Albanian Conflict ...................................................................................................... 453
12.4.1. Peaceful Voting: Sub-Optimal Choice .............................................................................. 453
12.4.2. Rugova and Non-Violence: Everyone’s Choice ................................................................. 456
12.4.3. Insurgency: Sub-Optimal Choice ...................................................................................... 459
12.4.4. Boycott: The Optimal Choice ......................................................................................... 463
12.5. Conclusions .......................................................................................................................... 465
12.5.1. On Yugoslav Destruction ................................................................................................ 465
12.5.2. On Theory ....................................................................................................................... 470
12.5.3. On Policy ......................................................................................................................... 471
Appendix ....................................................................................................................................... 474
References ..................................................................................................................................... 486
Introduction

I have been closely involved in the Yugoslav turmoil ever since I became aware of the world outside of my family. First, it was this excitement of watching partisan movies with my dad every Sunday morning. There was a TV show dedicated to the Yugoslav People’s Army and after that they would play a partisan movie, where heroic men, women and children of all Yugoslav nationalities, led by the communist party, fought the Nazis and quislings. My dad would comment on the show and the movie, drawing on his experience from the army, and I was excited and dreamed of becoming a Yugoslav soldier.

I was aware that my father was born in Croatia, where we had numerous relatives. I loved visiting them, I loved the seacoast and I became a fan of “Hajduk”, a famous football team from Croatia.¹ Therefore I believed, “naturally”, that my father was a Croat. My mom was born in Serbia. I was proud of being a “mix”. In my view, that was perfect, cool and Yugoslav. We lived in the northern province of Serbia, a mix of about 30 ethnic groups. Though my town was predominantly Serbian, the only church was catholic. We had close friends who were Slovaks and we watched Hungarian and Albanian news on TV. Older people may have been aware of different nationalities among their friends and colleagues, but I did not even think about it.

One of the first “political” impressions I can remember were tall, pointy and ominously

¹ The last time I visited my dad’s village before the war was in 1989. I was eight. Cousins about my age did not like I was Hajduk’s fan and they did not hide it. They cheered for “Red Star” from Serbia. I was utterly confused. In my town in Serbia kids almost exclusively cheered for “Red Star” or another team from Serbia, “Partisan”. We enjoyed rivalry between our teams, but this was something much more serious. I clearly sensed hostility.
black letters, aligned as soldiers and sprayed on my elementary school’s wall. They read “PROPALO ‘74”, or “Ruined in ‘74”. 1974. I had no idea what was that about, but I did not expect anything good. Only much later would I learn about the Yugoslav constitution of 1974 and its critical role in the destruction of Yugoslavia. Another dark moment that cut into my memory was the time when my parents were glued to the TV, watching a lot of men in suits in some big hall. I think I was having my dinner, when my mom laughed in frustration: “I knew it! I knew the Slovenes were going to leave!” I remember some people leaving the hall, others were applauding, my mom was frustrated and my dad was dead silent.

By then, I knew that Croatia and Slovenia wanted to secede. I was ten and we learned in school about our country and its republics and “autonomous provinces”. What I did not understand was why Serbs were so nervous. I drew Yugoslavia on a piece of paper, cut the republics out, one by one, and compared. Serbia was the biggest. Even if all six republics would become independent, Serbia would have still remained the largest. Why then this frustration? Then, a big blow came. I learned my dad was not a Croat! Vast majority of my cousins from Croatia were in fact Serbs. Grandparents were Serbs as well. I had to revise my view about my identity. Apparently, there were a lot of Serbs in Croatia. How strange! These Serbs did not want to split from Yugoslavia. I was not sure anymore if it was possible to cut Yugoslavia as calmly as I cut that paper. I had to explain to myself why all this was happening, why was it impossible for Yugoslavia to survive. Why people did not want to live together like before?

The final blow came from the outside, from abroad. As my cousins manned the barricades that were supposed to prevent Croat police from entering Serbian towns in Croatia, the news from the West were incredible. Predominantly, they were accusing Serbs of aggression and land-grab. How was this possible? My cousins did not come to Croatia from Serbia. Certainly my
grandparents were not part of this invading army. Our family cemetery has been there in the village for hundreds of years. Besides, did they not see in the West that Germans sided with Croats, just like in World War II? My expectations from the French, British and Americans were, “naturally”, to side with “us”. But the opposite happened. Shocking!

How did the world work then? I had to revise my understanding of international politics in addition to revising my views on national identity and inter-ethnic relations. By the time I started work on my dissertation, I was able to articulate the question that will drive my research: “how does the international system influence inter-ethnic conflict in smaller countries, focusing on the Yugoslav case?” In a way, this dissertation builds on these years of revising my views on nationalism, international politics and their interactions. This dissertation is a snap-shot of my last revision, taken in 2015, after several years of studying at Northeastern University.

The research and the findings presented here rest on a particular line of thought in political science that questions hard division between comparative politics and international relations. Blurring this division line disturbs the stable paradigms and complicates research because it makes all values within a country fairly relative. Moreover, it questions the notions of sovereignty as a binary variable and instead presents it as a continuous variable.

In studies of civil war, the dominant debate for years was the one between greed and grievance paradigms. The former propelled the self-interested individual to the forefront of the analysis, maintaining that people will turn to war once they realize it pays off sufficiently more than peace. The latter countered, advocating group grievances to be the main motivator of a collective violent action. Indeed, I assume that the main actor is a “conflict group”, thus not needing to prove the rational choice of an individual to stick with his own group. Instead, I focus on the elite and the elite decision-making. That is particularly important because neither greed
nor grievance explain decision-making driven by either of them. A person or a group may be greedy or aggrieved, but that does not mean much in and by itself. They need to have guidance, an agent to solve their coordination and collective action problem. That is the elite.

On the other hand, if greed, grievance and even state capacity are just motivations and opportunities for an insurgency, what then accounts for civil wars? Here is where I turned to theory of war, rational choice theory of war and, more specifically, its variant called “bargaining theory”. This theory presupposes that negotiations between parties do not end with the onset of violence, but that the violence itself is a part of the bargaining process.

Hence, theoretically, my research builds on the conflict group as the main actor in international relations. These groups vie for any support they can find and in doing so they cross the internationally recognized state boundaries. They turn to powerful countries for help, thus entering the stage run by the powerful countries. Depending on their norms and interests, powerful countries may either help them win their independence or a share in government, or reject them. Within this framework of analysis, one can have a much better scale of relative strengths of both country governments and greedy or aggrieved conflict groups within them.

I have approached the Yugoslav case by searching for seemingly irrational actions of conflict groups’ elites. One such action was the rejection of Slovenia and Croatia to turn Yugoslavia into a modern federation, without veto powers of federal units. The dominant view among scholars is that a “unitary” Yugoslavia would have been an extension of Serbian hegemony. However, the puzzling thing is that Serbs in total numbered 36% of Yugoslavia’s population. Hence, in a liberal democracy, it would have been impossible for them to rule by a simple majority, even if they all were going to support one single party.

This, of course, does not explain the onset of civil war. However, this question makes
current explanations problematic. It requires a reassessment of the preference formation among the ethnic groups that were demanding either a confederal Yugoslavia or its dissolution. Croatia is the most important country in this group, because of its size and mixed demographics with two other most important ethnic groups, Serbs and Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks). Explaining Croatian nationalism at the end of 1980’s required going back to the formulation of the first Croatian national program, its problems and evolution. One branch of its evolution was the Yugoslav movement of late 19th century. The heart of the Yugoslav movement was the idea of a separate Croatian political unit, even though the movement advocated, though not without controversies, that Yugoslavs were one people.

This tension led to frictions with Serbs over Bosnia and set the stage for the communists who got involved in the nationalist dispute among Serbs and Croats. In 1920’s and 1930’s, under instructions from Moscow, Yugoslav communists joined Croatian nationalists in bringing Yugoslavia down. This was a critical period when Croatian communists legitimized themselves as nationalists in order to prove to the Croatian people they were the ones who were going to end “Greater Serbian hegemony”. This set the stage for nationalistic infightings within the ranks of the Yugoslav communist party. Deep seated mistrust and self-legitimating policies turned communist Yugoslavia into a permanent paranoid struggle to enable every possible form of equality among its nations and national minorities.

The cases I selected to compare were chosen because they have different values of the dependent variable. Slovenia experienced short fighting with the federal army, but not civil war. Croatia and Bosnia had full scale civil wars on their territories, but Kosovo remained puzzlingly peaceful. Why the difference? Why did the Slovenes opt for violent secession when they were offered an agreement to leave Yugoslavia peacefully? Why did Croatia risk survival by attacking
the stronger Yugoslav federal army? Why did Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) opt for violent secession when they knew they were not armed enough for such an endeavor? Why Kosovo Albanians remained peaceful, when they were the ones most likely to start an insurgency?

Case comparison reveals the key role played by the international context. Its policy toward Yugoslavia stimulated secessionists and discouraged the federal state, thus reducing its capacity to deal with unilateral secessions. My findings show that this policy was largely determined by considerations of the events in the collapsing Soviet Union at the time. All policymakers agreed that the events in Yugoslavia and the ones in Soviet Union mirror and inspire each other. Hence, it was impossible for them to devise one policy for the Soviet Union and another for Yugoslavia. The most optimal policy was to have these countries voluntarily agree on a looser state union. This went directly against Yugoslavia’s grand bargain of 1943-1946 and alarmed Serbs against such an outcome, which would have left them as a minority in countries populated by hostile majorities. The wars and their absence were the direct results of such calculations and bargains.
Chapter 01: Hearing out the ancients

Classic thinkers such as Thucydides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Polybius and others contemplated the questions of internal strife and civil war, among other political problems. Over the last 10—15 years there has been a revival in studying the classical texts as a preparation for studying “grand strategy”. One goal in this chapter is to revisit ancient thought on the phenomenon of internal discord and its forms. Another is to offer examples illustrating two basic elements in the understanding of civil war that will be investigated throughout this research: A) a breakdown of common political identities; and B) a systemic context influencing internal strife. The basic question that will guide my research about civil war in Yugoslavia, therefore, is: does the occurrence of civil war within a small state depend on the strategic framework set by the relations among dominant powers?

---


3 This is not to say that civil wars are impossible within hegemonic powers. In fact, the absence of a dangerous external competitor can exacerbate internal strife to the point of civil war. Taking another angle, it could be said that, if hegemony is unchallenged, it replaces the system within which it expanded. It thus disintegrates as an actor and transforms into a political system within which new actors battle for power and security, while up to then smaller powers can become allies of the warring factions. An example of this might be Rome in the stage of late republic, after it crushed Carthage and became hegemonic power in the then known world. The Pax Romana, a period of peace and prosperity lasted for about 150 years until late 2nd century CE internal power struggles. The empire split into three and then four parts, followed by the
Before we proceed to the examples, we should take two steps. The first is assessing the elusive meaning of “internal conflict”, or as the Greeks called it – “stasis”. The second step will review some prominent causes of the internal conflict. The third lesson from the ancients will be discussed in light of a few cases. This should help us ease the transition to the review of contemporary scholarship on civil war in general and Yugoslav case(s) in particular in chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 4, I will deal with the sources of domestic strife and especially ethnic conflict, while chapter 5 will look at the literature on the importance of international relations on domestic dynamics. Chapter 6 will detail how I will use bargaining theory of war to explain civil war’s dependence on the external contexts. In this chapter I will also offer hypotheses, definitions of basic variables and ways to operationalize them. I will conclude the first part of this thesis in chapter 7, as I lay down the research design for the rest of the dissertation.

1.1. Stasis

The term *stasis* deserves particular attention. It was used by the ancient Greeks in the sense of “internally divided polis” (Price 2001, 31). It was an “enmity between the domestic”, as Socrates defined it, according to Plato, while *polemos* was the “enmity of the foreign” (Ibid, 68, 69). To the contrary, Plato himself wrote in his *Laws* that stasis in nothing but an “internal *polemos*” (Ibid, 70), albeit of the worst kind.

While both *stasis* and *polemos* have the same components (at least two groups in a hostile definitive split into Eastern and Western halves, decay and collapse in the barbaric invasions. See also: Finley 1983, 117-118.

4 City-state, singular: “polis”; plural: “poleis”.

5 "Polemos” is ancient Greek mythical representation of war.
relationship), the former was considered far worse. Thucydides held that stasis destroys common institutions and customs of polis, while polemos strengthens them; it is fought until the total destruction of the “other”, while polemos for the most part is not. That is why stasis is much worse. In stasis the two sides not only redefine their opponents as enemies (even if they are family), but they also redefine the object of conflict in order to delegitimize the other side, thus leading to a total breakdown of communication (Price 2001, 70—71, 81). Herodotus made an effective comparison when he said that “…civic conflict is worse than external war fought by like-minded people to the same degree as war is worse than peace” (Balot 2006, 157).

Thucydides’ observed that in stasis all cohesive factors (laws, customs, but also language) are collapsing, thus enabling society’s spiral into breakdown and the ultimate evil — civil war, i.e. the “greatest kinesis”. If, however, these cohesive factors are strong, polis enjoys harmony, or as Democritus labeled it “homonoia”, an opposite of stasis (Price 2001, 71). Homonoia and stasis both presuppose the existence of competing groups and individuals. The difference is that in the former competition is limited by the common interest (Ibid, 63). For Democritus that was a “healthy city”. Once that check is removed and interests of factions are perceived superior to common interests, the body of polis is sick. That is stasis.

Covino (2013, 19), building on Cicero’s work Verrines, defines stasis similarly as “…a breakdown of the social order within the polis which effectively ended the functioning of civic government”, since “…those involved in stasis are prepared to carry out its aims by illegal means if necessary.” This is quite a lucid observation, as it shows that stasis can result even from

---

6 Hence, civil war is “the greatest kinesis”, the greatest disturbance; movement, velocity or action a society can experience (Price 2001, 208).

7 Homonoia can also be translated as “together-mindedness” (Covino 2013, 5).
actions that are formally legal, but disregard the common interest and value personal and/or factional interests higher. Weed (2005, 4) comparably defines *stasis* as a “condition” that promotes factionalism that ends with “pathological consequences” (different forms of violence).

How are we supposed to recognize *stasis*? Analyzing Thucydides’ contribution to the debate, Price (2001, 38) argued that “…stasis is not strictly a struggle within any specific kind of political entity…” since “…Thucydides' definition requires the observer first to define a conflict as stasis evident in patterns of speech and action, before asking exactly what entity is being torn apart.”8 Indeed, Thucydides paid enormous attention to the changes in use of language, customs and rituals as indicators of *stasis*. While this topic has been controversial, even among the scholars of classics, it seems pretty reasonable to conclude (following Price 2001, 41—42) that changes in the use of language pertain to favoring particular, rather than common interests. In the same vein, deeds and words become divorced, where words might speak of common good; but deeds lead to more strife and support to the particular at the expense of common interest. Thucydides therefore recommends observing whether words and deeds serve common or factional interests, as an instrument for detecting *stasis*.

Perhaps this is a good place to underline that *stasis* thus comes in many forms, even though some authors reduce *stasis* only to violence. Covino (2013, 5) rejects Wheeler’s (1951) and Lintott’s (1982) focus on violence as defining element of stasis and embraces Kalimtzis’ (2000) “arrest of homonoia” (arrest of together—mindedness) as the essence of the *stasis* phenomenon.  

---

8 Building on that, he argued that the whole Greek world was in the state of stasis, thus defining the famous Peloponnesian war as a civil war among Greeks (see esp. Ch 7). This view was shared by Herodotus (Balot 2006, 157).
Violence, then, remains one of the “calamities” caused by *stasis*, as Price (2001, 9) cites Thucydides:

> Many calamities befell the cities in the course of stasis, such as occur and will always occur so long as human nature remains the same, although they will be more intense or milder and varying in form, according to vicissitudes of circumstance prevailing in each instance. (Ibid, 9)

Obviously, the form and the intensity of “calamities… in the course of stasis” may vary. Berger (1992, 11—12) includes “…gathering, faction, civil disorder, rebellion, riot and revolution.” The variance, however, depends on the prevailing “circumstances”. Logically, the questions arise about: 1) the cause of *stasis*, i.e., a breakdown of common political identity and, 2) the cause of the most extreme form of *stasis* — civil war. Therefore, *stasis* is primarily a state of mind expressed on a continuum of forms (“intense or milder”). These forms, it will be argued later, largely depend on the external circumstances, the strategic context shaped by relations among major powers.

### 1.2. Causes of Stasis and Its Ultimate Form — Civil War

#### 1.2.1. Aristotle: Internal Strife

Aristotle famously wrote in the fifth book of his *Politics* about internal strife. He is focused primarily on internal causes and remedies to *stasis*. Predominant cause is the sense of injustice. A lengthy passage is worthy of citing:

> The democrats think that as they are equal they ought to be equal in all things,
while the oligarchs, under the idea that they are unequal, claim too much, which is one form of inequality. All these forms of government have a kind of justice, but, tried by an absolute standard, they are faulty; and, therefore, both parties, whenever their share in the government does not accord with their preconceived ideas, stir up revolution. (Aristotle 1996, 120)

However, he finds that this sense of injustice is actually driven by two vices: envy and vanity. As such, they can never be removed from the polis, but can be tempered by a balanced mix of oligarchic and democratic elements in the system, depending on the conditions in each polis.\(^9\) Proper education is viewed as the best remedy against factions (Aristotle 1998, 158), but the best education is ironically found in the poleis that are already stable (Weed 2005). Similarly, Plato in his Republic also points to injustice as the cause of stasis (Kalimtzis 2000, 24). Besides class conflict that dominates Aristotle’s writing, it is important to notice his explicit mentioning of ethnic difference as a factor conducive to civil war:

A difference of race (1) is also conducive to civil war, until they acquire a common spirit: just as a city (2) cannot come into being by a chance multitude, nor in a chance length of time: this is why, whoever has accepted co—settlers

---

\(^9\) Aristotle says that actually democracies with strong oligarchic features (“polities”) are the most stable forms of government (Aristotle 1998, 150-151). Since the prevailing political systems were oligarchy and democracy, Aristotle rather focused on them (Weed 2005, 10).
either in the beginning or later (3), most of the time they revolted.\(^{10}\) (Aristotle 1998, 140)

He then offered several examples of such violent internal conflicts that did not split the polis along the class, but along the ethnic lines.\(^{11}\)

However, Aristotle recognized that to feel injustice being done toward one’s class or ethnic group is not yet enough to actually act on it and try to remove that injustice. Weed (2005, 43), picks out a very important deliberation about this from Aristotle’s (1998, 136—137) conclusion:”One should grasp what condition men are in when they form factions; for the sake of what they do so; and thirdly, what the starting points are for civic turbulence and factional tensions among one another.”

So, there are actually three components. First, the abovementioned “condition men are in” refers to the belief about injustice some citizens perceive. Second, once they start feeling injustice, the rectification needs to be articulated in some way. That will then unite them behind the common goal and help coordinate their actions. The part “for the sake of what they do so” refers to that common goal — “gain and honor” (Ibid, 47). This goal, shared by aggrieved

\(^{10}\) Berger (1992, 65) expands this to include: first settlers and their descendants vs. the late comers (the aristocracy of first settlers) and citizens vs. dwellers who are not citizens (have no political rights)

\(^{11}\) Thucydides reported that ethnic difference was invoked in the Peloponnesian War as well. Corinthian warmongers claimed Athenians and Peloponnesians were ethnically different. Scholars agree on social and political construction of this difference for the purpose of warmongering (Price 2001, 153).
citizens, is what unites them in a faction (Ibid, 46). Thus, feeling injustice but even more so sharing a view on how injustice is to be rectified enables citizens to recognize each other and unite in a faction. Third, sheer existence of a group of aggrieved does not constitute a stasis. Only after this faction starts really acting, by words and/or deeds, driven by a common goal, will there be the starting point of stasis. Aristotle lists triggers\(^{12}\) of factional conflict in the following passage (Ibid, 47):

\[
\ldots \text{(i) the perception of grossly unfair or illicit gains, (ii) the perception of honor gained by a rival individual or group, (iii) the fear of a retaliation or exploitation that seems imminent and which triggers preemptive action, (iv) the perception of oneself as a victim of insolence} \ldots \text{ due to more powerful rivals who hope to demonstrate their superiority, (v) the perception of excessive dominance} \ldots \text{ of others, (vi) contempt} \ldots \text{ for those perceived to be weak, (vii) disproportionate growth of power in some other part of the polis; and also (viii—xii) election intrigue, carelessness, pettiness, and racial dissimilarity. (Aristotle 1998, 137—138)}
\]

Interestingly Aristotle is very precise about finding causes of \textit{stasis} in disagreeing perceptions of justice. As previously elaborated, \textit{stasis} is expressed in many forms, violence being one of them. But, what leads to the most violent expression of \textit{stasis} — civil war? In already mentioned passage in Politics (Ibid, 138), Aristotle makes a hint about the cause of violence when he says: “Contempt is a cause of \textit{faction} and of actual \textit{attacks}, upon the government, for instance in oligarchies when those who have no share in the government are

\(^{12}\)“Starting points” or as Weed (2005) calls them “occasional causes”.
more numerous (for they think themselves the stronger party). Therefore, while stasis is caused by actions of the aggrieved faction, it can be suspected that the more extreme violence will result from the perception of a change in the balance of power.

We should recognize that Aristotle, for the most part, does not pay much attention to external influences — the ones coming from the rest of the world. However, in at least two other places he does recognize the importance of the external context for internal developments. One is when he acknowledged that rivalry of Athens and Sparta led them to support pro—democratic and pro—oligarchic factions “everywhere” (Aristotle 1998, 152). The other is the opposite effect, when the proximity of “destroyers” forces citizens to guard their government more vigilantly (Ibid, 153). It was Thucydides, however, who paid much more attention to external factors, as it will be shown in the next section.

1.2.2 Thucydides: Systemic Context

Thucydides finds “hunger for power inspired by greed and personal ambition” to be driving people into factions and toward conflict (Price 2001, 10). Here, he is very close to views of Aristotle and Plato in the sense that the cause of stasis is within an individual. Thucydides then takes off in two respects. First, as we have seen in 1.3.1, he offers a method of detecting stasis by focusing on changes in the use of words. Second, he is putting much stronger emphasis on the importance of external war in exacerbating stasis to its most extreme forms.

As Price (2001, 32) illustrates convincingly, both Aristotle and Thucydides discuss the

13 Italics added by me.

14 I will discuss modern approaches to the causes of war in chapter 3.
Mytilenian *stasis*, but it was Thucydides who connected the *stasis* with the factions’ relations to the great powers, Athens and Sparta. More famously, as will be discussed in more detail later, (referring to the civil war in Corcyra) Thucydides concluded that while:

…in peacetime the parties in individual states would not have had the pretext, nor would they have been so prepared to call them in, once they were embroiled in war and an alliance was available to each side for the detriment of their opponents and their own self—aggrandizement in a single stroke, bringing in Athens and Sparta was a facile matter for them as they desired some revolutionary change.

(Thucydides 1958, 143)

As we can see, sliding of a polis into violent forms of *stasis* (civil war) is heavily dependent on the context in which the polis has found itself. That does not mean that external conditions cause *stasis*, but that they influence the forms in which politics poisoned by *stasis* will evolve. Shlomo Berger’s (1992, 59—60, also Ch. 4) extensive study of internal strife in Greek Sicily and Southern Italy showed external war as the most important event precipitating revolution. However, he understood revolutions themselves were grounded in the “structure of the civic body”. As Price (2001, 26—27) nicely formulated, “…the conditions of war act on healthy societies just as unhealthy air and water contribute to, but do not invariably cause disease in healthy bodies…” Thucydides assessed that factions do always exist, but are led by judgment in times of security and raw emotion in times of stress and violence:

For in periods of peace and prosperity, both states and individuals maintain more positive dispositions because they are not compelled to face circumstances over which they have no control; but war is a teacher of violence in that it does away
with the easy provision of daily needs and brings most people's passions to match the level of their actual circumstances. (Price 2001, 24)

The second moment worthy of our attention is the role of war as “teacher of violence”. The insecurity surrounding the community changes individuals’ ideas about norms constituting appropriate behavior. These new circumstances demand new names for the “other side” in the internal strife. Instead co—citizens, they become “traitors”, “enemies”, “blasphemers”, etc., while the violent clash becomes “defense” from the “aggression” or “treason”. The unifying customs and institutions are stripped of their meaning and new ones are invented to justify actions in the new circumstances. As mentioned before in the section 1.2.1, change in language indicates the existence of *stasis*, but we see that the context of war further intensifies the language of hostility to its extremes.

I will sum up the review so far in three points. First, according to Aristotle, the cause of *stasis* lies in the grievances over injustice felt by an individual, family, class or ethnicity. Designing adequate constitutional framework and administering proper education can help reduce the risk of *stasis*. Second, according to Thucydides, the cause of *stasis* is in different contexts within which human nature expresses itself. The hunger for power inspired by greed and personal ambition is tempered in the time of peace as there is more room for reason. However, in times of stress, such as war, emotions take over and prompt humans to drop reason in favor of immediate gratification of their greed and personal ambition at the expense of common good. This does not mean abandoning all rationality, though. Factions are more likely to escalate *stasis* to the level of battle to life and death if they feel encouraged by external support. Third, *stasis* is primarily a state of mind where a faction favors its particular interest at the common expense. It is expressed in many forms, legal and illegal, non—violent and violent.
The most extreme form is civil war — *the greatest kinesis*.

Why *stasis* sometimes advances to civil war stage and in other times it does not? The question is not exhausted with finding cause(s) of *stasis*, but with finding the cause of its ultimate *metastasis* — the progression of internal strife to its most vicious form — civil war. The goal of this dissertation is to investigate whether changes in the relations among big powers hold most of the answer. In the next section (1.3) I will review some cases from ancient times using this approach, which will conclude this chapter.

### 1.3. Examples of Stasis

In order to illustrate the importance of the systemic context, I will employ two types of examples. One type will show conflicts *within* Greek city-states. Internal conflict poses a challenge to the dominant social group, thus the revisionist group starts from the position of relative weakness. The other type will show asymmetric conflicts *between* city-states, where a small polis decided to violently resist the pressure of the powerful.

Why should the asymmetric conflicts be taken into account, if civil war is usually understood as happening *within* a single political entity? The structure of decision—making in civil war *within* a polis and *between* poleis of asymmetrical power, in my view, is the same. A war inherently includes at least two actors (states, factions or individuals) viewing each other’s actions as threatening and applying kinetic energy to reduce and/or eliminate the threat.

What both sets of examples have in common is that it is hard to explain the rationale of weaker actors battling the stronger ones, without taking into account their views regarding
external support. Also, further mobilization of masses is more likely if there is a perception of having a strong ally. It is very unlikely that a polis confronted by a major power was able to avoid political cleavage over the course of action. The “war” party is more likely to win internal debate if there are serious signals of support from another power. Hence, smaller poleis defying big powers indicate the strength of their belief in an external support.

Therefore, using inter—poleis conflicts together with internal conflict should serve well to emphasize the basic idea: the (de)escalation of violence within smaller states and in asymmetric conflicts strongly depends on the strategic framework in the region set by the relations among dominant powers. The following examples should raise our sensitivity about this strategic dynamics.

### 1.3.1. Melian Miscalculation

Widely recognized as the founding book of the International Relations discipline, Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* may offer some interesting cases of (civil) war’s connection with the international system. One of the classic examples of ruthless, realpolitik, foreign policy offered by Thucydides is found in the “Melian Dialogue”. In the years of 417—416 BC, Athenians tried to subdue Melos, an island they found to be strategically important in their war with Sparta. Athenians’ cold rationality, as they were laying down options for the Melians, has been a classroom text in studies of international relations in general and realist

---

15 I have in mind a weaker faction within a polis confronting the stronger faction, or a small polis confronting more powerful polis.

16 Dominant powers can also experience civil wars, as I already mentioned in the footnote 2.
theory in particular. However, there is a lesson hidden in this story that has not received a deserved attention among political scientists, especially students of comparative (contentious) politics.

Faced with two uneasy options, to yield or to confront the clearly far more superior power, Melians put their trust “…in the fortune by which the gods have preserved [Melos] until now, and in the help of men, that is, of the Lacedaemonians…” However, the Melians’ miscalculated their chances. Thucydides reports that after increased Athenian pressure and “…some treachery taking place inside, the Melians surrendered…” (Strassler 1996, 357). What Thucydides did not write about were the Melians’ internal debates. We do not know how fierce they were, who were the leaders who advocated different policy and what arguments were used. Treason indicates that there were conflicting views among the Melians, possibly from the start, but most certainly during the conflict.

Even though the Melians reportedly did not experience a significant internal fighting, the lesson I want to take from this classical example is still relevant for understanding war and especially civil war. Namely, the Athenians’ military superiority was quite obvious to everyone, including the Melians. Since there is no evidence the Athenians were on a genocidal campaign against the Melians, the latter could have yielded. However, they hoped Spartans were going to help them. A weaker side, if not suspecting a genocidal intent of the opponent, is more likely to fight if it believes a third actor would support it.

Throughout the Peloponnesian War, we can observe this trend of defying larger power encouraged by hopes of external aid, like in the unsuccessful case of Samos’ conflict with Athens. The Persians helped initially. Subsequently, both they and Sparta failed to aid Samos (Legon 1971, 157). By the end of the Peloponnesian War, there were numerous instances where
both sides tried to induce their opponents’ smaller allies to rebel and defect, with Spartans being more successful. In the end, they themselves received help from Persians against Athens. Ironically, Athens was the leading force in Greek—Persian wars of the previous era (Kagan 2003).

1.3.2. Corcyra, Thucydides’ Civil War Model

Thucydides left a very detailed account of the tragic case of civil war in Corcyra in 427 BC. Here we see a full scale civil war driven by an “international”, bipolar, structure. Confrontation between Athens and Sparta, each with their allies among Greek city states, served as a centrifugal force that tore apart Corcyraean society to the extreme, mostly along the class lines.

The pro—Spartan faction (roughly, upper class) attempted to change city’s allegiance peacefully. After failure, they resorted to violence, killing the leader of the pro—Athenian faction (commons) under the pretext of keeping the city neutral. However, the Athenians’ anger and the arrival of a Corinthian (pro—Spartan) ship escalated the violence between the two factions. What started as a fight among the leaders, spiraled down to the masses as commons recruited slaves and their opponents hired mercenaries. Soon, the whole city was in the state of civil war. Athens and Sparta got involved and with changing luck, pro—Athenian faction won and decimated its opponents. A very similar scenario played out on the island of Samos in 440 BC, the early stage of Peloponnesian war (Legon 1971).

The passage already referred to earlier by Pierce catches the importance of external factors for the escalation of domestic confrontation and should be reiterated:

And whereas in peacetime the parties in individual states would not have had the pretext, nor would they have been so prepared to call them in, once they were
embroiled in war and an alliance was available to each side for the detriment of their opponents and their own self—aggrandizement in a single stroke, bringing in Athens and Sparta was a facile matter for them as they desired some revolutionary change. (Pierce (2001, 9)

As we can see, Thucydides assumed that there will always be “parties” in individual states. However, the capability of the parties, both internally (how “prepared” they are) and externally (having an “available alliance”), depends to some extent on how they relate to the external context in which they operate. We can observe this context in two interacting aspects: material and ideational. While an external actor may support one of the factions materially, it does not mean that that would suffice in recruiting followers. Followers are easier to attract if there is an idea that the victory is likely, so the participation in fight seems like buying a share in a growing business. Giving a credible impression of having a powerful external ally is perhaps one of the strongest promises of victory.

1.3.3. Hellenistic Period: Poleis in a Multipolar System

Similar cases come from Hellenistic period when the Mediterranean world was engulfed in a multi—polar struggle. Rome, Carthage, Epirus and four powerful states that “inherited” the Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great: Ptolemaic Egypt, Seleucid Syria & Mesopotamia, Attalid Pergamon in Asia Minor and Antigonid Macedon sought to enlarge their spheres of influence. This development left now dwarfed Greek city—states exposed to the interests of

---

17 Roughly from the death of Alexander the Great of Macedon (323 BC) to the Roman hegemony sealed in 31 BC, with the defeat of Egyptian navy in the Battle of Actium.
powers. As German historian Gehrke observed, apart from Athens and Sparta, all else could be considered to have been the “Third world” of those times (Hornblower 1988; Eckstein 2007, 259). Resistance to the superior powers thus depended on the strength of alliances of smaller city—states (Aetolian and Achean leagues) and, even more importantly, on their ability to find a protector among one or more of the rivaling powers.

For example, in the period leading up to the First Punic War (264 BC—241 BC), Syracuse as a Greek colony on Sicily kept its relative freedom between Carthage and Rome. Eckstein (2008, 371), drawing on Polybius’ *History*, explains how Rome was reluctant to pressure Syracuse, fearing it would turn to Carthage for protection. After Syracuse clashed with the much weaker Mamertines, it was again only a super—power rivalry that prevented a smaller power (Mamertines) from being defeated by a stronger power (Syracuse). Rome sided with the Mamertines after Carthage sided with Syracuse. Rome was afraid their defeat at the hands of Carthage was to be followed by Carthage subduing Syracuse and thus occupying whole of Sicily. This fear escalated conflict into a full scale Roman war with Carthage. Roman victory in Syracuse sent a credible signal to other Sicilian city—states about the relative power balance. Soon, they all crossed to the Roman side and accepted Rome’s hegemony.

Covino (2013), building on Berger’s (1992) work and the records of Cicero’s *Verrines*, examined the prevention of stasis by Roman intervention in Sicily. He concluded that Romans were sophisticated as their diplomats successfully influenced the political process, adjusting the

---

18 The Punic wars (264 BC – 146 BC) in the Western and Macedon Wars (214 BC- 148 BC) in the Eastern Mediterranean were a series of successive wars in which Rome heavily used a web of alliances with smaller city-states to balance against competitors until it ended up as a hegemon in the Mediterranean.
existing system of government, before the major instability would break out, but only after they were invited by the locals. They were driven by the profits they were making from having stable client states.

Roman expansion went further and around 226 BC (during peace between Rome and Carthage) they helped the Iberian town of Saguntum resist Carthaginian pressure. This protection enjoyed for several years most likely contributed to Saguntum’s hope that their ally would come to their aid, once Carthage resumes hostilities. Indeed around 219, Hannibal in charge of Carthage’s troops came to the Saguntum’s walls, under the pretext of protecting a small tribe hostile to Saguntum. Roman historian Livy wrote that Romans ultimately failed to come to the city’s help (Goldsworthy 2000, 144). Saguntum paid a price of expecting external support, but one can hardly accuse them of irrational wishful thinking. Romans were indeed rivals of Carthage and Saguntum’s independence was in their interest. However, Saguntum would not have defied Carthage if it did not have hope in external help.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, Macedon sought an opportunity to impose its domination over Greece. Smaller Greek city—states, fearing Macedonian hegemony, asked and received support from the Romans (Eckstein 2008, 379), even though Romans were focusing on the Carthaginian threat and the coming Second Punic War (218—201 BC). Not only did Roman counter—pressure enable smaller Greek states to fight Macedon until Romans finish off Carthage. They extended their help to small city—states along the Adriatic coast against the ambitious Illyrian leader Demetrius of Pharos. The Roman goal was to help them keep their independence and thus prevent opportunities for Macedon’s expansion (Ibid, 56—60). In the words of Polybus’ (Ibid, 79):

It was at this time and at this conference that the affairs of Greece, Italy, and
Africa were first brought into contact. For Philip and the leading statesmen of Greece ceased henceforth, in making war and peace with each other, to base their action on events in Greece, but the eyes of all were turned to the issues in Italy. And very soon the same thing happened to the islanders and the inhabitants of Asia Minor. For those who had grievances against Philip and some of the adversaries of Attalus no longer turned to the south and east, to Antiochus and Ptolemy, but henceforth looked to the west, some sending embassies to Carthage and others to Rome, and the Romans also sending embassies to the Greeks, afraid as they were of Philip's venturesome character and guarding themselves against an attack by him now they were in difficulties. (Polybius 1923, 253)

According to the Polybius’ history, after victory in the third Macedonian war, Romans enabled pro—Roman parties to win in most Greek city—states (Ibid, 366—367). Thus the hegemony of Rome also enabled stability within poleis as few dared challenge the pro—Roman factions.

1.3.4. Conclusion

Previous examples showed how strength and interests of surrounding powers were important for the internal stability (as well as external safety) of poleis. Great powers were sponsoring or intimidating poleis as a way to gain geopolitical advantage and/or tribute in various forms. Such pressures presented polis with a choice — to fight and/or to negotiate the best deal possible. It seems that the availability of another power’s support had a major influence on decision—making in such situations.
If external pressure occurred at a time of *stasis*, there was a danger of factions perceiving external power’s interests as less threatening than the interests of a rivaling faction. The logical consequence was to have factions bid for external support in order to defeat each other and thus gain supremacy in internal affairs of a polis. However, the causality might have been reverse, as well. The existence of *stasis* in a polis could have lured powers’ meddling, thus causing either reduction or escalation of *stasis*.

Several hypotheses can be drawn from considering this sort of interactions. For example, pressure from a single power might stabilize a polis, if a dominant faction received its support. If a revisionist faction gets support, violent removal of the incumbents is very likely. External support usually depends on ideological and/or ethnic proximity. Intensity and the length of violence depend on the overall balance of projected power, since civil wars were leaving less room for negotiated settlement, unlike external wars. Factions’ capacity to recruit the masses

19 Even though statistics on *stasis* and civil wars in hundreds of *poleis* across ancient Greece are poorly lacking (Finley 1983, 111), Berger (1992, 107) and Goehrke (1985) found Greek colonies in Southern Italy and Sicily experiencing at least one instance of internal strife per city every seven years, while in Greece internal strife was even more frequent (Manicas 1982, 680).

20 Thus, as was mentioned before, Athens supported democracies and Sparta supported oligarchies and usually they both supported their colonies.

21 “Projected power” refers to the material force and military skills sides are capable to bring to the battlefield.

22 Granted, the institute of amnesty was used in some occasions, most notably to end civil war in Athens in 403 BCE. There, an insurgent democratic faction supported by Thebes challenged
within polis (an aspect of a projected power), while largely depending on ideological affinity, also depends on the prestige and credibility of their external sponsors, what is today known as soft power.

Summing up this review of ancient thought on civil war, it seems that the strategic context was a factor strongly associated with the regression and progression of stasis. In the following chapters we will see how above mentioned hypotheses are still relevant for the contemporary studies of civil wars. I will discuss the definition of civil war in chapter 2. Then, I will focus on the literature dealing with the causes of civil war in general and Yugoslav civil war in particular (chapter 3). Since I argue that civil war is the result of both domestic and international variables, I will develop my approach to the former in chapter 4 and to the latter in chapter 5. In chapter 6, I will offer refinement of the bargaining theory of war I will utilize to merge domestic and international variables. Lastly, I will design the research plan for the rest of the dissertation (chapter 7).

oligarchic faction instilled by Sparta to a sort of a stalemate. After renewed negotiations, democratic faction pardoned oligarchs in exchange for restoration of democracy.
Chapter 02: Defining Civil War

Civil war has three essential elements. First, there is physical violence — use of kinetic force by groups of humans aimed at hurting each other. Next, this violence should occur within a common political system, territorially bounded, usually a state.\(^{23}\) Lastly, the goal of this violence has to be political. It has to revolve around the basic political issues such as control of the territory (the question of sovereignty) and the rules of decision-making (the question of political system). However, the scholarship on civil war has been struggling with definitions, both in relative terms (how to differentiate it from other forms of political violence) and objective terms (how to measure it).\(^{24}\) In the following pages, I will chart the path to the study of civil war. I will try to pin down its location in the constellation of phenomena studied by political scientists. First, I will try to offer an overview of different forms of political struggle in order to focus on what makes civil war unique by comparison. Second, measuring civil war will be in focus.

\(^{23}\) Though, as we have seen before, Thucydides argues in favor of a culturally defined society as an arena for civil wars. This society, unlike state, presupposes some form of shared identity. Thus, all Greeks were part of Hellenic society within which city-states existed. Adopting this definition would present us with a problem of modern states within which many different cultures may find themselves in. Members of these cultures may share a citizenship, but nothing else. A war between them, thus, would not constitute a civil war, even though they would share the same citizenship.

\(^{24}\) For example, how many people should be involved in violence to call it a war? How long should the violence last? Does the war start with the first shot? When does it end?
2.1. From Politics to Political Violence

The broadest and arguably most popular definition of politics is found in the title of Harold Lasswell’s 1936 book *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. Asking such questions presupposes the existence of some kind of dialectical process between establishing rules and their erosion. Rules emerge where recurring social interactions cause confrontations. Politics is, therefore, a continuous struggle over social rules. Most fundamentally, one can differentiate among political struggles depending on whether they are to be found between groups or within groups. This approach may be somewhat misleading, since a struggle may cause group formation, as Tilly (1975, 42) famously stated: “War made the state and the state made war”. However, it is plausible that objectively the original group was a family, but the continuous protection of offspring created group subjectivity, a sense of group self-awareness, a sense of group identity.

When we talk about modern politics, the general understanding is that its basic types are international and domestic politics. Domestic politics, unlike international, is most famously described via Weber’s definition of a state. In his “Politics as a Vocation” (1919), he defined state as a "human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory". Thus, all politics within that territory is domestic politics. The concept of “sovereignty” is generally understood as the best way to describe the mutual recognition of non-interference in domestic affairs that states extend to each other. International politics, to the contrary, is often portrayed as a realm of anarchy, where there is neither supreme rule nor ruler (Waltz 1979). Many scholars question this divide (e.g., Krasner 1999) and I tend to agree with them, as the reader will see in the following pages and chapters.

Besides domestic vs. international politics, another way to further dissect political struggle is along the axis of whether it is being conducted within or outside of institutions. According to
Hodgson (2006, 2) institutions are systems of “…established and prevalent social rules structuring social interactions.” This does not imply any normative position, since an illegal action can be justified. For example, democratization as a result of a successive political struggles waged in all possible ways, including violence.\(^{25}\) On the other hand, respecting laws promoting racial discrimination can hardly be justified by the need to preserve order.

McAdam et al. (2001) are not satisfied with distinguishing between institutionalized and noninstitutionalized politics. They introduce the concept of contentious politics and its two subtypes: contained contention (within institutions) and transgressive contention (out of institutions). They define contention as:

…episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants. (Ibid, 5)

This way, they can put Nixon’s impeachment and Mau Mau rebellion (2001, 6) in the same basket, because they are both “episodic” interactions. However, I find this approach problematic for two reasons, the treatment of “episodic” and “public”.

The concept of “episodic” is supposed to eliminate all “routine” political processes,\(^{26}\) such as consultations, parliamentary debates, voting, elections, etc., with which I fully agree. Therefore, the emphasis is on the political drama around which the studies of contentious politics

\(^{25}\) For McAdam et al. (2001, 268) democratization”…is not A Single Thing, but the contingent outcome of interactions among a number of claims and counterclaims.”

\(^{26}\) McAdam et al. would later (2009, 260) describe contention as “nonroutine” politics.
flourished. The drama is in the fear (or hope, in case of revisionist groups) that political foundations of society are disturbed in an unusual way. This disturbance may be episodic, or not, in cases of protracted struggles. It may be very intense (riot, barricades), or less so (peaceful gathering, strike). Protracted struggles may be violent, such as the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland that lasted from late 1960’s until 1998. Some of the longest non-violent movements include: women’s suffrage movement that lasted for decades from mid-19th century well into the 20th, Polish “Solidarity” (1980-1990) or American civil rights movement (1955-1968). A mix of violent and non-violent methods was used in South Africa, during the decades of anti-apartheid struggle.

A very subtle form of contentious politics can be found in a protracted small scale sabotages camouflaged as “inefficiencies” (Scott 1985). The ruling group is thus continuously indirectly harmed, even without existence of a centralized resistance movement. The tensed dilemma before the ruling group is in inability to understand whether the suboptimal performance is the result of the strategy of resistance or a coincidence of random events. Even if the ruling elites do not notice intentional erosion of their power, the tension can never leave the oppressed. The oppressed is always tempted to risk a bit more, test the limits and worry about being exposed.

Therefore, the essence of contention is in the tension caused by uncertainty which is least present when political struggle occurs within institutions. Even in the mildest cases of disturbances, the implicit threat can be in show of numbers (in mass gatherings — “what the masses will do if government does not compromise?”) or effects (in strikes – “can we afford the economic and social cost of it?”).

Adding the element of “publicity” appears problematic as well, since institutional politics
(impeachment included) is performed within a “well-bounded organization”, without actively involving public. In addition, insisting on “public” involvement makes coup-d’état hard to classify, since it is an episodic and dramatic political action that affects the interests of claimants, but public is informed only when everything is over. The subtlest form of resistance introduced by Scott is also hard to categorize as public, since it is intentionally camouflaged as “inefficiency” or “unintentional” suboptimal work performance, yet it is quite a serious form of contention. Even the element of “collective” interaction seems problematic, because it is hard to define how big the “collective” should be to qualify for the category of contentious politics.

Combining the two axes along which we might disaggregate the concept of political struggle, then, might be visualized like in the chart below (chart 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respecting formal procedures?</th>
<th>Political realm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(1) Depending on the type of political system: elections, appointments, favors, nepotism, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chart 2.1)

27 McAdam et al. (2001, 6) “…we take “public” to exclude claim making that occurs entirely within well-bounded organizations, including churches and firms…”

28 McAdam et al. (2009, 277).

29 Characteristic examples are offered. This is not an exhaustive list, of course.
On the left side is the type of the political struggle, depending on whether actors subscribe to the same set of formal rules or not. Domestic and international dimensions of struggle are on the horizontal axis. The cells represent different clusters of forms of struggle.

Before I focus on different forms of contention (cell 3), it would be necessary to underline that the above depicted cells are not so clearly separated in practical politics. Concepts often bleed one into another. For example, negotiating trade agreements (cell 2) often involves resort to economic and other threats and counter threats (cell 4). However, actors more often than not respect rules and rulings of international organizations. The absolute gains they make when trade wars are avoided strongly drive their decision-making. Neoliberal international relations theories flourished around this premise (Keohane and Nye 1989; Keohane and Martin 1995). Along the same reasoning, a political rally in an emerging democracy can be a form of contentious politics, while in an established democracy it is just a usual expression of political allegiance causing no uncertainty. Mansfield and Turner’s study (1995) shows how democratic process can be destabilizing in newly emerging democracies.

The basic division of contentious politics “repertoire” distinguishes among social movements and lethal conflicts including civil wars (McAdam et al. 2009, 277). Social movements are characterized by:

1. sustained campaigns of claim-making,
2. an array of public performances including marches, rallies, demonstrations, creation of specialized associations, public meetings, public statements, petitions, letter-writing, and lobbying,
3. repeated public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment by such means as wearing certain colors, marching in disciplined ranks, sporting badges
that advertise the cause, displaying signs, chanting slogans, and picketing public buildings. (McAdam et al. 2009, 278)

This type of political struggle is common in democratic and democratizing societies (Ibid, 278), where freedoms of public gathering, speech and movement are larger than in other types of societies. Violence of some scale can happen, but it is not usual and in general not expected nor wanted. Nonviolent sustained protests aimed at regime change gained momentum after successful campaign of Serbian “Otpor” (Resistance) movement in 2000. It is based on the rich, decades-long theoretical work of Gene Sharp. It is also empirically confirmed by Chenoweth and Stepan (2011) who concluded that non-violent removal of an illiberal regime helps democratic consolidation much more than violent removal.

Before I discuss basic forms of political violence and what makes civil war so different, a terminological confusion should be prevented. We should be able to discriminate among such concepts as “political conflict” and “political violence”. For example, Brubaker and Laitin (1998, 425-426) point to insufficient evidence that violence is a natural result of an intensified conflict. They warn that conflict and violence are not on a continuum, but different categories of political confrontation. Kalyvas (2006, 12) criticizes the occurrence of interchangeable use of “conflict”, “violence” and “war”. Lawrence (2010, 145) underscores that conflict does not have to be violent, while violence does not have to escalate to war. Conflict and violence do not even have to share the same cause. To sum up, not every political conflict involves violence, yet political violence always presupposes the existence of a political conflict with at least one side resorting to inflicting bodily harm upon the other side. The goal is to force the other side to yield politically in exchange for cessation of physical harm.

Also, not all violence is political. Violence employed by criminals may have political
effects, but that does not make it political, since perpetrators have no political agenda. However, in the struggle to protect their criminal enterprise, criminals might try to physically prevent government forces from entering certain areas. The cases of Colombia and Mexico come to mind. If criminals show capacity to control a territory in spite of government, their violence will have to be considered as “objectively” political. Since there is a challenger to government’s sovereignty, the situation is qualitatively new. Instead of having a relatively bad legal and police system, a country in question effectively lost part of its territory and population.

2.2. From Political Violence to Civil War

Just like terrorism, civil war is extremely hard to define. It is somewhat easier to define civil war after it is compared and contrasted to other forms of political violence, as suggested by Sambanis (2004, 816). What kinds of political violence there are? What makes civil war so different than other types of political violence? I will resort to several guiding questions that will serve as coordinates on the map of violent forms of political conflict. The basic questions are as follows:

1. Is state involved in violence?

2. How strong is the challenger group in material and organizational terms?

3. How strong is popular support to the group challenging the existing order?

4. What is the scale of violence?

5. How high is state capacity?

1. Is a state involved in violence? Sometimes a state administration is not targeted by violence, but sub-state groups fight each other, motivated by different agendas or simply ethnic,
religious or class hatred. The terms communal violence (Hoeffler 2012) and rioting (Horowitz 2001) usually best describe such outbursts of deadly but short (measured in days and weeks) occurrences.

2. **How strong is the challenger group in material and organizational terms?** If one side (usually the one targeted by a government) is unable to mount any resistance, we label such violence, from smaller to bigger, as a massacre, pogrom or genocide (Hoeffler 2012). While a massacre and a pogrom may be hard to differentiate one from another (a pogrom may involve more focus on damaging targeted group’s property), they are also very similar to communal violence and rioting. What makes them different is that the perpetrators’ side is virtually unharmed. There is no violent exchange. Genocide is a much clearer concept, though not without its controversies. In general, unlike riot it is usually planned and unlike pogrom, it can take months and years, with the intention to eradicate an ethnic, religious, racial or national group, in whole or in a substantial part.

3. **How strong is popular support to the group challenging the existing order?** If the popular support is low or declining, the leadership of a group challenging state authority might resort to terrorist actions (Lawrence 2010, 146). Terrorism is a concept notoriously hard to define. However, it has to revolve around strategic violence used against selected targets, usually civilians, with an aim to have scared population pressure its leadership to alter its policy. Some authors distinguish state-terror and non-state terror, while others assign terrorist tactics only to the latter (Tuman 2009, 9). However, if popular support is large enough to harbor and feed militant activists, the guerilla might appear. Max Boot (2013), views guerilla warfare as “hit and run tactics” (there is no frontline) of targeting government forces for a religious or political goal. If the absence of domestic support is not substituted with external support, guerilla survival is
uncertain (Weinstein 2007). Guerillas are not strong enough to control a territory for long enough to exploit it and feed itself that way. They are unable to confront state in a “direct and frontal way” (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 418). Fearon and Laitin (2001, 7) label rural guerilla as insurgency.

According to Hoeffler (2012, 7): “civil wars are defined as internal to a country, where one or more organized groups fight against the government.” Kalyvas (2007, 417) adds more precision, stating that the conflict needs to be militarized (the challenger side needs to have recruits and military equipment) and that there has to be a “…domestic challenge directed against the authority of the current holder of sovereign authority, which distinguishes it from interstate war.” Fearon and Laitin (2003, 13) include the goals of challengers into the definition. They are: change of government, taking control of a part of territory or change of a government policy. What is the difference, then, between an insurgency, guerilla and civil war?

Bateson (2010, 5-6) criticized Collier and Hoeffler (2004), as well as Fearon and Laitin for interchangeably using concepts of “rebellion” (“insurgency”, “war onset”) and “civil war”. According to her, rebellion does not necessarily involve extended fighting. Kalyvas and Balcells

---

30 It is interesting to ask: might an external challenge to the “current holder of sovereign authority” qualify as a civil war? Of course not, since one of the essential elements of civil war is its “domestic” origin. However, is it justified to lump together international wars aimed at changing other side’s policy and international wars aimed at changing other side’s “current holder of sovereign authority”? Regime change wars seem to occupy space between civil wars and international wars. Another type of war that should be noted here is “extra-systemic”, where an independent state wages war against a political entity that is not a member of international system. Two types of such wars are imperial and colonial wars (Sambanis 2004, 817).
(2010, 427) support this view. Rebellion (insurgence) is merely associated with the onset of violence, yet many scholars confuse onset of violence with prolonged fighting labeled as war. A state can yield to the demands of rebels, thus avoiding war. Also, civil war can evolve from a social movement turned violent. Challenger does not even have to be a non-state actor. A coup or mutiny can split the army and/or government. Only if challengers survive government’s militarized response to the onset of violence, we can talk about civil war, Bateson concludes.

Even though I find Bateson’s sensitivity quite constructive, the role of popular support should not be overlooked. It is quite hard to label even a prolonged armed conflict with a visible front line as a civil war, if part of population does not lend (active or passive) support to a group challenging government authority.

This way I add three distinctive components to sharpen understanding of civil war. One, there has to be a prolonged fighting. That is common to civil war, terrorism and guerilla. Two, there has to be a territory claimed by a challenger group, even temporarily. That means that government forces have to penetrate it and maintain active physical presence in order to control it. Three, there has to be a part of civilian population showing passive or active support to the challenger group. This is a qualitative shift, one that makes civil war different than other forms of violence, since state sovereignty is so openly contested.

4. What is the scale of violence? The scale of violence is usually used as a proxy to describe the seriousness of the fighting and the challenge to the central authority civil wars present. The most exhaustive discussion about the numbers of casualties per unit of time needed for violence to qualify as civil war has been offered by Sambanis (2004). The quantification of deaths as a way to identify civil wars has been utilized in different ways. Gleditsch et al. consider civil war as “on”, when there is at least 25 deaths in fighting and at least 1000 deaths in a single year
(Sambanis 2004, 818). Fearon and Laitin (2003, 76) demand at least 1000 deaths in total, out of which 100 year on average. Correlates of War project started with 1000 annual deaths, but switched to cumulative. That is a problem with “intermediary ranged” violence counting more than 100, but less than 1000 casualties. If accumulated deaths over a couple of years go over 1000, which may present a problem of marking the start and the end of war. Collier and Hoeffler (2002) adopt 1000 deaths in total, but demand at least 5% of those casualties to belong to all sides involved.

Sambanis points out to other problems. Namely, there is no reason not to have a range of deaths, rather than a threshold. He proposes 500-1000 deaths in the first year of the war and no fewer than 500 deaths in any three year period during the war. In addition, at least 100 casualties should be on the government’s side, to avoid labeling asymmetrical violence such as massacres or genocides as war. Sambanis also points to the need for proportionality. There are riots in India, for example, that can leave hundreds of people dead in the streets, while some wars can have fewer victims. So he applies the abovementioned values to states with population larger than 500,000.

Sambanis’ operationalization of civil war is more complex than presented here. However, like most others it is based on the body count. The inherent problem of the body count based definition of civil war is that it does not capture the cases of war that do not fit the quantification proposed. Sambanis (2004: 820) himself acknowledges that when he says that “[d]espite the high average, 11 conflicts have caused fewer than 1,500 deaths, and some barely reached 1,000 deaths. But these cases… satisfied most or all of the other criteria for civil wars: they were fought by well-organized groups with political agendas, challenging the sovereign authority, and violence was reciprocal.” He proposes a “more flexible” approach, but then again he remains in
One alternative to body count approach can be to measure use of military technology – combat use of armored vehicles, tanks and artillery. A government can use armored vehicles and even tanks to suppress social movements’ street demonstrations. But if a central government resorts to the combined use of armor and artillery, the violence should be defined as civil war. Artillery indicates the strength of the rebels, while use of armor indicates the attempts to regain territorial control. The initiation of civil war starts with the first combat use of armor and artillery.

The end of civil war should be marked with the return of armor and artillery pieces to barracks and training grounds. It is quite implausible that the violence of this scale would not result in hundreds and thousands of dead. But, it is not the number of deaths that make civil war. It is the intensity of the struggle to impose one’s control, sovereignty and political system upon the territory and population. As ancient Greeks said, it is this greatest kinesis, the highest uncertainty that plunges the society in the greatest worry and fear that constitute civil war. The fear is thus perhaps best measured by the weapons one resorts to. The stronger the weapon, the bigger the fear, the closer we are to the state of civil war.

5. How high is state capacity? State capacity is a concept describing government’s ability to enforce its policy on the whole of its territory. Hendrix (2010) reviews existing approaches to

\[\text{\textsuperscript{31}} \text{Kinesis (Greek): non-directional movement, unpredictable movement.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{32}} \text{“We easily lose sight of the fact that struggles to achieve and maintain power, to establish order, and to contrive a kind of justice within states, may be bloodier than wars among them” (Waltz 1979, 103).}\]
measuring state capacity. They fall in general into three camps: military spending, bureaucratic/administrative capacity (monitoring & taxation) and political institutions coherence and quality. First, if repressive apparatus is strong, state keeps stability. However, if administrative apparatus is corrupted, repressive apparatus will not react on time to prevent challenging groups’ rise. Third, if political institutions mix elements of democratic and autocratic regimes well, the cost of rebellion will be higher, but peaceful political struggle will be more promising. If, however, political system is anocratic (limits political participation, but is unable to police population), incentives to rebel are high. Fearon (2005) and Fearon and Laitin (2003) connect state capacity to GDP and disaggregate that variable into oil producing states and other state. They argue that oil exporters have little incentive to build strong bureaucracies and thus do not extend their control deep into the society. They do finance policing, but not much else, thus corrupting bureaucracy and reducing state capacity. However, they do give primacy to military repressive component of state capacity. Hendrix finds state’s taxation ability to be the best proxy for state capacity.

Why is state capacity so important in understanding civil wars? Kalyvas and Balcells (2010, 418) persuasively argue that civil wars should be disaggregated. They find four types of civil wars based on high/low state vs. challengers’ capacities.33 “Conventional war” features high capacity state vs. high capacity challengers, “irregular war” features high capacity state vs. low capacity challengers, “symmetric non-conventional war” (SNC) features low capacity state vs. low capacity challengers and “coup” is most likely if challengers’ capacity is high, while state’s capacity is low. They developed this typology from previous Kalyvas’ work. Their aim

---

33 According to Kalyvas and Balcells, the use of artillery and heavy armor indicates high capacity, while predominant use of small arms indicates low capacity.
was to explain changes in civil war technology following the end of the Cold War. The failure to
disaggregate civil wars missed to capture very important link between the international system
polarity and civil war dynamics. They concluded that Cold War superpower rivalry elevated all
actors’ capacities as superpowers supported their proxies. With the end of Cold War, external
support subsided, so did actors’ capacities and forms of civil war changed (irregular war dropped
significantly, while conventional and SNC surged). This was also noted by Bruebaker and Laitin

However, Kalyvas and Balcells seem to have assumed that big powers withdrew from
global competition, instead of changing the mode and regions of furthering their interests. If
bipolar rivalry was driving powers’ foreign policy, what has been driving it ever since the bipolar
order ended? International system evolved from USA’s “unipolar” decade of the 1990’s toward
sliding to multipolarity after quagmires of Iraq and Afghanistan, worsened by 2008 economic
crisis. Can we justify such neorealist approach? What if we opt for neoliberal, constructivist or
other international relations approaches to explain powers’ interference in civil wars? To follow
Kalyvas and Balcells’ (2010, 427) invitation to further study civil war in relation to system
polarity, one has to consider international system as an independent variable. This approach to
studying civil war bridges international relations and comparative politics disciplines. This
connection is one of the foundations of my dissertation. I will develop it in the following
chapters, but I will offer more detail in chapter 5.

The chart with the appropriate axes representing questions one to five is on the next page.
A rough distribution of forms of violence should help differentiate and single out three types of
civil war: insurgency/rural guerilla, conventional war and symmetrical non-conventional war.
So far, I was discussing different technologies of intra-state political violence. The goals of
group(s) challenging state authority were not taken into account. However, some scholars think
different political goals do make a difference in understanding the onset and the dynamics of
civil wars. The most prominent divide in this respect is among *identity* (*ethnic and religious*) and
*ideological* civil wars (Sambanis 2001, 5).  

At this point, I am at the doorstep of laying down current theories explaining causes and
dynamics of civil war. I will also try to show areas of research that should be further developed
and expanded. Before I do that, I would like to wrap up this chapter with my understanding of

34 Kaldor (2012) adds “*new wars*” as a type of predatory warfare driven by criminal activity and
possibly wrapped in identity justifications. Inability of governments to control such activities
prompts Kaldor to question territorially based sovereignty in favor of what she calls
*cosmopolitan governance*. 

(Chart 2.2)
civil war. The definition of civil war that I subscribe to is:

*Civil war is a militarized combat over sovereignty among members of the same state, of such magnitude that sides resort to the combat use of strongest conventional weapons at their disposal, usually armored and artillery units.*

A clarification is in order here. Kalyvas (2006, 17) also drops number of deaths from his definition, which states that civil war is an: “...armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign unit between organized entities subject to a common authority at the outset of hostilities”. However, gang wars of organized criminals would then be categorized as civil wars. If they would add a political intention of challenging state sovereignty to their definition, terrorism might creep into the category of civil war. My definition has a problem, since Kalyvas and Balcells (2012) do not require use of armored and artillery units in cases of symmetrical non-conventional civil wars. Even more, they allow for government not to exist at all, in case of failed states. Agreeing with their remarks, I adjusted my definition not to include government and not to rely exclusively on armored and artillery units. Government is represented as an actor “combating over sovereignty”. The drama of the civil war is captured in sides’ resorting to the combat use of “strongest conventional weapons at their disposal” in order to account for cases of failed states, though their number is fairly small. However, vast majority of countries include armored and artillery units in their arsenals. I insist on *conventional* and not all weapons. Otherwise, Russian-Chechen war would not fall into civil war definition, since Russia did not use nuclear weapons.

Lastly, should civil wars be disaggregated between ethnic and ideological civil wars? One approach finds ethnic character of war to be important. Kaufmann (1996a, 63), for example notes
that in ethnic wars sides do not fight for loyalty of non-co-ethnics as much as they do in ideological wars, though Kalyvas (2008) sees some evidence of defection even in ethnic war. Sambanis (2001, 2004) finds ethnic wars associated far more with political grievances than with the lack of economic opportunity. Hence, ethnic fractionalization should not be overlooked as one of the causes of violence. Wimmer (2013) is critical of those who do not seriously take nationalism in studying wars. Collier and Hoeffler (2000) find higher ethno-linguistic fractionalization\textsuperscript{35} to hinder coordination of rebel action, so the more ethnically diverse a country is — the less likely it is there will be war (Sambanis 2001, finds the opposite). Elbadawi and Sambanis (2002) find the relationship to be non-monotonic, middle level of ethnic diversity is risky, while ethnic domination and strong heterogeneity are less risky. Kaufmann (1996b) proposes ethnic separation as the only viable way to end ethnic fighting, while ideological wars may end with a political agreement and constitutional changes. Kalyvas (2003) points to a different possible approach, disaggregating civil war into numerous other mini-wars happening at the same time. Some are fought for public interests (ethnic rights, ideology, etc.). Some, on the other hand, are fought for private interests (local rivalry, revenge, looting, smuggling, etc.). Keeping these findings in mind will justify my focus on ethnic groups in civil wars.

\textsuperscript{35} Ethnic fractionalization measures simply the ethnic and linguistic variety within a state. It is criticized by ethnic polarization index (measuring ethnic diversity) and ethnic power relations index (measuring ethnic groups’ shares in controlling governments). For a useful review, see Wimmer \textit{et al.} (2009).
Chapter 03: Why Civil Wars Happen: Basic Theoretical Overview

The scholarly debate has been able to produce a rich assortment of potential causes of civil war. Moreover, the debate evolved to include not only questions about the civil war’s onset, but also the ways in which civil wars are fought, what keeps them going, how they end, how people deal with their legacies, etc. In addition, various ontological and methodological approaches have been developed. Kalyvas (2007, 417) has recognized three different styles of civil war research: “…[the] economists have primarily stressed the impact of natural resources, I[nternational] R[elations] scholars have pointed to ethnic antagonism, and comparativists have focused on the state.”

In the previous chapter, I discussed different forms of political violence. But, what decides between the occurrence of civil war and some other form of political violence? Bateson (2010, 259) highlights Sambanis’ invitation to answer this question as crucial. In doing so, one of the most fundamental things to understand are the three segments composing the answer: actors and their motivations (section 3.1), opportunities (section 3.2), and the decision to act (section 3.3).

The first segment deals with the formation of actors involved in civil war. How do they get to be? Are they built on the existing social groups or somehow constituted parallel and/or to the effect of the political conflict preceding the outbreak of violence? The emphasis will be on ethnic groups as actors. This question is intertwined with the question of actors’ motifs. What is their goal is often constitutive of who they are and vice versa. It would be wrong to assume that both actors and their goals are immutable (Olzak 1992; Kalyvas 2007). This will be discussed in section 3.1.

The second segment deals with opportunities. Collier and Sambanis (2005) and Brubaker and Laitin (1998) strongly argue in favor of marrying motive and opportunity in explaining civil
war. A wish to do something without an opportunity to actually do it does not bring much change. This will be discussed chapter 5. However, having a motive and an opportunity still requires action. Blimes (2006) maintains that ethnic conflict by itself cannot explain civil war, unless joined by a theory of war. Quackenbush (2006, 38) builds on Most and Starr’s (1989) differentiation between “opportunity” (a possibility of conflict, for example, physical proximity or acquisition of weapons) and “willingness” (a desire to engage in violence, a view that it is good to physically hurt the other side).

Thus, the third question is: how motivated actors decide to act when an opportunity arises? One actor’s opportunity constitutes another actor’s misfortune. Why not accommodating the other side if it is in a dominant position (Fearon 1995)? This will be discussed in section 3.3.

Therefore, a three-track research is needed when studying wars, especially civil wars. There, the domestic challengers’ identities and motives are often less articulated and more fluid than the ones in the international arena. Notwithstanding the surge in non-governmental transnational actors, the primary expression of a group’s dominant interest remains the state. It is easier to understand who speaks for the state and who is in control. It is less obvious who speaks for an ethnic group, especially within a relatively repressive state. On the other side, the rules within a state are less controversial than the ones in the international system. This has been noted by Krasner (1999, 6) when he observed that the logic of consequences (i.e., rational choice) is more appropriate in studying international relations, while logic of appropriateness (i.e., constructivist approach) is more appropriate in studying domestic politics. This, by no means, is supposed to delete the entire valuable constructivist agenda in international relations, and especially not dismiss rational choice in domestic politics. Rather, it is supposed to emphasize the need to closely monitor the development and dynamics of domestic groups’ identity
formation and how they enable or constrain conflict and cooperation. This is why it is of fundamental importance to understand problems of ethnic and national identity in analyzing civil wars.

3.1. Ethnic Groups and their Motives for Conflict

*What is an ethnic group?* The salience of ethnicity in civil wars has been stimulating vigorous debates for decades. Toft (2003, 3) finds two out of three violent conflicts to be ethnic in nature, while ethnic wars are two times more frequent than ideological wars and four times more frequent than interstate wars. Horowitz (1985) offered a large, rather empirical, case study oriented, book on ethnic conflict. One of the first questions to be answered, of course, is “what is ethnicity?”

Ethnicity is a “subset of categories in which descent-based attributes are necessary for membership”, including “…region, religion, sect, language family, language, dialect, caste, clan, tribe or nationality” (Chandra 2012, 9-10). Chandra differentiates between nominal and activated identities, what we might call objective and subjective ethnic identity. *Nominal* are the ones associated with individual’s attributes, as outlined above. When an individual actually claims, or is assigned by others, a membership in a certain identity, that is *activated identity*. Ethnicity thus is a belief about group membership centered on ancestral bonds and enriched by a shared cultural heritage. It is not fixed; one can practice different ethnicities, but it is also not limitless.36 Eriksen (1993, 6) defines “ethnic” in terms of cultural boundaries, while “national” is reserved for ethnic groups demanding sovereignty.

---

36 Religion, on the other hand, one can change at will, independently of any “objective” limitation.
Connor (1994) labeled “activated identity” as “nationalism”, deriving terminology from its Latin etymology “natio”, meaning “birth”. This refers to the idea of common descent. Therefore, for Connor, once an ethnic group is recognized by its own members as distinct among others, it should be labeled a “nation”. The confusion then comes from the popular identification of a state and a nation, which is more present in Western countries. Connor labels identification with the state as patriotism. In the end, he allows for the term of ethno-nationalism to be used in the sense of loyalty to one’s own nation, whether the nation has its own state (a nation-state), or it is part of an existing state (Conversi 2002, 2).

What is ethnic conflict? Ethnic conflict is a conflict in the name of an ethnic group’s rights. Before dealing with the question “why conflict?” the question “why group identification?” needs to be answered. To put it more clearly, the emergence of the nation as a “self-differentiating ethnic group” (Conversi 2002, 3) needs to be explained. Three major strands of thought emerged about its origins: primordialists, modernist and ethno-symbolist.

Primordialists hold that ethnic affiliation is one of the basic human needs. All ethnic and nationalist groups, therefore, can more or less represent a somewhat changed, but essentially historically the same group. This is why primordialists (Shils 1957; Geertz 1963) are also labeled as essentialists. Closely related to this concept is the idea of “ancient hatreds”. Since groups have

---

37 Since both *ethnos* (Greek) and *natio* (Latin) mean “birth”, ethnonationalism is a tautology (Conversi 2004, 3).

38 Note the difference with Chandra. For Connor, others cannot assign an identity to an individual.

39 This is yet another etymological irony, since “patriotism” is derived from Latin *pater* – “father”, which yet again implies shared ancestry.
fought in history, they must somehow (causal mechanism is a bit of a mystery here) be predestined to keep on fighting. Hoeffler (2012), although not a primordialist, reminds us about statistics showing higher chances of violence between groups who did fight in the past. This approach is highly problematic, since it is not easy to prove historical continuity of ethnic and national groups. Second, even if groups did fight before, it is not the same to claim that masses simply fought for their respective nobility due to feudal obligation and to claim that they fought each other fully conscious of their differences and competition.

Modernists, or “constructivists,” on the other hand, see nothing “ancient” in ethnic groups and nations. There is nothing given about it. Rather, consciousness about shared togetherness is a product of modernity, emerging in the period around French revolution and afterwards. It is characterized by increased mass literacy, urbanization, centralization, adoption of standard languages and overall regimentation of society under control of the political centers. A classic example of such an approach is offered by Weber (1976). French national identity, he noted, was not a given in the Revolution of 1789. Rather that myth was implemented via the post-revolutionary French state throughout the course of the 19th century. Because the shared idea of togetherness is construed and not given, this approach is also labeled as constructivism. Modernists, of course, do not agree in everything (Ozkirimli 2005): instrumentalists hold that group identity is construed by rational elites to serve their interests in a top-to-bottom process (Giddens 1990); socio-cultural modernists see mass identity as a reflection of “high culture” of the elite (Gellner 1983). Socio-economic modernists trace mass identity formation in the uneven economic development (Hechter 1975). Constructionist modernists do not think that unifying culture needs necessarily to reflect interests or culture of the elite. It can be invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), or it can spread horizontally, via print capitalism based on a vernacular, until

*Ethno-symbolism*, introduced by Smith (2001), is threading between the two main approaches. As Ozkirimli (2005, 35) nicely concluded ethno-symbolism views present as “constrained” by the past. It gives agency in shaping group’s identity to the elites, but their freedom is limited by the cultural products of the group itself. “The point is that both invention and imagination presuppose preexisting building blocks on the one hand and their combination and subsequent transformation by inventors or imaginers into a novel end-product on the other. We cannot invent or imagine ex nihilo” (Motyl 2001, 59). Therefore, the elites have to manage with what “they have”. They cannot invent whatever they want.

All this is fine, but why groups cannot just form and mind their own business? Why ethnic boundaries seem to be the primary frontlines? What is ethnic conflict in the first place? Ethnic conflict is a disagreement in the name of ethnic rights and interests, which is considered

---

40 It is implied that the necessary pre-condition for ethnic conflict is the existence of different ethnic groups within the same political unit. Countries that are mono-ethnic are logically excluded. The problems, then, are to be expected in multiethnic countries, especially the ones who have not been successful in strengthening patriotism at the expense of ethno-nationalism.

41 Let us not forget that conflict does not imply violence, nor is violence a logical extension of conflict. Then, *ethnic violence* should be a violence committed against out-group members in the name of ethnic rights and interests. As Brubaker and Laitin (1998, 428) stated, ethnic is “…violence perpetrated across ethnic lines, in which at least one party is not a state (or a representative of a state), and… in which the violence is coded as having been meaningfully oriented in some way to the different ethnicity of the target.” Ideological wars, unlike ethnic, are
legitimate by significant parts of those ethnic groups. These issues can range from symbols (Kaufman 2001) to land (Toft 2003) to sovereignty (Breuilly 1994). Sometimes such conflict “arrests” the “normal” functioning of the political system, which relates to the ancient Greek idea of “stasis”. Most of the time, however, this conflict is articulated within the existing institutional structures.

Varshney (2007) offers four basic categories of explanations for ethnic conflict: essentialism, instrumentalism, constructivism and institutionalism.42 They are naturally related to the explanations of ethno-nationalist group identity formation discussed above. Horowitz (1998) offers almost a dozen explanations, but they can fit relatively well within Varsheny’s boxes.

Essentialism implies lack of change over time, stemming straightforwardly from the primordial approach to nationalism (Connor 1994). This is the “ancient hatreds” argument. According to it, the frictions between groups are practically “inherited” from previous generations. However, some conflicts are quite new, especially in former colonies. Close to this approach is the one focused on cultural differences and conflicts over values, famously promoted by Samuel Huntington in his bestseller, “The Clash of Civilizations”. Simply, people who do not like the same things and who do not share similar values are likely to end up in some form of hostility.

not defined by questioning the territorial integrity of the state, but by disagreeing over the type of political system in the state Kaufmann (1996b, 138).

42 There is also a fifth category, realism. However, realism (as imported from international relations field) presupposes state collapse in order to set in motion ethnic security dilemma. It does not explain why state collapsed in the first place, so Varshney rightfully dropped it from the review.
Instrumentalism is centered on greed as motivation, less on grievance. Horowitz lists several related strands of thought. “Modernization approach” maintains that, as societies modernize, individuals inevitably demand similar things whose scarcity then produces frictions. A very mixed historical record discredits this view. A sort of extension of this approach is that economic competition among already formed ethnic groups drives the conflict. Alternatively, individuals compete for scarce resources first, but since ethnic identity increases trust among members, therefore, ethnicity becomes primary “service” of individuals. The result is reinforcement of ethnic identity as a useful tool in power struggle. Another approach is that it is in the interest of the elites to manipulate groups into fearing each other, in order for the elites to hold onto power (Defiguerido and Weingast 1999; Gagnon 2004). For example, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998) have introduced the concept of “securitization”, which explains how rational individuals can frame certain events and trends as mass security concerns. Closely related is the concept of “ethnic outbidding”, where intra-ethnic elite competition spirals into alarming masses against an external enemy (Chandra 2005). If so, why ordinary people follow, asks Horowitz. Perhaps emotions such as loyalty to the group drive them? In that case, one should not focus solely on rationality of individuals. Perhaps individuals have their own agenda, as suggested by Kalyvas before, so they pretend to believe their leaders and readily enter conflict and even war?

Constructivism, as noted by Varshney (2007), is persuasive when discussing identity formation, which was presented in the section on ethnicity. However, it is less so when discussing conflict onset. The claim is that identity connects the “master narratives” of social (ethnic) divisions and local incidents which are then framed by political entrepreneurs as a part of a larger struggle. The news spreads and inflames tensions in the national level. Varshney notes
that uneven distribution of incidents implies some other mechanism at work. Horowitz (1998) reminds us that human proclivity for social divisions has been well established even in experiments and is logically followed by group comparisons. Varshney (2003) agrees that hierarchies are inherent to humans, whether institutional or discursive. Together with Barreto (2009), they expose value-rational behavior as a trigger for conflict, as individuals search dignity and recognition (perceived within the cultural frameworks of their society). Anderson (1983, 11) powerfully draws a parallel between religion and nationalism, since both concern themselves “…with the links between the dead and the yet unborn”. Few other ideas can offer such a benefit, which is why it so often attracts extreme loyalty. Giving priority to co-ethnics would stimulate intra-ethnic support at the expense of the other group. Once there is a misbalance among groups, resentment and hatred appear.

Institutionalism holds that a multiethnic polity’s stability depends on the proper political architecture devised to satisfy different ethnic groups. Varshney (2007) considers works of Arend Lijphart to be the classics in this approach. The problem is in the relative malleability of ethnic identities. The stability then seems to depend on the constant interplay between the institutions and group identity, where political institutions will be able to limit conflict to peaceful means.

Ethnicity as an explanation for internal conflict is a rich, though not uncontested, field. Sambanis (2001) finds ethnicity to be a distinct category of civil war, predominantly based on political grievances and not on lack of economic opportunity. Gilley (2004) advocates the opposite, almost none, if any, conflict labeled as “ethnic” deserves the title. Kalyvas (2008) warns that groups need to be disaggregated. If individuals composing groups are not motivated

---

43 Again, conflict should not be confused with violence and especially not with civil war.
by personal interests but their stated group grievances, such fights are both ethnic and grievance based.

Based on the previous account, actors can be seen as class based or ethnic (and religious) based, which follows the distinction between non-identity and identity based conflicts. However, fluidity in actors’ identities and plurality of their motivations demand sensitivity in identifying and monitoring changes. Neither actors nor their interests should be viewed as given and immutable prior, during and after the civil war (Kalyvas 2008, Fotini 2012; Chandra 2012). They can be endogenous to the civil war dynamics, if one looks closer in search for often subtle, but important redefinitions of identity.

The above mentioned theories of ethnic conflict are closely related and in a sense overlap with some of the theories of civil war. It is so because theorizing about civil war suffered from neglecting theory of war in general. That is why initially scholars focused on greed vs. grievance debate about causes of civil wars. While motivations are certainly vital to understanding violence, they are not enough. Motivations cluster around two basic categories: grievance and greed.

**Grievance.** The first wave of modern approaches to the studies of civil war focused on collective grievances stemming from the uneven economic development (Collier and Sambanis 2005). The explanation revolved around the negative effects of modernization. It produced either vertical or horizontal inequalities (Cederman et al. 2013) as a result of exploitation. Vertical (class) inequalities were perceived as a “relative deprivation” by Gurr (1970). It described the feeling of personal frustration as a cause of rebellion. Modernist approaches considered

---

44 This does not imply that class based fighters have no identity, only that it is not ethnic or religious.
inequalities to be a stage on the path to progress and the Western politico-cultural model (Harrison 1990). Marxist-inspired scholars perceived either continuation of exploitation and struggle or eventually a revolution. Marxist thought was twofold. In one way it expected class loyalty to supersede ethnic loyalty. In the other, and especially after World War I, it allowed for a strategic alliance, where appropriate, between communists and nationalists. Horizontal inequalities considered situations where class roughly coincided with ethnic, religious or regional grouping. That was labeled as “internal colonialism” by Hechter (1975).

Greed. Olzak (1992) moved on from grievance, associated with oppression, to ethnic groups’ competition as a source of conflict. The concept of competition is crossing into the realm of greed as an explanatory factor of conflict. Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (2009) discard ethnic fractionalization and put emphasis on state weakness as conducive to violence. This is known as the “greed” approach to civil wars, as its main focus is on where rebels find material strength to challenge government.

What, then, is greed? Collier and Hoeffler (1998) pose a seemingly simple approach: individuals will rebel if they will get more that way. This opens door to adding a new possible category of actors in civil wars — greedy predators devoid of any ideological justification of their actions. Granted they might use ideological narratives as a cover, but they do not have to. This kind of wars Kaldor labeled as “new wars”. Regan and Norton (2005, 319) offered another definition: “[t]he term greed, moreover, serves as a convenient moniker to describe self-interested behavior and the resources available to pay selective benefits. In effect, a strong resource base serves as a mechanism for mobilization.” Barreto (2009) criticizes this approach as reductionist, since it limits human desires to obtaining material wealth, not honor or any other possible non-material reward.
However, the hard separation between grievance and greed is questionable. Often, it is just two sides of the same coin. We should remember that even Aristotle noticed how factions tend to use different relative measures in assessing what they deserve to get in terms of goods and honors. Sambanis (2003) holds that often both are at the heart of the motivation to participate in civil war. He invited others to move on to the investigation of conditions enabling civil war, opportunities that rise before the aggrieved and greedy. Before him, Tilly (1978) came to the same conclusion. Tilly realized that internal conflicts outnumber civil wars. How does that make sense? The answer was to be found in the structure of society and the opportunities it gives to the revisionist groups. Indeed, one might ask a simple question — is it not better to emigrate, to leave the country where one is oppressed or poor? Why is violence at home more risky than leaving home and going abroad?

3.2. Opportunity

Fearon and Laitin (2003) opened a door to a new consideration — it is neither greed nor grievance, but a weak state which encourages revisionist to challenge its authority. State weakness provides for an opportunity. What, then, contributes to state weakness? In this section I will sketch rebels’ opportunity and its mirror image, state weakness, in three passages. The first will present the material aspect, the following will point to structure and the third will remind us of importance of political culture.

Material structure. In order to sustain and strengthen militarized challenge to state sovereignty, a revisionist group needs to carefully assess the availability of finance, the cost of rebellion and the military advantage it may or may not have (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). These all constitute opportunity structures. As it seems, rebels’ opportunity and state’s weakness mirror each other to a large extent. For example, “resource curse” has been widely discussed as a
possible opportunity structure. It indicates lower state capacity. It is a prize for greedy rebels and greedy outsiders. An economic shock may hurt population via price drops. Of course, as authors reveal, endogeneity is a problem here, since such states may have low social and administrative capacity in the first place, which may be the primary trigger for insurrection and with resort to resources only following. Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Hironaka (2005) explain much of civil war by the weakness in decolonization process. Newly independent, internally divided states were struggling with resources to form functional political systems.

**Institutional structure.** Discontent has to be shaped by politicization in order to be articulated and transmitted as a pressure on government (Tilly 1978). In case of inability of the existing political system to peacefully resolve popular discontent, what may be the alternatives? Without institutionalized articulation of discontent, population’s protest may express itself in spontaneous gathering, short outbursts of rioting or emigration. Politicization implies an organized group of people with an ideology and means to spread it. Thus, they are shaping a new political actor (forming a new party, for example), or they are recycling the existing one (using an old structure, like a workers’ union, for a new purpose).

The existing social structures are shaped by the strength of the state, the type of its political system, its economy, variety of social divisions, even geography and population size, historical legacies, etc. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) utilize a neo-Marxian approach. They rely on historical institutionalism to explain mass political mobilization. In their view, interaction of polity, society and culture mobilizes social groups (Lichbach 1998; McAdam et al. 2001). Or, to put it in another way — sparks of institutional contention ignite existing mobilizing structures in a society, while cultural frames give necessary oxygen for fire to spread among population. Their approach is not strictly structural, as much depends on the availability of shared symbols and
meanings. Lichbach (1998) criticizes this approach as too structural. There is no room for rational choice — calculation of actors. He proposes integration of this approach with his work on solutions to the collective action problem through rational choice (more about it in 2.2.3 where I will discuss how actors enter into action, how they decide to move).

Legitimacy structure. Critical approach to state capacity reveals another dimension of state power and another frontline where it can be challenged — cultural hegemony. This approach, rooted in Gramscian refinement of Marxist theory, views sheer political control as insufficient for an effective hegemony of the ruling class within a state (Martin 2002). What solidifies state’s hegemony over society is a culture of acceptance, a “social hegemony” on top of “political hegemony”. Its visible part is popular acceptance of a regime, a solid legitimacy of the way things are. This culture is produced and reproduced by intellectuals employed by the dominant social group (Adamson 1980). Without a challenge posed to the existing order in this dimension, it is very hard to conceive a wider support to the revisionist groups, though not impossible. Already mentioned Scott introduced concept of “everyday resistance” which is not challenging just state’s material and institutional capacity. It includes a repertoire of cultural products, such as jokes and rumors challenging the existing narrative, which can be produced by ordinary individuals and not intellectual counter-elite.45 In the last couple of years, we have witnessed a series of popular revolutions in the Middle East where social media played an immense role. It enabled both vertical and horizontal communication lines of coordinating masses in challenging regime legitimacy.

Buzan’s (1983) notion of societal security is closely related to this aspect of state capacity.

45 “Radio Yerevan” jokes during the Cold War are a fine example of popular jokes used to delegitimize the official Soviet propaganda.
Societal security is focusing on preserving the identity of the state. However, investing in a particular form of identity may threaten other groups/states. This is a societal security dilemma. Within a state, this concept works in both class and ethnic/religious relations. Like all other cultural variables, it is not easy to define and measure, but one can easily imagine poisonous effects on socio-political stability when a monument to a controversial person is erected. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of civil war and especially ethnic civil war is in the fluidity of identity formation. If centripetal trends are dominant and patriotism (loyalty to the state) is stronger than ethno-national or class loyalty, no amount of destruction and grievances can guarantee the outbreak of civil war. If centrifugal trends are dominant, the survival of the state depends on the political capacity of a dominant ethnic/class group to check the challengers and preserve its sovereignty.

Cox (1981) portrayed hegemonic structure as based on three pillars: material capabilities, institutions and ideas. They all support the hegemonic edifice. Since their relative stability indicates a functioning society, disturbance in any of these corners transmits to the other two, (re)creating both actors and opportunities for further destabilization.

Given these three dimension, one important source of structural change remained somewhat neglected in the civil war literature, or at least not systematically studied and very much under-theorized. That is the international realm, the one external to the state. In the section 3.4 I will discuss the prevalent ideas about the importance of the external — internal linkages. This should justify my whole research project, since my perception is that this niche of studying civil wars has not been sufficiently exploited. Until then, I will present a third component in the comprehensive analysis of the civil war — action itself.
3.3. The Onset of Violence

As I mentioned before, civil war is composed of actors’ motivations, opportunities and actions. While actors are motivated by perceived grievances or greed, they observe changes in the opportunity structures, but they also observe the behavior of other individuals and their many aggregates. Violent action is not a natural outcome of motivations and opportunities. A change of identity is possible, as well as fleeing and yielding, which is why Kalyvas (2006) views civil wars as deeply endogenous processes. Since violent action is not a natural result of a “right set of conditions”, quantitative approaches to civil wars are criticized for lack of causality (Bhavnani and Miodownik 2010; Kalyvas and Kenny 2010; Sambanis and Zinn 2006). Some other approaches usually accepted as possible explanations of war onset suffer from the same problem.

For example, Levy (2011, 16) sheds serious doubt that an outcome in a relationship among two actors can be explained solely by attributes assigned to actors themselves. He dismisses societal and state level approaches such as democratic peace and capitalist peace. He is critical of “prospect theory” which builds on loss averse human psychology to claim that individuals would risk violence to prevent loses. Levy simply does not see the reference point, that is, how much are humans ready to give up on before they resort to violence. He allows for systemic theories such as realism’s balance of power theory and power transition theory to somewhat capture the competitive logic of balancing, counterbalancing and preventive war. Here, the empirical record is mixed at best, since both bipolar and multi-polar orders have correlated with both peace and war.

Levy gives primacy to dyadic, “interactional” level of analysis. It is supposed to capture important elements of a relationship between two particular states. Lichbach (2009, 114) similarly concludes that conflict studies moved from event-count model to the idea that
particular actors interact and produce trajectories of mobilization and counter-mobilization. Two ways to get closer to identifying causality explaining why conflict escalates to war are rational and psychological approaches.

*Rational choice* approach was borrowed from economics and utilized in political science. In international relations, *the logic of consequences* is guided by rational choice. Levy writes:

...individuals are rational in the sense that they choose within constraints to obtain their desired ends and strategic in that these decisions rest on their assessment of the probable action of others. The outcome depends on the aggregation of these individual actions... Rational choice is concerned fundamentally with bargains, strategic interactions, transactions, and institutions and, increasingly, with incorporating research on cognitive capacities and limitations, information, and networks. The approach is methodologically individualist, yet its focus is on the aggregation of individual choices rather than what goes on in the mind of any particular person. (Levy 2009, 127)

Levy went on to describe the main limitations on rational choice as *scarcity* and *institutional structure*, which remind us of material and institutional structures of state capacity in the section 3.2, which are so important for the feasibility of rebellion. The two most important concepts relevant for rational choice are *strategic interaction* and *equilibrium*. The first refers to the decision-making of actors where they are taking into account the actions of others actors as well. In such an interactive game, they are trying to reach their goals, adjust, revise and go on until they reach a point where any change would make them worse off. That would be equilibrium. Equilibrium does not imply that the situation is “good”. It can be quite bad (like
slavery, for example), but to unilaterally abandon its position would make that actor worse off (attempt to flee might cause harm or death of fleeing slave’s family members).

As Kalyvas and Kenny (2010) observed: “...if there is an opportunity to achieve redress peacefully, this option may be preferable...” to violence. Having this in mind, Fearon (1995) rightfully asks what is so “rational” about bloodshed. Why rational people do not come to an agreement and prevent horrors of war? Even though he was not studying war, Tsebelis (1990, 17) sharply noticed that: “[i]f, with adequate information, an actor's choices appear to be suboptimal, it is because the observer's perspective is incomplete. The observer focuses attention on only one game, but the actor is included in a whole network of games”.

Fearon rejects standard realist explanations of war as a result of disagreement over military power, misperception of the other side’s will to fight or security dilemma. He advances two strong candidates. One is bluffing, that is, withholding information or having private (thus not shared) information. Doing so is rational in the sense that one might hope for a better bargain if it appears stronger. The other approach Fearon (1995) holds central is the problem of credible

---

46 Scholars who wrote on asymmetrical wars such as Areguin-Toft (2001) are likely to be highly critical of this approach, since guerilla is by definition weaker than the central government’s forces.

47 Posen (1993) applies a hard realist concept of security dilemma by which one side’s move to increase its protection causes fear on the other side. The other side reciprocates and the relationship spirals to violence. He is assessing the security dilemma of ethnic groups that find themselves without a central authority and have to take care for their security. Just like disagreement over military power and underestimation of the other side’s will to fight, it doesn’t answer the question “why is an agreement impossible?” (Fearon 1998).
commitment. As he stated (Ibid, 406): “[t]he declining state attacks not because it fears being attacked in the future but because it fears the peace it will have to accept after the rival has grown stronger.” This does imply that actors usually have some sort of assessment about the intentions of the other side, once it becomes stronger and/or have its demands met. However, for Fearon, from a strictly rationalist perspective, intentions are not at the heart of the matter (Ibid). He even states, in the example of the First Gulf War, that US action was simply aimed at preserving competition among producers. The guiding assumption was that no country increasing its share in production of oil could have possibly credibly committed not to use its power against the US interest.

Gartzke (1999) criticizes Fearon, because he sees randomness in uncertainty which is essential in Fearon’s argument. It is hard to pin down the variable that is indispensible in the war onset analysis, if we don’t know what makes commitments incredible. If there is a way to make a commitment credible, that should be a more optimal choice than war. If there is nothing that could make a commitment credible, annihilation should be the logical expectation. However, annihilation wars are seldom. There is point in war where sides agree to stop and cut a deal. Then, there is a way to assess that the other side will respect the commitment. Fearon allows for the third party to step in and guarantee peace, but then again, why should the third party be trusted? For Gartzke, war remains random event. Some conditions may only make it a little bit more likely, but not more than that.

This brings us to the next possible rational explanation for war, namely, that war is a continuation of bargaining. This is the bargaining approach (Wagner 2000; Reiter 2003.). In its
essence is the idea that war onset is not the end of negotiating. The sides readjust their positions and renegotiate issues even during the war. War is thus a continuation of bargaining as sides acquire more information as the war goes on about their probability of winning. Only if sides turn to absolute war, which is rare, is bargaining finished. This theory is “closer to real life”, precisely because we see so many more real wars compared to absolute wars. As Wagner (2000, 474) noticed, if war is not the part of a bargain, but driven by the lack of credible commitment, how is it supposed to end then, since no side can credibly commit?

Applying this distinction to civil wars should proceed with a caveat. If conflicting parties are geographically relatively segregated, war-as-bargain should be more likely. This is the case with most ethnically based conflicts, except in the areas where population is relatively mixed. If, however, conflict is ideological, it is more likely it would cut across ethnic and urban-rural divide. In that case, the initial flare of the fighting would come close to an absolute war, or, as ancient Greeks used to call it — the greatest kinesis.

All the reviewed rational choice approaches presuppose groups as unitary actors. Can we do that? Lichbach (1994) was dealing with solution to collective action problem, which asks why people do not free-ride. His starting point was to divide the ontological dimension into individual and collective actors (aggregates such as: institutions, structures, relations). Lichbach sees two ways individuals already organized in aggregates can be stimulated to act. In the first case, hierarchy approach, the situation is discussed and a plan of action is adopted. Individuals are kept in line because of a strong leadership, if there are rewards and punishments, if there is external support. If there is no plan discussed and adopted, community approach means that

48 This is why Powell (2004) labels Fearon’s approach as “costly lottery” (actors either fight or bargain) and Wagner’s as “costly process” (actors bargain as they fight).
individuals act based on communal beliefs, since members of the same institution are more likely to look at the situation in the same way. Sometimes the most committed members will act first.\footnote{The “5% rule” states that only the most committed members of a community do not need others’ action to encourage them to act. Usually there is about 5% of them in any society (Lichbach 1998).}

More recently, as we have seen, scholars like Kalyvas’s demand disaggregation. Why don’t individual humans flee rather than take on incredible risks and sometimes consciously opt for death? The approach focusing on individuals, according to Lichbach (1994), can have two basic types: contract approach and market approach. \textit{Contract approach} presumes that individuals do base their actions on agreements they make. Since acting alone is too expensive (and in the case of fight against a government dangerous) they agree to unite. If there is no prior discussion among individuals, according to the \textit{market approach}, individuals can join action if they: see increased benefits, lower their costs, improve productivity of their tactics, sense reduction of public goods’ supply, perceive increased probability of winning or making a difference, are not informed well, are more at risk if they do not act, etc. They can also exit, if they can relocate away from danger. This is a fundamental question in civil war studies, since usually insurgents are a weaker side, challenging the central authority. If the insurgency is not keen on failing, it needs to attract mass support. Blimes (2006) finds social cohesion of ethnic groups to be strong enough to solve the collective action problem. Barreto (2009) differentiates between elites and the rank-and-file nationalists. While the former may largely be driven to nationalist collective action by material wants, the later may largely be driven by the pursuit of a social payoff.

Some authors are not fully satisfied with the reach of rational choice as an explanation of (civil) war. Jervis (1976), while building on rational choice, introduces some elements
recognizable in constructivism as well, primarily (mis)perceptions and assumptions about other actors. Though his misperceptions are not about images in constructivist sense, introducing psychological aspects is turning his approach toward ideas and not only cold calculations characteristic for rationalism. For example, Jervis finds that information will not be taken seriously if it does not fit the expectations and hopes. Change is hard to notice, since people need fixed references to simplify their lives. This may lead to neglect of important changes in others, which may be dangerous should hostility occurs. Only when conditions significantly deteriorate do people find ways to deal with cognitive dissonance and acknowledge change. Perceptions and misperceptions are hard to measure, which has been the strongest criticism of this approach.50

Constructivism offers to some authors a more compelling logic, the one outside of the rational choice framework. They emphasize the importance of emotions, symbols and narratives. Instead of being purposefully developed by rational individuals, the proper group behavior is given in cultural products, “narrative scripts”. According to these scripts, once given conditions are met, action is mandatory as it is part of “what one does in such situations”. Because these “roles” are not purposefully created by rational individuals, we tend to label this approach as culturalist constructivism (Fearon and Laitin 2000). This is a fundamental constructivist concept in international relations: the logic of appropriateness. Petersen (2002) claims that the changes in the power positions of ethnic groups may ignite psychological reactions: fear, hatred, rage and resentment. Once spread among the community, they can provoke massive violence. Kaufman

50 Jervis later developed his approaches much more in the direction of constructivism, so much so that in the interview for the Theory Talks (2008) he said: “My first book, The Logic of Images in International Relations, is a combination of what we would now call social constructivism and rational choice theory. They have much more in common than either one wants to acknowledge.”
(2001) finds driving force behind violence in myths and symbols justifying fear of group’s extinction and subsequently chauvinism. However, he was not able to find a transmission mechanism that would put these feelings in motion other than the security dilemma. This has been, in general, the weakest spot of constructivist approaches — how to explain violent interactions after explaining the rise of a particular identity.

*Rational Choice and Constructivism.* Fearon and Wendt (2002, 62) conclude that “…in some recurring conflicts, actors can act out of norm/habit.” What began as a rational choice has been reproduced for so long that it created a narrative and identity that took over, even after the initial conditions have ceased to exist. 51 Akin to this observation is the concept of “ontological security” (Mitzen 2006). It explains certainty individuals and states may derive from a protracted competitive relationship with another actor. By maintaining the security dilemma, actor feels reassured about her identity, purpose and order of things in the world. That is a necessary precondition for planning rational actions. *Rational constructivism* (Fearon and Laitin 2000) is interesting for the same reason. It does not necessarily find individuals aiming for victory in war. Ethnic violence may not only be motivated by looting, revenge, etc. Violence can be motivated by setting boundaries between groups. The goal is to enforce the boundary, while violence and confrontation are vehicles. Victory is not necessarily defined as a military defeat of the enemy.

### 3.4. External Sources of Internal Dynamics

So far, the main currents of thought about civil war predominantly dealt with internal factors contributing to the escalation of violence. External factors have been for the most part

---

51 Kaufmann (2006, 137) finds long term ethnic war to solidify antagonistic identities so much that they resemble the ideal type of “ancient”, “primordial”, hatred.
just peripheral to the main problem. In this section, I will try to justify the attention I gave to the international relations in the analysis of civil war dynamics. In the first part of this chapter, I laid down my view of ancient Greek’s thought on civil war. There, I tried to show how Aristotle was primarily focusing on internal aspects of civil strife, while Thucydides explicitly attached enormous importance on external factors in civil war. Here, I will try to show the main approaches introducing external factors into internal politics and possible room for development.

Investigating interactions of international and domestic politics is not a novelty. In international relations, the dominant approach was set in the second of the three Waltz’s (1959) famous levels of analysis of the international relations. The second one referred to the domestic sources of international behavior, while the other two dealt with the individual (human nature) and the international system (anarchy). It has been mostly associated with international relations theories such as neoclassical realism, which includes domestic sources of international behavior (Rose 1998), as well as liberalism’s democratic peace theory (Maoz and Russett 1993) about democracies not going to war against each other. Foreign policy analysis is naturally steeped in dissecting decision-making processes as key sources of international politics (Allison 1999), while Evans, Jacobson and Putnam’s edition (1993) attempts to integrate domestic and systemic levels of analysis in explaining international relations. Scholars inspired by Marxism see poverty within “peripheral” countries as a result of “core” (industrialized) countries’ structural intrusion and exploitation (Wallerstein 2004).

Finnemore and Sikkink (2001), building on constructivism, have rightly invited comparativists to acknowledge the all-pervasive influence of globalization in both material and

---

52 Kalyvas and Kenny (2010) also noticed that Thucydides emphasized external sources of internal dynamics in civil war.
ideational aspects. Keck and Sikkink (1998) in their studies of advocacy and international norms have pointed to the practice of domestic actors blocked by their government to seek outside support. Another large body of literature linking international and domestic politics has grown around the international aspects of democratization. Good example is Whitehead’s (2001) edition discussing international impact on democratization.

Several seminal works in comparative politics touch upon the importance of the international stimuli for the domestic politics. Gourevitch (1978) “reversed” Waltz’s “second image”. By “reverse” I mean he saw international causes of domestic politics. Putnam followed (1988) introducing the term “two-level diplomacy” in order to go beyond both second image and second image reversed. For him, the political elites strive to optimize their score in both domestic as well as international arena “simultaneously”. Putnam further reminded us about the pioneering attempts of Rosenau (1969) to define “linkage” between domestic and international arenas, as well as Katzenstein (1976) who was dealing with the internal adjustments to the international economy. Solingen (1998) was mostly concerned with the impacts of “internationalization” on the shaping of internationalizing or backlash coalitions: the former promoting cooperation while the later promoting conflict.

Having in mind the growing research on the domestic-international linkages, I am focusing on its application in studying domestic political violence. Prominent scholars such as Lichbach (1994), Sambanis (2001), Kalyvas and Kenny (2010), Blattman and Miguel (2010) and Kalyvas and Balcells (2012) have been inviting more studies on international system as an influence on domestic contentious politics. Some scholars responded.

I will proceed following the motivation-opportunity-action structure of civil wars already used in this section. It is logical to expect that external sources make effects in each of the
segments, thus influencing identities, institutions and decision-making of domestic actors. Upon reviewing how some scholars approached this issue, it should be easier to map the research area within which this dissertation is trying to make a contribution.

3.4.1. External Sources and the Motivation-Opportunity-Action Components

**External Sources and Motivation.** Diffusion of global norms via membership in international organizations influences social movements in less developed countries (Hechter and Okamoto 2001). The growing awareness of human rights’ standards predictably made individuals more aware of the discrepancy between them and the more developed world. Similarly, the work of human rights activists across borders enhances enhanced comparisons of local and international standards, as well as among countries. That opens space for activists to go “beyond borders” and increase awareness of gaps and fuel grievances (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Brzezinski (1994) noted the global reach of media in transferring the images of hedonistic Western societies to the poor global South. By sheer comparison of their poverty and Western wealth, the poor masses must feel resentment, anger and greed. Political elites engage in “framing strategies” and identity questions depending on their perceived utility in regard to the external pressures (Grove 2001, Nasr 2000).

**External Sources and Opportunity.** Posen (1993) assumes that central authority has collapsed and only then security dilemma takes off. But what makes central authority collapse is often not taken into account in the civil war literature (David 1997). Besides predominantly domestic factors, international factors can play a significant role. As listed above, the opportunity structures have three segments. Each segment contributes to the overall capacity of the state and consequently, its ability to maintain order. Change of capacity is not only absolute, in the sense
that state can have more or less of it. It is also relative, since aggrieved groups may increase their own capacity vis-à-vis state. In her comparative study of state collapses in Lebanon, Somalia and Yugoslavia, Clement (2005) explicitly included the shifting international environment as a necessary factor in state collapse. As Fearon (2013, 15) stated: “In my view, civil wars often start due to shocks to the relative power of political groups or factions that have strong, pre-existing policy disagreements…”

**Material structure** logically can be affected by material changes due to international economic crises, external funding of rebels (Heraclides 1990; Tilly 2003), diaspora funding of rebels (Hockenos 2003) and kin state support (Saideman 2001; Carment and James 2000). Also, refugees from a neighboring conflict can put pressure on government resources (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006). An external war can weaken state enough to have internal groups use internal resources successfully (Skocpol 1979).

**Institutional structure** can come under pressure when external actors demand changes in political system or economic effects lead to adjustments and restructuring. For example, external pressures for democratization might force government to liberalize its institutions, thus giving more free space for opposition’s activities (McFaul 2004). Also, a country might promote political autonomy in another country’s resource rich area, in order to have easier access, something Tilly (2003) calls “promotion”. International sanctions might be counter-productive and even strengthen national unity, though they may hurt general population (Eland 1995) and foster corruption and smuggling.

**Legitimacy structure** is intimately connected with grievances, though there is an important difference. Grievances can result from non-ideological factors, such as environmental disasters, economic crises, etc. However, the necessary politicization of grievances comes from the
ideological realm. Some ideas need to penetrate population and link grievances with the dominant elite or another group within a state. Not, for example, against foreign governments and international organizations. That is when the legitimacy of the order is endangered and elite’s social hegemony brought into question. The work of numerous international human rights organizations monitoring levels of corruption, political rights, gender rights, etc. can have a large influence on internal debates in countries ranked low. Similarly, the work of international institutions can harm or support legitimacy structure of governments (Reus-Smit 2014).

McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2001, 307) have noticed that the US “decertification” of Somoza regime “…caused defection and rise of Sandinista”. The acts of domestic and international actors in support of a regime are labeled “certification” and serve to validate regime’s legitimacy.

**External Sources and Action.** In the previous chapter on decision-making in the outbreak of violence, I discussed only dyadic relationship where state confronts a challenger. However, as Lichbach (2009, 117) points out, rarely if ever do we have such a simple situation in the real world. What we deal with are multiple dyads, though I see no reason why polyadic as a term should not be introduced to describe 2+ actors’ interactive relations. Such multiple relations develop within the state and across borders. Within the state, other groups challenging government may apply the same of different forms of contentious politics. Out of state actors can support governments or their challengers. This increases options for all actors involved and influences the bargaining game they are playing. Additional influences also contribute to uncertainty as they complicate the analysis for all actors.

For example, Thyne (2006) recognizes the difference that external signals make on the internal contentious dynamics. He finds that external “cheap signals” disrupt intrastate
negotiations, but that “costly signals” bring internal actors closer to bargain, since it reduces uncertainty. Hence, a cheap signal such as a statement of an external diplomat in support of the rebels may encourage them, but not change government’s position. However, if the statement is supported by troop movements, the signal that costly is more credible. It reduces uncertainty and is more likely to bring parties closer to a bargain. To the contrary, Fearon (1995) holds that credible commitment problem is worse when a substantial minority receives external military support. Posen (1993) also notices that external intervention opens up a window of opportunity for a recipient. Fearon (1998) studies commitment problem and the spread of ethnic conflict. His case study of Serbs and Croats in 1991 mentions, but does not build too much on the importance of external influence in achieving credible commitment. He mentioned Serbia as irredentist and Russia as potentially so.

In the debate on humanitarian intervention (“Responsibility to Protect” doctrine), one can see a pretty clear example of the importance of international factors for the contentious dynamics within a country. According to Bellamy (2009), a prominent advocate of “humanitarian intervention”, if a government is endangering its own citizens, it cannot hide behind the principle of sovereignty. The military intervention becomes a legitimate action on the part of international community. The doctrine is supposed to deter governments and directly influence their decision-making. However, the opposition camp, led by Kuperman (2006, 2008; Crawford and Kuperman 2006) challenges the idea on the basis of “moral hazard”. From that angle, “responsibility to protect” acts as an insurance policy for secessionist. They have a “perverse incentive” to provoke violence, suffer civilian casualties, enrage international public and activate humanitarian intervention for their political goals.
3.4.2. Sources of External Influence: Third Actor or Systemic

Besides disaggregating external disturbances of internal dynamics, it is of crucial importance to distinguish mechanisms generating external influences. Some authors introduce external factors in the form of a “third actor”, a singular, usually neighboring country interested in influencing neighbor’s domestic political developments. Triangular relationship can also come in the form of a diaspora. However, authors using triadic approach stop there, without developing any sort of further explanation about when external intervention could be expected and what limits actions of a third actor. Other authors are introducing more sensitivity for a systemic-oriented understanding of external influences. However, the latter branch seems underdeveloped. Kalyvas and Kelly (2010) most vocally complained about inadequacy of current approaches to civil war in regard to the role of the international system.

identifying party ideology and popularity as driving factors. Strategic needs played small or no part, while the role of other powers was neglected.

Sambanis and Zinn (2006) allow for foreign military/economic intervention to escalate conflict into violence. Walter (2009) shows the crucial importance of a third actor in solving the credible commitment problem to end civil wars. The problem with this approach is that it does not take into consideration the multitude of interested external actors. They interact with each other as well as with the parties involved in a domestic conflict. The ensuing complexity escapes the simple triadic approach, but is always well perceived or at least experienced by domestic actors. In his critique of Brubaker’s “triadic nexus” [sic], Smith (2002) observes insufficient attention given to international influences on the post-Cold War nationalism in Eastern Europe. He proposes “quadratic nexus”, supposed to capture this wider international context within which ethnic conflict has been evolving.

Some studies are sitting on the fence between the “triadic” and “systemic” approaches, such as Fearon and Laitin’s (2003) regional focus. They locate substantial external influence in big powers’ regional politics during the Cold War (USSR in Eastern Europe, France in Africa and the US in Latin America), without getting too much into contribution of other great powers to the regional dynamics. Indeed, some other authors took Cold War as a reference point in studying internal-domestic links. Perhaps it was so due to Cold War’s salience — a protracted bipolar system with a relatively clear start and end. Already mentioned Kalyvas and Balcells (2012) saw a change in the technology of civil war associated with the end of the Cold War, but they seem to think great powers’ involvement subsided.53

53 It is interesting that they observe how the end of the Cold War geographically shifted occurrences of civil wars, away from China and Latin America, and into Eurasia, Middle East
A study on nation building by Mylonas (2012, 6) takes a “reversed neoclassical realist” approach. Similar to Jenne’s work, it seeks to explain domestic inter-ethnic relations as the result of that state’s relation with a minority’s external sponsor. Unfortunately, it holds that this triadic relationship is only “influenced… but… independent from — international alliance blocks” (Ibid, 6). One important problem here is that Mylonas does not pay much attention to the relative strength of a minority group(s), when he gives primacy to state’s foreign policy goals. If a state is sufficiently threatened by an internal group, it is more likely its foreign policy will be driven by internal needs, then the other way around.

Byman (2001) brings us to the doorstep of systemic approach. He warns about great powers’ rivalries, but since the end of the Cold War he finds them less important than regional rivalries. I think this can be equally plausibly viewed from another angle. It is not that the end of ideological conflict reduced the scope of great powers’ interests, but the capacity of a power like Russia decreased, thus its effective scope of influence decreased. Since 2001, Russia (as well as China and to some extent Brasil), has become more assertive even out of its immediate neighborhoods. In a multi-polar world, regional rivalries are prevalent, while in a bipolar world, global rivalry sets the stage for inter/intra-state conflicts. However it may be, Byman offers quite useful approach and tools for analysis. What is needed is to chart relations among great powers and then see whether regional, local and internal dynamics clash with it or fit within.

**Systemic Approach.** Unlike works characterized by the absence of interest to pursue origins and sub-Saharan Africa. However, they do not go further and hypothesize on what may be the cause of the geographic shift. If they suspect that the international system is under-studied, then the great powers’ relations have to remain in focus. Technology of rebellion might be less important than the hostile or cooperative relations among great powers.
and the structure of external influences on domestic dynamics, some works do go a step further. Here are some of the examples of such line of research.

For instance, even though Hironaka (2005) avoids dealing with the onset of civil wars, she confirms that the international system is a source of protracted civil wars. She holds that decolonization imposed a certain type of state onto societies that were not capable of sustaining it. Such weak states plagued by internal divisions were further torn apart by the international interventions in support of “sovereignty”, often existing only on paper. Wimmer and Min (2006) take a macro-structural approach and tie civil war with the emergence of a state as a social institution, following waves of imperial collapses. This is not helping much, since having a state is a precondition for having a war within a state (a civil war), but not all states emerging from the ashes of empires experienced civil war and not necessarily at the same time. It means some other important factors were at work and they find it in ethnic exclusion from power. They explicitly reject the idea that changing power balances or revolutionary goals were major factors enabling civil wars. Chua’s (2003) descriptive and popular book locates rising socio-ethnic grievances to the economic effects of globalization, yet it does not explain when they would erupt into a civil war.

Midlarsky (1997) connects “local conflict structure” with “systemic conflict structure” in order to explain the outbreak of a systemic war. He maintains that an “overlap”\(^{54}\) disturbs the balance of power and thus triggers a systemic war between alliances. He finds an example in the outbreak of the World War I, where Austro-Hungarian war against Serbia created an “overlap” of conflict structures. Midlarsky’s application of the same approach to the Balkan wars of the

\(^{54}\) An “overlap” is when the outcome of a local conflict is of vital importance to great powers involved in a strategic confrontation.
1990’s shies away from fully including global and regional powers into the equation. He reduces the system to the “regional” conflict structure, includes Germany in an “informal alliance” with Croatia and Slovenia and stops there. He does offer a somewhat systemic justification for that, as he perceives bigger powers as interested in the events elsewhere. As we will see in the case studies, this was not entirely so. Another problem is that Midlarsky aimed at explaining the outbreak of a systemic war, not of a civil war, so the causality is flowing from a dyad to a system, instead reversely.

Balch-Lindsay, Enterline and Andrew (2000) put forward a strong appeal to include wider international context into the study of civil war. That context was referred to as a “security web” by Rosh (1988) or a “security complex” by Buzan (1983). Lake and Powell (1999) in their edited volume move on and advocate a “strategic” analysis. It steps out of levels of analysis limits and seeks to shed light on choices actors make in a strategic setting. Actors include state subunits, as well as governments and international actors. They all constitute strategic setting within which choices are made. Arfi (2005) compares state collapses in Yugoslavia and Lebanon and takes the international system into account as a source of external influence. This is the approach I find to be the closest to my views on the role of the external factors. It does not

55 Both cited in Balch-Lindsay, Enterline and Andrew (2000, 619).

56 For example, in a study on civil rights movement in the US, Salama Layton (2000) showed the importance of international dynamics for the success of racial desegregation. US diplomacy was severely limited in the non-white countries due to Soviet propaganda’s emphasis on institutionalized racism in the US. In addition, internal instability was rising, thus making desegregation the optimal policy. Similar connection was recognized by McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2001, 342).
oversimplify multidirectional signaling. An external actor signaling support to one of the
domestic actors is signaling that to everyone. Others signal as well. The complexity cannot be
reduced to a “third actor”, since all domestic actors can adjust and thus avoid clash. However,
such adjustment often does not happen. There is a multitude of “third” actors, all signaling and in
such confusion, domestic actors have to make decisions. I believe this complexity has not been
respected and exploited enough. In the next chapter, I will try to offer a theoretical model that
would tie ethno-nationalist conflict with the systemic dynamics in order to explain the onset of
civil war.

Lastly, it should not be forgotten that Huntington’s (1996) “clash of civilizations”
hypothesis, is also offering a systemic perspective. It portrays identity conflicts, civil wars
included, as attracting bigger powers as sponsors of their cultural brethren. However, relations
among powers, even when they belong to different cultures, can and usually do regulate relations
among and within weaker countries. Therefore, a conflict, especially a (civil) war among or
within smaller countries along identity lines is more likely a signal of a deteriorating relationship
between the powerful, than the cause of it.
Chapter 04: The Main Approaches to the Yugoslav Collapse

Following the previous discussions on the need to separate ethnic conflict and civil war, this chapter will portray the prominent views about the driving factors behind the ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia and the civil war onset. This is also important because numerous authors conflate the two. For example, Hayden (1992, 3) finds a direct link between Slovenia’s 1989 amendments and the war. Ramet distinguishes collapse of Yugoslavia and war, but essentially conflates the two, since she is not employing theories of war. She is satisfied with ranking Milosevic as a number one culprit, followed by Tudjman and a host of intellectuals “sowing resentments” that stirred up “emotions” in the context of “democratization” (Ramet 2004, 754).

However, the chapter 3 discussing civil wars’ theory showed this not to be enough in explaining war onset. It is necessary to take into account at least the credible commitment or bargaining approaches to explain the rationality of strategic decision-making. I will thus split this section into two segments; 4.1 will discuss the currents in thinking about Yugoslavia’s stasis, its chronic ethnic tensions that “arrested” its political system. In the section 4.2 I will discuss how existing theories of civil war fare in explaining Yugoslav collapse. In both sections I will try to emphasize the external context and its place in the literature, so I can position my approach and offer my hypotheses on civil war in chapter 7.

4.1. Thinking about Ethnic Conflict in Yugoslavia

Reviewing scholarly thought on Yugoslavia’s unraveling should start by acknowledging a few distinctive traits. Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic and highly decentralized federation, with a relatively softer version of communism. Transition from communism to liberal democracy did not have to end in a partition, nor a brutal civil war. The collapse of an ideology such as
communism, could have delivered a viable liberal-democratic and multiethnic alternative. It did not. Ethnic conflict deepened and then led to ethnically-based secessions. So, scholarship should be judged according to whether it can explain why problems of ethno-nationalist conflict dominated both communist and post-communist periods.

The literature on Yugoslavia’s collapse is remarkably sizeable and still controversial on many accounts, which contributes to a growing number of articles and books. Several literature reviews have attempted to cover, if not most of the literature, but at least the most important works (Ramet 2004 and 2005; Jovic 2001; Dragovic-Soso 2009; Radeljic 2010). While I have been guided by their categorizations to an extent, I will try to integrate them with Varsheny’s four basic approaches explaining ethnic conflict. In such way I hope to keep a coherent flow with the previous structure of this chapter. Granted, a number of authors cannot be easily put into one category, but I will try to acknowledge that where appropriate.

Varshney’s four basic approaches explaining ethnic conflict are: ancient hatred, instrumentalism (overlapping with greed as motivation and the material capacity of state), constructivism (overlapping with grievance as motivation and the legitimacy of state) and institutionalism (overlapping with the institutional capacity of state). Some major works on Yugoslavia can be roughly associated to each of these categories.

Ancient hatred argument has been most notably and widely attributed to Kaplan’s “Balkan Ghosts” (1993). Less prominent, but also following the same trajectory of historical animosity among Balkan nations is Kennan’s “The Other Balkan Wars” (1993). While it is popular and,

---

57 State capacity as a permissive or prohibitive factor of internal conflict and violence, as well as its components (material capacity, legitimacy and institutional capacity), has been discussed in chapter 3.
one might have an impression, desirable to refute the ancient hatred argument, it has been noticed that a long term ethnic war might solidify antagonistic identities so much so that it resembles the ideal type of “ancient”, “primordial”, hatred (Kaufmann 2006, 137). However, former Yugoslavia is just an example against it. Toward the end of one of the most brutal episodes of genocide and multi-dimensional (ideological, ethnic, international) warfare, World War II in Yugoslavia, the communist leadership was able to form a unified multi-ethnic armed force.

Instrumentalist approach covers arguments revolving around economic hardships and (power) greedy individuals. Economic hardships in Yugoslavia feature prominently in Woodward’s two valuable books: one on unemployment (Woodward 1995a) and the other emphasizing the damaging effects of international economy on domestic consumption (Woodward 1995b). Allcock (2000) is close to Woodward in regard to the importance of economic and structural problems, best represented by growing regional differences. His magisterial work pays attention to other, social, ideological and even international, aspects, yet finds primary cause in the economic inequality. This approach is missing a strong link connecting economic problems with ethnic conflict. The fact that ethnic groups were in conflict before can hardly suffice in explaining why economic hardships of today would make historical episodes relevant or repeat. It is especially so, since historical record is mixed, rather than chronically antagonistic.

Another way to look at this problem is to focus on leaders’ quest for power and domination. Gagnon (2004) and Oberschall (2000) are best known for advancing the argument that power-greedy leaders were the key to the collapse. Among them, Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbian federal unit within Yugoslavia, features most prominently. The leading
author in finding Milosevic and Serbian leadership to bear the most guilt for the collapse has been Ramet (2004, 2005 and 2006).

Constructivist camp encompasses a variety of scholars who share one important commonality in explaining Yugoslav collapse: it was the perception of the self and the other that was crucial. The construed images of a proper vs. illegitimate behavior of “us” and “them” that have been constantly changing, at some point took a “wrong” turn and ended up in the zero-sum game logic. Then it was “expected” and “appropriate” to take a “self-protecting measures” along the ethnic, rather than class, political or geographical lines. This approach thus has a lot in common with the “grievance theory” of ethnic conflict and its counterpart, the legitimacy of the state. Presumably, a state with a strong legitimacy, even though it might experience material impoverishment, will direct popular grievances toward a positive engagement and away from social clashes. Nationalism and weakening of the Yugoslav state’s legitimacy became two sides of the constructivist medal.

Naturally, studying how nationalism and especially ethnic nationalisms developed and interacted in Yugoslavia has been central to the constructivist approach. Even authors who emphasize other factors cannot avoid discussing nationalism. Among those who focus on nationalism, the debate is centered on the relative “guilt” of particular nationalist projects. That Serbian nationalism was the key driver of the collapse is clear in the mentioned works of Ramet and the authors she praises, such as Magas (1993), Cohen (1993), Silber and Little (1996), Anzulovic (1999), Bennett (1995), Cigar (1995), Sells (2002) and Dragovic-Soso (2002). However, Croatian nationalism also attracted some (usually secondary) criticism. For example, from Woodward (1995b), Silber and Little, as well as Sells, but Dragovic-Soso (2009) pointed out that this side of the story has been rather understudied, especially when it comes to the role
of Croatian intellectuals. I wholeheartedly agree with her and think that this is the key factor in the overall Yugoslav decline. I will elaborate on this in chapter 2 of the dissertation. Some authors focus on both sides — Wachtel (1998) discusses the role of cultural politics and nationalism, while Perica (2002) surveys the role religion played in stoking nationalism.

Another way to approach this question has been to ask why the state lost its legitimacy. For example, Budding (1997) noted how Yugoslav communist elite discouraged growth of integral Yugoslav national identity, while Jovic (2009) most powerfully advocates that it was the communist ideology of “withering away of the state” that lead to Yugoslav collapse. This approach is jumping a step over, because it assumes that authoritarianism and ethnic nationalism were a natural response to the crisis of Yugoslav communism. However, statistics do show constant growth in the percentages of “Yugoslavs” over time and even though the (Yugoslav) state was “withering”, republics-as-states were strengthening. This was not supposed to happen, so the logical conclusion is that the communist ideology was not the only one at work.

Explaining how nationalism and communism interacted is crucial in explaining why Yugoslavia collapsed. In order to do so, it is crucial to trace the genealogy of Yugoslav communist ideology, including the emergence and branching of key national ideologies. Yugoslavia and communism did not mean the same for all. Only few authors go this far and pay some attention to this (Cohen 1993; Budding 1997; Lampe 2000; Udovicki and Ridgeway 2000), while Ramet (2005, 4) does not have this on her list of “controversial issues”. It has to be established how in competition and cooperation with national ideologies, communists borrowed key concepts, images and perceptions from nationalism. There are four parts to this genealogy: first, the creation of nationalist Yugoslav ideology; second, the infection of Yugoslav communists by nationalism; third, the application of communist ideology in the post-World War
Two period; and fourth, the stasis — “the arrest” of the political process, gridlock and decay. This will be the focus of the following chapter.

Fourth approach is focusing on *institutional* capacity. It is mostly concerned with the design of Yugoslav political system, the negative effects of the 1974 constitution and the transition to multiparty system after the fall of the Berlin wall. Most notable works here are the ones of Hayden (1992, 1999), Sekelj (1990) and Miric (1984) on Yugoslav political system and constitutionalism. Lukic and Lynch also recognized lack of integrationist, all-Yugoslav based institutions at the federal level. Also, most other scholars at least acknowledged the negative effects of the Yugoslav veto-based political system. Ramet (2006, 359) offers an idea that is relatively popular among scholars and interested public, namely that a confederative system could have saved Yugoslavia. But this approach inherently accepts that there was something natural in weakening federal structures. Abolishing state-union (federation) in favor of a union of states (confederacy) can hardly be accepted as “saving” a country. Going toward the other extreme reveals perhaps the weakest point of the institutional approach. Namely, why, after decades of decentralization and social, political and economic decline, the opposite proposal did not gain hold? Why, instead of further decentralization that was transforming state union (federation) into a union of states (confederacy), centralization was not embraced? If the general betterment of society was the goal and the long-term policy of decentralization was making things worse and worse, why not reversing it? Even a prominent Croatian economist Korosic (1988) suggested some reforms in that direction, but in general such ideas were and have been associated with Milosevic’s “hegemonic” scheming. Lastly, the decentralization of such magnitude as introduced in 1974 was the result of a deliberate political struggles and not a “natural”, “spontaneous” evolution of the system. What was behind those struggles? Institutional
approach is not sufficiently paying attention to politics, rational or emotional, behind the political structure.

These four approaches to ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia also have their international aspects. The worsening of inter-ethnic relations and the declining capacity of the federal authority, according to some authors, can be in part explained by external dynamics.

Related to the ancient hatreds approach, the attractive power of culture in Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” (1996) has been viewed as dividing catholic Croatia and Slovenia from Orthodox Serbs and Bosniak Muslims. His deterministic logic has been widely criticized ever since. Instrumentalist accounts see declining economic performance of Yugoslavia related to external shocks coming from the world markets and global financial institutions imposing austerity measures (Woodward 1995a, 1995b). Some authors see growing European integrations as constructing the image among Slovenes and Croats of belonging to Europe, rather than to Yugoslavia (Radeljic 2012; Jovic 2001). Allcock (2000) and (Jovic (2009) find the threat of Soviet Union and overall Cold War structure to be an important factor for ideological cohesion of Yugoslavia.

On the other side are authors who see Western policy toward Yugoslavia as intentionally or unintentionally degrading state’s institutional capacity to curb nationalist incidents and prevent war. Primary argument here revolves around the policy of recognition of both secessionist republics and their borders as sacrosanct. The key moments were the European Community’s interference in the summer of 1991, findings of European Community’s “Badinter committee” about Yugoslavia “collapsing” and controversial German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. Badinter’s committee has been heavily criticized for “cherry-picking” legal documents in order to build a legal construction according to which there were no “secessions” from Yugoslavia,
since the country “collapsed”. Australian constitutional lawyer Radan (2002) wrote a particularly strong criticism of those findings. Once Badinter reframed Yugoslav infighting as a “collapse”, rather than secession, the borders of secessionist republics, and not of Yugoslavia, became sacrosanct. The game was fundamentally changed. Legitimacy was given to the secessionists, now victims of the “aggression” of the federal government and Serbs.\footnote{The problem of defining conflict has been discussed before, but at this point it is quite useful to hear again from Price’s study on Thucydidean stasis. He holds that “…a polity is variously and chaotically defined in a stasis, or it may cease to exist altogether… This is the paradox, and it is, I think, what has bedeviled modern theoretical studies: the outcome of an internal conflict may determine its definition retroactively” (Price 2001, 34-35). Price then elaborates and shows examples of how the term “revolution” implies that revolutionaries were oppressed, thus giving legitimacy to their action. On the other hand, the term “civil war” deprives both sides of legitimacy, while the term “rebellion” delegitimizes the rebels. During the conflict and especially after the war, these labels legitimize actors’ agenda. However, it is not only that “the outcome of an internal conflict may determine its definition retroactively”, but \textit{the definition of an ongoing conflict by a dominant power may determine its outcome.} This is a well known controversy of “one’s freedom fighters are another’s terrorists”. This will be debated more in the third chapter of this dissertation, dedicated to the changes in the international context that deeply affected internal Yugoslav dynamics.}
all sides in some cases led to violence and in other cases not. Slovenia experienced what is now known as a “Ten Day War”. Croatia and Bosnia ended up in a savagery of a full scale civil war. In Serbia, Kosovo Albanians rioted against constitutional changes in 1989, but were conspicuously quiet since then until 1998. There were sporadic frictions between Serbs and Bosniaks living in Serbia and Montenegro, but the relations remained peaceful, though tensed.

In the next section, I will review some of the existing explanations for the war onset. It is always important to keep in mind that the collapse of the country did not necessarily have to lead to violence. However, unlike peaceful splits of Czechoslovakia in 1993 or even Serbia and Montenegro in 2006, the end of Yugoslavia in 1991 was also a start of a war. While most of the prominent accounts of those events do deal with both Yugoslavia’s collapse and the war onset, the logic of war is rarely explained in depth. For the most part, it is treated as if it was a natural extension of the country’s collapse. However, there is nothing natural or pre-determined about a war, especially if there is a strong mismatch and one side is obviously stronger.

4.2. Thinking about the Onset of Civil War(s) in Yugoslavia

Why peaceful separation did not happen? This is the essential question when analyzing the onset of civil war in Yugoslavia. While previous works mostly offered reasoning on why the country collapsed, when it comes to the question of civil war onset, for the most part they turn into a chronology of events. However, the war, this or any other, was not bound to happen. If for anything, there is a problem of timing. If it was bound to happen because ethnic cleavages were so deep, why it did not happen earlier or later? There were numerous opportunities at hand: the deadly Kosovo riots of 1968, the heat of the nationalist tensions in Croatia around 1970 or the attempt to instigate Croat insurgency in Bosnia and Croatia in 1972 that left about 30 dead. The
The most popular explanation is that it was Tito’s firm hand that kept the country together. However, even after Tito’s death in 1980, Yugoslavia was able to crush the Albanian riots of 1981 and 1989 and function until 1991 collapse in civil war.

Looking at the economic crisis as an “opportunity structure” does not help much — Yugoslavia experienced chronic economic problems after the initial period of centrally planned industrialization and urbanization. Since the early 1970’s, Yugoslav unemployment was souring (Woodward 1995a, 193), even though large numbers of Yugoslavs had already left the country in search for jobs in Western Europe. Yet only after the delegitimized political system was abandoned and the market economy introduced, the war erupted. Why it did not happen earlier? If state weakness was decisive, why did not Bulgaria, Albania or Romania experience widespread violence? Bulgaria promoted aggressive oppression since mid-1980’s against its Muslim minority, Romania had chronic friction with its large Hungarian minority, while Albania was a multi-religious country with strong tribal and regional loyalties. Yet, there was no significant violence. Was it precisely the democratic transition that sparked the violence? The same problem repeats, there were other countries in transition that did not experience mass violence. There were others that did, such as Moldova and Caucasian countries (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan).

In order to tackle this problem, it is necessary to return to the rational choice approach to civil war. No matter how strong are the psychological reactions to “hostile myths” and “emotion-laden symbols” (Kaufman 2006, 47) or “fear, hatred, resentment and rage” provoked by group’s status change (Petersen 2001), civil war does not have to be the result. As discussed earlier

---

59 As a matter of fact, Albania did collapse in 1996. There was some violence following lootings, but there was nothing close to a civil war.
(chapter 2), there are many forms of violence. For example, rioting is an option. Pogroms and similar short episodes of violence can be attributed to outbursts of mass emotions, such as 1989 deadly rioting in Kosovo that left almost 30 dead in the streets, but it did not lead to war.\footnote{The rational choice approach assumes that actors (ontologically understood as either individuals or groups-as-unitary-actors) act in accordance to their preferences, regardless of how those preferences are constituted. Rational theory of war, therefore, rests on the understanding that engaging in violence does not have to be the least optimal action. Furthermore, it maintains that the decision to engage in violence does not have to be the result of an instant psychological reaction, though it does not mean that emotions cannot decide one’s aims. For example, a deeply religious person can violently react against a perceived insult to her faith’s symbol. Whether the reaction will be instant, without any preparation or organized, calculated, with the secured supply lines and assigned roles is what makes a general difference between a riot and an insurgency in general and terrorism, guerilla and civil war in particular. Therefore, as will be shown in the chapter 3, there is a room for understanding emotions, as well as norms and values and how they integrate with the rational choice in studying civil war.} The fact that ethnic leaders are able to organize and sustain protracted fighting for sovereignty over a certain territory implies that there is instrumental rationality employed on their part. They are calculating relative troop numbers and supply routes, weighing their chances and reliability of allies, deciding on timing and location optimal for the onset of violence. Even if the violence starts as a riot, at some point a self-imposed leadership necessarily has to decide on either continuing with the insurgency or negotiating with the government, or both. What, then, rational choice approaches have to say about the onset of civil war in Yugoslavia?

*The security dilemma* approach is initially applied to Yugoslav civil war by Posen. In his
well known 1993 article, he argued that the more mixed the ethnic groups are, the more incentive there is to be on the offense. The anarchy forcing ethnic groups to replace the collapsed state in protecting their own safety is created by the collapse of the state. However, we do not see why the state collapsed. Or why it had to collapse in the first place. There seems to be a danger of endogeneity at work in the absence of such an explanation, since the collapse of the state may be simultaneous with and hard to separate from the onset of violence. The history of ethnic animosity is another important factor, as it can be invoked to deepen the mutual threats. The security dilemma mechanism was also used in some other works on Yugoslavia, such as Kaufman (1994), Saideman (1995) and Roe (2005).

Fearon (1994, 1998) used Yugoslavia as a case study in two of his papers. He criticized the mechanism of security dilemma as insufficient to explain the war onset (Fearon 1998). Instead, Fearon applied the problem of credible commitment to the dynamics of Serbian and Croatian war. His conclusion was that the inability of Croatian leadership to give credible guarantees to the Serb minority in Croatia pushed the Serbs toward the violent response.

Wagner (1999), as the major proponent of the bargaining approach in studying war, was critical of both preceding approaches. He maintained that the security dilemma has been unpersuasive, due to its inability to show why a peaceful revision of status quo is impossible. Security dilemma’s improvement, credible commitment problem, may explain the onset of a war. But majority of wars end in some sort of agreement, which is a commitment. According to Wagner, it is not enough to explain the onset of war, unless one can explain the bargaining that continues throughout the war until the agreed settlement. Most well known books about Yugoslavia mentioned above do, indeed, show the history of the bargaining: the diplomatic negotiations and the dynamics on the battlefields. Unfortunately, they have not been informed by
theory much. This seems to be the case with the bargaining approach the most and I am intent on utilizing its advantages.

The international component of the Yugoslav civil war onset has been hotly debated between what crystallized as two camps. On the one side are those who think that the actions of the West encouraged secessionists (Slovenes, Croats, Bosniaks and Albanians) to initiate violence and challenge Yugoslav sovereignty, such as Posen (1993) and Kuperman (2008). Woodward (1995b) emphasized German pressuring of other EC countries into recognizing independence of Croatia and Slovenia as a particular disservice to negotiations. Burg and Shoup (1999), who dealt with war in Bosnia more specifically, also viewed Germany’s foreign policy as harmful for the stability of Yugoslavia. Gibbs (2009) provoked controversy in finding German-American power competition behind their destructive policy of supporting secessionists. Similarly wrote Thomas (2003).61

On the other side are those who think that the official Western support to Yugoslav unity and sovereignty encouraged Serbs and the federal Army into aggressive actions against the right to self-determination of the secessionists. In this camp one can find Fearon (1998). James Gow (1997) finds that the West simply had no “will” to enforce the peace that would allow secessionist republics’ independence. He finds Yugoslavia as already collapsed when the secessions started. Josip Glaurdic (2011) also criticized Western support to Yugoslav unity as enabling Serbian nationalistic aggression. His work reflects the previous works of Ramet (2005, 2006) and Conversi (1998). Even though Posen (1993) assumed that Croatian perception of

61 Conversi (1998) and Libal (1997) responded to “German bashing” by pointing to the prevalent domestic causes of violence and exclusively Serbian guilt for the war.
Germany’s protection encouraged its leadership into violent secession, he acknowledges the passive role of the UN as conducive to the Serbian aggressiveness.

What most of theoretically informed works have in common is that they severely lack in-depth understanding of actors’ identities and thus preferences. Also, the problem with Yugoslavia is that the initial acts of violence were performed by the sides that were by all accounts much weaker than the central government’s forces joined by Serb militias. Works immersed into many details, on the other hand, lack precision in explaining the process of rational decision-making and possible alternatives. An example illustrating that is the curious case of Slovenian “Ten Day War” that has received little attention, even though it was a first larger (in terms of territory and the number of people involved) violent clash in Yugoslavia. It is not known to me that anyone has explained why Slovenes refused to initiate peaceful secession from Yugoslavia, when they enjoyed open support of Serbian leadership to do so. Another problem in the literature is the timing of conflicts. Why all secessionists did not act in the same time, if they were subjected to the same conditions of state collapse, security dilemma, uncertainty, economic downfall and political transition? Lastly, few works on the role of external actors offer systemic explanations of the behavior of the international community, for the most part Western community. Without an idea of what is driving the actions of powerful states and international institutions toward fragile states, one does not have the context within which to understand the logic behind the practical policy. If external actor’ actions do fundamentally alter the opportunity structure for domestic actors, it is quite important to assume whether those actions are driven by *realpolitik*, liberal values and/or commercial interests or international norms.

In the rest of this chapter, I will present my approach to studying ethnic civil wars. I will
attempt to justify marrying studies of ethnic conflict and the international system. Also, I will try to justify the focus on the elites’ decision-making. Laying down hypotheses, as well as definitions and operationalizations of concepts will follow. Lastly, I will attempt to justify the selection of cases and conclude with the research design.
Chapter 05: Stasis among Powers – Systemic Approach to Civil War

The literature overview offered in chapter 3 showed how low state capacity seems to be the primary correlate of civil war. However, the state capacity can decline not only due to domestic causes, but also due to external shocks, such as economic crises. Still, numerous global and regional economic crises did not lead to social unrest in all countries. Social problems can lead to emigration and rise of apolitical criminal activity. Where social unrest occurred, it ranged from street rioting, such as in Argentina (2001) and Greece (2014), to massive upheavals and social revolutions in the “Arab Spring”. Only in some cases did civil wars occur. Such variety of effects demands further investigation.

Full scale, prolonged, civil wars, like the ones in Syria, Ukraine and Iraq, pose a troubling question for the “low state capacity” theory of civil war. If a low state capacity provides an opportunity for the insurgents, a chronic civil war testifies to the strength of both the state and the insurgents. Endogenous factors are not enough to explain prolonged civil wars that drain resources in an exhausting struggle for territorial control. Even where a war is not prolonged, the insurgents’ aim to capture and hold territory inevitably implies instrumental rationality on their behalf. This is so because they have to have some idea on how to annul the central government’s monopoly on violence. Whether they believe they can physically prevent central government’s access, or that someone else would do it for them, the calculation has to be there.

What takes my logic outside of the domestic realm and into external-domestic linkage is the fact that insurgents by definition are militarily weaker than the central government. As Lichbach (1998, 414) put it bluntly: “This inequality is, in fact, the real basis of social order; force by the minority against the majority, after all, would never maintain order because there are
too many in the majority and too few in the minority.”⁶² Even in cases where economic shocks degrade capacity of central government to finance its bureaucracy and oppressive apparatus, it cannot be simply assumed that the economic shock somehow does not degrade insurgents’ capacity to organize anti-government forces. Moreover, many governments receive external support in time of crisis in order to preserve stability. Whether they do or they do not get such support can have a decisive influence, which justifies linking internal with external dynamics. If a state’s capacity largely depends on its position in the international system, then that position affects the likeliness of a civil war.

Therefore, *the interaction of both domestic strife and external dynamics is essential in understanding the propensity of societies toward civil war.* If one is missing, the civil war onset is not likely. If the interaction between the (international) system and the (internal) domestic conflict is what drives the escalation of conflict into civil war, it is important to examine both aspects. *The first* is to explain the emergence of a zero-sum game between factions’ and how it spirals to include their vital interests — what I would like to call the “*ultimate zero-sum game*”. War becomes one of rational policy options once both sides recognize each other as a top existential threat. What drives the spiraling to that point? *The second* is the role of the perceived changes in the international context in escalating zero-sum game into a civil war. Once revisionist faction involved in the “ultimate zero-sum game” trusts the international context is

⁶² A nuance is due here, since Lichbach confuses numbers with force. It is quite possible to have a minority in possession of technology, know-how, material capabilities and/or external assistance giving it enough force to impose the political order it prefers. For example, the Apartheid regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa were able to police black population, though not without hardships.
favorable, it will most likely abandon non-violence.

The first task (explaining the ultimate zero-sum game) traces the failure to establish common civic national identity and its effects regarding the conflicting vital (sub-national) factional interests. Since masses rely on their elites for guidance, the more convergence there is among the ethnic elite, the more likely the masses are to follow. Confronted with the situation in which their elite seem unified, the masses can hardly be expected to give their confidence to the elites with which they have fewer things in common. Establishing why and how the elites’ goals within an ethnic group converge toward the antagonistic narratives can largely explain the radicalization of the critical mass of group members. The rules regulating political conflict are then being dangerously eroded as they are manipulated against the “other” faction in a zero-sum game. The side recognizing the instrumentalization of the political rules against its vital interests is poised to abandon them.

Besides official and unofficial negotiations (bargaining) within institutions and classic intelligence operations, factions also learn of each other’s intentions, resolve and capabilities by playing symbolic games in the contested physical space. Since violence is usually the last resort due to the risks and costs it brings, the revisionist faction will promote its exclusive symbols in public spaces to mark the territory it aspires to control. Promoting factional symbols is a sophisticated way to challenge the status quo, while simultaneously testing the resolve of the other side. Often it indicates transition toward mass violence.

The second task is to explain the transmission mechanism by which the ultimate zero-sum

---

63 An ideology clearly articulating concrete political grievances and demands binds activists in a shared group identity and therefore purpose. It helps them coordinate their actions and verify each other’s contribution to the cause, thus helping solve the problem of collective action.
game escalates to violence. In my view, the mechanism enabling war is in the different perceptions of changes in the international system. Factions involved in a civil strife usually understand each other’s capabilities and intentions better than those of foreign states. Morrow (1999) differentiates between the observable (military strength, economy, demography, etc.) and unobservable components of an actor’s capability. The insecurity about external support to rival factions seems to constitute a substantial, perhaps crucial, part of an overall asymmetry of information. Why is this so? The chapter 6 will discuss the international system as a variable and the theoretical consequences of such an approach. Following that, the chapter 7 will integrate domestic and international variables. The bargaining theory of war will be enriched through an emphasis of elites’ perceptions of international context.

In summary, my central hypothesis can be presented in a simple way like this:

\[
\text{Ultimate Zero-Sum Game} + \text{Relevant Systemic Change} \rightarrow \text{Civil War}
\]

\[H_1: \text{The civil war onset is most likely when a change in the international balance of power is differently perceived by domestic actors antagonized in the ultimate zero-sum game.}\]

Before I conceptualize the “ultimate zero-sum game” as the last stage before stasis erupts in the civil war, I will discuss how actors get trapped in the domestic rivalry.

### 5.1. Actor Constitution

If we remind ourselves of Aristotle’s views on the origins of internal strife, or stasis, the center stage is occupied by the perception of justice. My thesis does not aspire to deal with normative aspects of civil strife. The perception of justice is at the heart of the “grievance” as a driving impulse of social discontent. Grievances are constantly present in any society, so the
conflict is a “continuous process” (Gurr and Lichbach 1986, 5; Lichbach 2009, 146). The question is how grievances unite individuals into **politically relevant** factions (Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010) and how they escalate to civil wars.

Aristotle recognized several possible lines of confrontation in a society, most notably class (oligarchs vs. democrats), ethnicity, new-comers vs. first settlers and citizens vs. dwellers. Following this strain of thought, we recognize that each individual in any society has multiple identities switched on at different times and in different contexts. Religious identity, for example, is conspicuous, but less so than linguistic, or racial. Gender and sexual orientation are important as well. Sports fans can sometimes so passionately identify with their teams and their fellow fans that they may engage in most brutal physical violence.

Although there is a multitude of political entrepreneurs and identities operating in the political life, we should not overestimate the number of **politically relevant** identities. Only a few can be prioritized by enough individuals to be able to challenge the status quo. The attachment to any particular identity depends on how important it is in everyday life. For instance, a Palestinian in the West Bank may fear Israelis. If poor, it may fear the Palestinian Authority’s bad governance even more. If homosexual, he or she may fear Palestinian neighbors more than the Israelis, simply because of the more frequent exposure. Homosexual Palestinians, therefore, are more likely to be driven by the identity that is the source of their greatest pain — the homophobic environment. To illustrate, both Palestinian Authority and Israel engage in the blackmailing of homosexual Palestinians. It is much harder to blackmail Israelis, because of significantly higher tolerance for gays in Israel. That is why most, but not all, homosexual members of an Israeli intelligence unit were able to give priority to their national interest and blackmail homosexual Palestinians into spying for Israel (Haaretz 2014). The logic is simple and
brutal: a Palestinian may live a harsh life under constant Israeli-Arab tensions, but a homosexual Palestinian is likely to lead a far more brutal and most likely shorter life if outed.

Since identities shared by politically relevant number of individuals tend to revolve around ethnicity, class, religion and region, these lines of conflict are most likely to serve as reference points for assessing whether the political system is just or unjust. Wendt (1994, 386) summarizes a wide range of literature confirming the “...positive identification with the welfare of the other, such that the other is seen as a cognitive extension of the self, rather than independent.” Not only that the collective identity can be the result of a rational choice in quest of a support network (Lichbach 1998), but Wendt reminds us that the attachment can be highly emotional, while Barreto (2009) bridges the two by evidencing the logic of value-rational nationalist action. Such elevation of cognition to the higher levels of social aggregation structures collective social actors and helps reduce the problem of collective action (Wendt, Ibid.).

Individuals feeling injustice seek people who share the identity against which the injustice is felt (Lichbach 1994, 15). They will try to enlarge the possible pool of supporters by framing the events as needed. The reverse also applies. People perceiving harm inflicted upon individuals similar to them might try to escape, hide or camouflage if possible. If they cannot do that (due to a conspicuous feature of their identity, such as race; or by choice) they will fully assume group identity. This happens because group membership provides relatively more resources to survive in a hostile environment, compared to the individual resources.

The more people prioritize the same feeling, the more demand there is for an ideology that would make sense out of it, establish causes and prescribe appropriate action to remedy the injustice. The more demand there is, the more incentive there is to provide a sought after product. Usually, the ability to articulate a coherent ideology rests among the elite. Therefore,
this would be a bottom-up process, a “demand for an ideology” process. The demand particularly strongly spikes if the aggrieved individuals share more than one identity: ethnic and class; or ethnic and religious; or ethnic, class and religious. For example, Hechter (1975) tied ethnic to class grievances of Celtic nations against the English colonial center.

An interesting caveat is in order here. While ethnic identity is one of the most potent division lines among humans, high ethnic fractionalization is less likely to lead to civil war than high ethnic polarization (Horowitz 1985, Montalvo and Reynald-Querol 2005). This is so because a high ethnic fractionalization signifies a high number of ethnic groups (high heterogeneity). The higher the number of ethnic groups, the smaller is their relative size. Since most of these groups would then comprise a small percentage of the overall population, they would not be able to violently challenge the status quo. They would have to seek allies out of their group. That means adopting more inclusive ideology and cooperative practices, as well as moderating their demands, or at least instruments of their struggle. Hence, only the most extreme individuals could resort to violence. Terrorism would be the most logical option due to low group capability for attempting territorial control.

On the other hand, high ethnic polarization signifies a society with only few dominant groups. A country with only two (ethnic) groups similar in size is the most polarized. The problem with this approach is that it assumes that polarization equals antagonization. It does not investigate the content of groups’ identities and is not concerned with their compatibility and incentives to construe and maintain a functional government and civic national identity. Switzerland is perhaps an outlier, but an instructive one, since it is relatively polarized (German, French and Italian), but highly stable and functional, with a strong Swiss national identity. This is why polarization should be supplemented with an analysis of antagonization. They do not have
to correlate.

Besides, Bhavnani and Miodownik (2009) have rightfully pointed out the need to deal with the most salient group identity and not jump straight to ethnicity. For example, Germany might be coded as a highly polarized society, because of its catholic-protestant divide. However, 19th century nationalism and 20th century secularization, notwithstanding high productivity and thus economic incentives to integrate, have largely defused the potential for German religious civil war. We should not forget that even linguistically, northern German territories are significantly different than southern, including Austria and Switzerland. Yet, linguistic and religious polarization did not yield separate national identities on the territories of modern Germany. In the Balkans, comparing Yugoslavia and Albania is illustrative. Both were religiously divided three-way (high polarization), but linguistically unified. Yet Yugoslavs spent 20th century mutually slaughtering each other, while Albanians unified and kept an impressive domestic cohesion. Again, religious polarization evolved differently in respect to ethnic polarization, leading to different formations of national identities and their attitude toward the common state.

The failure of civic nationalism and the success of ethnic nationalism to survive state formation and resist assimilation is the precondition for any future ethnic zero-sum game. This is why it is of absolute importance to take a deeper look at the emergence of modern national identity and the dialectics between ethnic and (failed) civic nationalism. The tension between the two and the trajectory of their relations is what sets the stage for actors. The resulting institutions provide structural equilibrium producing historical record of the relationship. The elite driven narratives about such historical record provide a framing repertoire groups employ to legitimize

---

64 For example, histories of: colonialism, slavery, trade, alliance, war, autonomy, religious authority, cultural supremacy, etc.
their interests and mobilize support, both domestic and international. Failing to investigate these aspects means risking misunderstanding the rational choice of actors (Bates 1997).

Civic nationalism can also be understood as an instrument of strategically minded ethnic elite. In that case, it is possible for civic discourse to mask an ethnic core. In his application of Paul James’ (1996) “abstract communities” approach to nationalism, Bellamy (2003, 1) proposed a three-level dissection of (Croat) national identity. The first deals with “big stories”, the narratives dividing one nation from the others. The second deals with how political and intellectual elites operationalize such narratives in practice, in order to legitimize ideologies they promote. The third deals with the social practice, the way individuals act following the “big story” narratives articulated by the elite. These three constitute each other. It is possible for the “big story” to be either ethnic or civic-based, as well as its articulation by the intellectual and political elites. For example, I think that the articulation of the “big story” about “Croatian national statehood”65 (the first, most abstract level) has been swinging from inclusive ideologies based on civic identity (“political Croat nation”, Illyrian and Yugoslav “people” or “nation”) to exclusive ideology based on ethnic identity (Croatian ethno-nationalism). However, I will elaborate more on this in chapter 9.

All societies produce grievances. Highly polarized societies are the ones with large minorities, as mentioned before. Large minorities can provide both protection and rewards to their leaders. These structural incentives stimulate elites to produce revisionist ideologies addressing or inventing group’s grievances as they bid for ethnic leadership. The stronger the revisionist group, the bolder its leaders are to challenge the status quo, in and out of the existing

65 Bellamy maintains that historic “Croatian national statehood” is the “big story” constituting “abstract community” of Croats.
political system. Horowitz (1985, 306) noted that leaders in highly polarized societies that try to reach across ethnic lines usually lose support of their kin.

(See Appendix: Map 5.1 “European areas with strong autonomist, independentist or separatist tendencies”, Association for the Promotion of European Minorized Peoples 2015)

Since ethnic leadership legitimizes itself by promoting particular ethnic interests (favoring decentralization), and state leadership is promoting interests of the state (favoring centralization), ethnic leadership is in a win-win situation framing-wise. If its demands are satisfied, the competences of central government are reduced. If its demands are not satisfied, the legitimacy of the political system is damaged in the eyes of the minority group. The minority elite’s wing that is cooperative with the central government must get special rewards as an incentive to prioritize state interests. This is most likely to cause resentment among those who are not getting the same from the government.

Thus, the relationship between the minority and the majority resembles a rational choice game known as the “stag hunt”. If two hunters have to cooperate in hunting a stag, while one is satisfied merely with catching a rabbit, it is of utmost importance to understand which game each one is playing. If one only pretends to be hunting a stag, while the real aim is a rabbit, the other hunter is being exploited. Stag-hunter will be betrayed as soon as a rabbit surfaces above the grass in a credible opportunity for the rabbit-hunter. Perhaps the stag-hunter does not necessarily have to be unaware of the rabbit-hunter’s goal. It can simply hope that the stag will emerge before rabbit does. Translated to the inter-ethnic dynamics, stag represents a civic national identity, or at least as high state capacity as possible. Rabbit represents a national state for the ethnic minority, or at least as high devolution of state powers as possible. It follows that the stag-hunter is the political elite of the ethnic majority, while the rabbit-hunter is the political elite of the ethnic minority.
There is a bit of controversy over who has the advantage in solving the collective action problem: the minority or the state. It has been recognized that the smaller the group, the easier it solves the collective action problem (Olson, cited in Champagne 2015, 11-21). Lichbach (1998, 414) contrasted that governments are better positioned to solve the collective action problem in what he termed as the “state’s dilemma” (vs. “rebel’s dilemma”). These views do not have to be in conflict if we distinguish political collective action from military collective action. The minority’s elite, due to the single interest it serves is more likely to achieve internal cohesion in political institutions. The majority’s elite fractures in terms of how to deal with the minority (to accommodate or to repress) since there may be other issues of higher priority. In this sense, Olson was right in terms of political collective action. However, Lichbach was right regarding military collective action. The existing material capabilities, institutions and practices favor incumbents in a violent clash against insurgents.

The only way to break this tension between state and large minority is for a minority to fear an external actor or conditions more than it fears central government, or if central government can impose its authority by brute force\(^6\) and/or stimulate civic nationalism.\(^7\) Consociational constitutional arrangements inherently struggle with (and perhaps even promote) tensions between state and ethnic groups. Since groups’ strength changes and new identities may emerge, the constitution is very unlikely to be able to cushion all grievances regarding just

---

\(^6\) Areguin-Toft (2001) rightly notes that the weak can win in an asymmetric warfare, except when a stronger side is “barbaric”.

\(^7\) The latter assumes that the international context (balance of power and norms) is supportive of state authority and discourages secessionism.
Therefore, “[w]hat we observe as peaceful cooperation is thus really an institutional equilibrium or equilibrium institution supported by violence averse groups and strong states” (Lichbach 2009, 144). In states of high capacity, an ethnic minority elite is likely to fracture and form two wings, moderate and extreme.

While my focus on the elite may resemble “diversionary theory” (Gagnon 2004), I do not agree that inter-ethnic violence is the result of an intra-ethnic elite’s scheme to demobilize its opposition. If ethnic groups are polarized within, then why can’t anti-war parties across ethnic groups join forces and defuse the tension? If they are stronger than pro-war parties, they can expose government’s scheming, pressure army into passivity and challenge internal order. If they are too weak to do so, then they are no threat to the incumbent’s power. Why, then, would the incumbent risk to provoke a war as a way to demobilize the opposition that is either too strong or too weak? War might even increase risks to its power, if population is not in favor of war. If it is, then radicalization and warmongering either preceded intra-group competition or resulted from a debate where government seemed more persuasive. Relatively free debate is possible, since “diversionary theory” operates under implicit assumption that the society in question is not a dictatorship. Since the opposition would not have existed in a dictatorship or it would have been already suppressed. That is why I do not subscribe to “diversionary theory”.

I think it is precisely the opposite; the intra-ethnic elites’ homogenization drives the conflict with the other group. In fact, Bhavnani and Miodownik (2009, 45) in their statistical analysis concluded that:“…if indeed the importance individuals attach to their ethnic identities is a key determinant of conflict, then shifts in ethnic salience should assume center stage in explanations that link ethnicity to conflict.”

---

68 For similar arguments against ethnic partition, see Fearon 2004.
Going back to the Olson vs. Lichbach debate, once ethnic majority elite unites in recognizing minority’s separatism as the primary threat, while ethnic minority unites against centralization, the state descends into the spiral of a zero-sum game. My thinking is much closer to Chandra’s (2005) “ethnic outbidding” theory in the sense that all sub-groups within an ethnic group agree on the general policy direction. Nonetheless, I do not agree that they must be exclusively driven by their intra-group competition. They can legitimately and genuinely fear the other group more than they fear their intra-group competitors.\footnote{That is why decisions of war and peace have to be studied in a relational context, which I will try to offer in chapter 7.}

The antagonistic homogenization of factional elites does not have to be a reaction to an accumulation of grievances among the population. It can also be a top-to-bottom process, a “supply of grievances” process. If it seems that only one part of a faction’s elite (people occupying mass media, primarily political leaders) recognizes the same social processes and events as threats, it is likely that the masses will be alarmed. But if most of ethnic elite sounds an alarm, masses are likely to be both alarmed and mobilized. McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2001) label this as “framing”, while Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998) call it “securitization”.

When masses are confronted with the situation in which their elites seem unified against a perceived danger, they can hardly be expected to trust the elites with which they have fewer things in common. This is a refinement of a similar argument made by Fearon and Laitin (1996, 730), upholding that people tend to believe their group members much more than out-group individuals. DeFigueiredo and Weingast (1999) narrowed the source of confidence to group-members’ belief that their leadership was not responsible for initiation of inter-group tensions, thus locating the source of danger in the other group’s leadership.
These two processes (bottom-up and top-to-bottom) of actor constitution operate simultaneously, as if they were on a market where grievances and ideologies seek each other. The members of the existing and potential factions constantly negotiate, renegotiate, broker and frame the ongoing social processes. The most sought after ideology is the one that can solve more grievances. This is why a promise of secessionism to address all grievances is so appealing in highly polarized societies.  

What disturbs the existing equilibrium capable of absorbing chronic grievances is the elite framing of the acute grievances resulting from antagonizing incidents. This framing and the resulting political initiatives set in motion the bargaining process between the ethnic elites. The course of further action then depends on both material and ideational costs of proposed actions, as perceived by the elites.

Antagonizing incidents have been recognized in a CIA (1988) study as the events in which the societal “implicit promises or bargains” have been broken, thus creating a sense of deep uncertainty. These incidents may come from any direction: external shocks of different kinds (Fearon 2013); drastic acts of political, religious, ethnic and economic repression (Collier and Sambanis 2005); land disputes (Toft 2003); symbolic actions (Kaufman 2001); power vacuum

70 Following Montalvo and Reynald-Querol (2005) I use the term “polarization” to refer to countries with only a couple of (ethnic) groups which are more or less similar in size. Therefore, countries with one ethnic group and countries with high ethnic heterogeneity have low polarization.

71 That there is hardly anything causing “natural” or predetermined forms of grievances has been powerfully advocated in Herrera’s (2007) analysis of the construction of economic interests in Russian regions during first half of the 1990’s.
caused by the imperial collapse (Posen 1993, Lawrence 2010).

The problem of ontological security, that is, the protection of historically construed cultural boundaries between groups (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 873) is an example of the elite motivation to construe grievances, especially on the part of the conservative ethnic entrepreneurs among the minority group. The problem cannot be avoided, since modernization fosters inter-group mixing. If framed as a deliberate policy of a majority group to assimilate a minority, the masses are incited to decide whether to trust their co-ethnics or others. The irony is that the failure of civic nationalism to absorb ethnic nationalisms set the context, identities and incentives for the elite behavior.

Of course, the list is not exhausted (we can include even the emergence of new technologies or discovery of new mineral resources), but it serves to emphasize the likely suspects that in a particular context can disturb the fragile political equilibrium. McAdam (1996; 24, 32) simply labels such events and processes as “opportunities”, while Lawrence (Ibid.) calls them “triggers” and Fearon (1995) uses the term “indivisible issues”. In essence they are the events that disturb the political equilibrium and make some ethnic groups fear the new status quo, while others fear exactly the revision of status quo.

The legitimacy of the existing political system limits the revisionist elite’s demands. Legitimacy in a highly polarized society depends on the ability of its political system to absorb

72 The first things that come to mind regarding “indivisible issues” include control over a holy site or a strategic geographical point. However, historical controversies can offer some of the most antagonizing “indivisible issues”. For instance, the Armenian genocide can either be recognized or not. It cannot be recognized “moderately”. This is why different historical narratives so potently antagonize groups and set off zero-sum game among them.
grievances and promise meaningful reforms, while keeping the equilibrium among group’s vital interests (the way the elites define them). McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) would call it “contained contention”. Once sides become unable to solve the disagreement within the existing institutional framework, the political system becomes a weapon at the hands of the status quo faction. The side fearing for its vital interest under status quo will thus have a crucial incentive to challenge the institutional framework itself.

McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2001, 8) associated contentious politics with an “innovative action” of an aggrieved group. “Innovative action” is a step out of the established patterns of political life and thus challenges the existing order. The status quo faction can either “certify or decertify” (accept or reject) such entrance of the new actor in the political life (Ibid, 213). In either case, the new social actor surfaces, but if it is “decertified” the relationship turns into contentious politics. The chart below represents the path toward the “actor constitution” and is taken from McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (Ibid.).

(Chart 5.1 “Actor constitution”; McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow 2001, 113)

If the revisionist and status quo factions cannot come to an agreement on restructuring of the political system that would satisfy all side’s vital interests, they are entering the ultimate zero-sum game. That means they are most likely going to intensify internal debates on the use of
violence. McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2001, 7) found sources of “[v]irtually all broad social movements, revolutions, and similar phenomena…” to have “…roots in less visible episodes of institutional contention”. Institutional contention spills over because inter-factional bargaining and intra-factional debates on the appropriateness and the consequences of the use of force are most likely paralleled by the activities of their rank and file in contested public spaces.

Since violence is extremely costly, but obviously not the worst of all options (Fearon 1995), and negotiations do not seem encouraging, the non-violent steps to assert one’s authority in the contested space seem a rational choice. Not only do these activities increase risk of violent friction between the lower members of factions, but they also serve as an instrument measuring the fluctuations of the popular support. The weapon of choice is found in symbols of factions’ ideologies.

Symbols are not only abstract. They are put on tangible, three-dimensional carriers: newspapers, documents, flags, plaques, graffiti, posters, uniforms, insignias, even humans congregated in demonstrations occupying physical space. Even a song can become a tangible symbol. If it is played louder than a song favored by the other faction, or contains provocative words, it is imposing itself symbolically on the physical space. Erecting barricades, as much as it is physical, is even more so symbolic demarcation of the territory, actors and is a challenge to a status quo.

Language use is a particularly common opportunity for inter-ethnic friction for two reasons. First, the more the vocabulary employs “war-like” wording, the more likely the radicalization among the followers is. This has been noted famously by Thucydides. Second, domination is often established when one side has to “yield” and use other side’s language. This is especially so in ethnic conflicts. Even when both groups speak the same language, they tend to
emphasize dialects and even regional jargons (or even invent new words) as means of asserting authority. While this friction may be avoided in private spaces, in institutions and public spaces that is impossible.

The fight over the monopoly of violence in a contested territory, i.e. organized political mass violence, is not the natural next step. It is usually preceded by a “war of symbols”. In it, violence may be used against such tangible carriers of unacceptable symbols. **Physical violence repertoire aiming at non-human symbol carriers** consists of: tearing posters, erasing or painting over graffiti, plaques and road signs (especially bilingual ones), removing flags, etc. **Non-physical violence repertoire aiming at humans** consists of: organizing counter-demonstrations, denying service in shops, sacking from jobs, demanding signing of loyalty oaths, etc. **Physical non-lethal violence is also aiming at humans** when they are hardly distinguishable from the symbols they carry (banners) and perform (occupying space). This violence consists of: use of water cannons, tear gas, beatings, rubber bullets, etc. *This is how carriers of symbols transcend the realm of rhetorical and symbolic confrontation of factions driven by incompatible ideologies into a physical confrontation over the contested territory.*

None of the mentioned actions is directed against the life of the other faction’s members. They are, nevertheless, clear acts of aggression, both establishing one’s authority as well as collecting information about the other side’s resolve. Will this escalation from non-violence to non-lethal violence\(^73\) metastasize into massive lethal violence, such as civil war or not? It depends on two factors. **One** is that the *interests at stake are vital* for all sides, turning the relationship into an *ultimate zero-sum game*: actors can either fight or give up on their vital

\(^73\) Or, roughly in the vocabulary of McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow (2001), transition from “contained” to “transgressive” contention.
interest. The other is the different views regarding the international context: revisionist faction trusts that external support will help neutralize the status quo faction’s superior capabilities, while status quo faction trusts differently.

The concept of a “vital interest” will be analyzed more in the following section. That section will also bridge conceptualization of the “vital interests” in both domestic and international realm. However, at this moment, I would like to propose that domestic factions’ vital interests revolve around the tension between centralization and decentralization. A majority faction favors centralization and unification by shattering existing high polarization into a multitude of small identities (usually by creating small administrative units) and/or by fostering civic nationalism. On the other hand, minority factions favor decentralization, demanding stronger territorial subdivisions and/or veto-based constitutional arrangements, if not outright secession.

It is quite impossible to have a deep strife in any society without factions’ resorting to external support. Violence applied to vital property, body and life of the other side is then employed as a natural next step in the already established pattern of escalation. However, it is not predetermined by the preceding progression. It is a rational decision of the elites to resort to organized violence in order to back their demands in the ongoing bargaining process over sovereignty. The influence of the factions’ perceptions of external support is crucial and will be discussed further in chapters 6 and 7. In conclusion of this section, here is the basic model of the “ultimate zero-sum game”:

\[
\text{High Ethnic Polarization} + \text{Homogenized Ethnic Elites} \rightarrow \text{the Ultimate Zero-Sum Game}
\]

\[H_2: \text{When mass grievances in a highly polarized society homogenize ethnic elites in antagonistic positions regarding their vital interests, their relationship transforms into the ultimate zero-sum game: a choice between fighting a war and giving up on a vital interest.}\]
5.2. The “Ultimate Zero-Sum Game”: Approximating “Vital Interests”

Defining concrete “vital interests” is quite context-dependent. The goal of this section is to emphasize the need for a particular sensitivity in studying the political framework structured by a whole network of actors’ interests. The closer our sketch of such framework is to the “reality”, the closer we are to understanding the opportunities and constraints structuring actors’ strategic choices in both international and domestic dimensions.

The first step is to disaggregate “interests” into ends actors prioritize and the means they use to reach such ends. The term “interest” may be a bit ambiguous, since actors can have an interest in a supreme end, such as survival, but also in means providing for a survival, such as military power. Finnemore (1996, 2), as well as Legro and Moravcsik (1998, 23), brought attention to this ambiguity regarding whether “power” is a “means” or an “end”. Burchill (2005, 212) is using “national interest” for “ends” (such as survival) and “means & purpose” (such as military power). I would like to avoid any confusion, so I am accepting breaking “national interest” into “ends” and “means”.

Biological survival as an end is expectedly preferred to any other. It seems there is a consensus on this issue among different theories. For the positivist (neo-realist and neo-liberal) and conventional constructivist (Wendtian) schools of international relations, state survival tops all other concerns (Burchill 2005, ch.6). This parsimonious approach hides some problems, revealed by other theories. Marxists and liberals expose the problem of state being a means, rather than an end of various domestic groups. Whether those groups are understood as classes

---

74 For more details on defining national interest, see Burchill (2005), Finnemore (1996) and Weldes (1999)
(in Marxist view) or a cosmopolitan society (as some liberals see it), state survival is not necessarily a goal. In fact, it may be an impediment. Hence, survival of those social groups, rather than survival of a state, should be understood as groups’ primary goal.\textsuperscript{75}

Assuming that state survival is a primary end also tends to downplay the importance of internal divisions within a state. The fact is that so many social groups (especially strong ethnic minorities) would prefer dissolution of their state, but that only few are willing to risk fighting for secession, implies that the survival of people, not of state, is the primary end of humans. State is thus only a means and not necessarily the end. As German born British scholar Georg Schwarzenberger (1951, 126) wrote in the early years of the Cold War: “… in their attempts to influence international relations, they [business and political elites, my remark] work in the main through the medium of either state apparatus or of public opinion.” Reification and adoration of state as an “end” worthy of dying for has replaced religious fervor with the advent of nationalism.\textsuperscript{76} With the European integration and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the nationalistic state-centered paradigm of “national security” has been challenged by people-

\textsuperscript{75} If we go a step further down the constructivist lane, we might even question the biological survival as a given primary end. For example, a religious group preferring rewards in the afterlife may not be driven by biological survival. Also, honor and historical commemoration of one’s heroism have also driven groups and individuals to discard sheer survival. The research program of “strategic culture” analyzes how cultural differences influence national strategies. For a nice overview, see Margaras (2004).

\textsuperscript{76} “\textit{Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori}” (“it is sweet and honorable to die for the fatherland”) is a verse of ancient Roman poet Horace and it spread since 19\textsuperscript{th} century on the wave of the emerging nationalism.
centered “human security” (Paris 2001).  

Since state is therefore a means to survival (survival being the ultimate end), it is important to understand that this differentiation is most visible in states of small capacity, the ones more susceptible to civil wars. In such states, large minorities are motivated to tend for their own security, rather than rely on the state. In high capacity states, the grievances and their expressions are too weak to challenge the state. Therefore, the difference between population and the state is for all purposes blurred, since all grievances are contained within the existing political structure.

This categorization of states according to their capacity instructs my basic ranking of actors in international system. On the top we find big powers, the “poles” of the international system, capable of effectively denying anyone’s interference in their domestic politics, even though they are susceptible to the effects of the international economic fluctuations (US, China, Russia, UK, France and Germany). Below, there are regional powers, states of high capacity deterring foreign interference by an ability to switch alliances among big powers (Iran, Turkey, Poland, Israel). One step down are placed states whose capacity depends on the international strategic and economic context. If left on their own, they could relatively efficiently deal with any internal dissent, assert their monopoly of violence and absorb grievances in their political system (Georgia, Macedonia, Spain and Ukraine). Below them are the states sustained only because of the external support. If left on their own, they would collapse along various cracks: class, ethnic,

---

77 This paradigm has served the emerging practices of “humanitarian intervention”, conditioning sovereignty upon the respect of human rights and softening borders to enable European integration under liberal paradigm.
regional and religious (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bahrain, Yemen, and North Korea). The bottom is reserved for failed states. They are essentially territories that only formally exist as states, but have no single force capable to assert monopoly of violence (Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia).

“De facto states” are territories with a monopoly of violence, but lacking international recognition. They share a dramatic tension with the nominal central governments of states within which they are formally located (Kurdistan, Somaliland and Transnistria). Although this division seems categorical, it should be viewed along a continuum.

While all actors share the same end (survival), their position in the international system is conditioning the means available to secure their survival. The means to secure survival are usually known as “vital interests”. The etymology is helpful to understand this, since “vital” is a word of Latin origin denoting “life”. So, “vital interests” represent a cognitive preoccupation over means that directly and exclusively secure life, i.e. survival, as the supreme social end.

Along the same lines, I propose defining “peripheral (non-vital) means” as means with two following properties. One, they enable easier, indirect and non-exclusive access to vital means. Two, they are negotiable and can be risked as a test of the other actors’ credibility to commit. Wendt (1992, 405) is explaining how social threats are construed, not given, by describing how we would learn about aliens’ intentions, if they were to show up. I believe there

---

78 Highly ethnically polarized countries facing “resource course”, such as Nigeria, may be prime candidates for this category, since state capacity is directly dependent on external factors.

79 On problems of conceptualizing failed states, see Nay (2013)

80 For example, a de facto state recognized by half of the UN members falls between two categories.
is no need to introduce aliens to describe the process of learning in building intersubjective meanings. The concept of peripheral interests serves the purpose. Since actors can attempt to change identities (for example, by reframing the ethnic conflict as class conflict), such change essentially is an attempt to “restart” socialization of groups in question. Groups then risk peripheral interests as a test of other side’s credibility in reframing the relationship in a more peaceful and mutually beneficial form.

I have used the expression “cognitive preoccupation” to capture what Finnemore (1996, 6) observed as social construction of material world, when she claimed that: “Material facts do not speak for themselves, and attempts to make them do so have limited utility.” While I absolutely agree with such constructivist approach, I find total dismissal of positivist theories’ reliance on material facts to be too harsh. Some material needs such as shelter, food, heat, and water condition human cognition and therefore social interaction. Material facts of this sort can be viewed as if they do speak for themselves, since their scarcity painfully reminds humans of their importance. These vital needs teach humans about the need to provide for them.

This means that actors can have full empathy for each other, but they might not have enough resources to satisfy the essential needs of their populations. Then, they might rationally choose to delegitimize competitor’s demands. Finnemore accepts this (1996, 6), but does not seem to appreciate the effects of human ability to make predictions and plans. Humans have the ability to study causes and therefore make plans for securing supplies of “vital commodities”. Hence, they are not left with too many options when it comes to means to provide for their survival. Securing “vital commodities” then effectively becomes an exogenous and fixed societal

81 There is a vast literature on the disastrous effects of the “inevitable” depletion of hydrocarbons. See, for example, Michael T. Klare’s opus.
interest in a Waltzian sense.

However, the more their planning involves behavior of other humans, the more their perceptions and values come into play. This is a connection between Wendtian concepts of internal (corporate) and external (role) identities of a state. Measuring how much water or wheat a society needs is easier than measuring what a neighboring society’s intentions are. Historical record of interaction among these societies is what teaches and reminds them about the role of the “other”. Just like the history of famine and drought teaches societies about their vital interest in acquiring the means (arable land, water) to survive, the history of interactions with other groups teaches societies about their neighbors’ role. This was noted by Posen (1993), introducing a necessary constructivist implant of history in a neo-realist account of civil war onset.

As mentioned before, Kaufmann (2006, 137) observed how a long term ethnic war might solidify antagonistic identities so much so that they resemble the ideal type of “ancient”, “primordial”, hatred. Indeed, a legacy of existential threat posed by another group may construe defense from that group to be a vital means for survival. Hence, neutralizing the threat ascends to the same level of “primordial” (“of first order”, i.e. vital) concerns, among which we find uninterrupted supply of vital commodities. Along the same lines, Burchill (2005, 26) observes how “states” may observe some maritime routes, natural resources and traditional invasion routes to constitute their “national interests”. He concludes that (Ibid, p.50) “subjective

---

82 There is an interesting literature on chronic rivalries. See Colaresi, Rasler and Thompson (2007) for an illustrative introduction.

83 “Critical geopolitics” builds its research program on this premise. The seminal work attempting to deconstruct the geopolitical narratives is Ó Tuathail’s Critical Geopolitics (1996).
interpretations are therefore unavoidable”. While I agree, it is clear that the room for interpretations is sometimes so narrow that subjective interpretation cannot but resemble Waltz’s exogenously given interest.84

Big powers’ vital interests thus are focused on means securing survival: flows of vital commodities and the favorable trends in the balance of power. As power relations are being legitimized by norms, norms as well can be perceived as means securing survival (i.e. the supreme social end). This is especially so in the modern times of awakened and politicized masses which are demanding legitimacy.

Smaller states’ survival crucially depends on their relations with big powers. As concluded in the previous section, those smaller countries which are highly polarized within are locked in an existential tension between decentralization and centralization. The level of (de)centralization is a means of survival for both the status quo and the revisionist faction within a country. Securing external support is one of the most important components of state capacity. It sways the internal balance of power one way or another and therefore dominates domestic actors’ bargaining power.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate: “Vital interests” should be understood as the means actors’ believe are securing the supreme end: survival. That is why wars are fought to

---

84 Thus, rather than being separate categories, constructivism and positivism may appear more relevant at different points on a continuum of planning. Positivism may be more appropriate in short-term analysis where identities and interests seem given, while constructivism may yield better analysis in long-term processes, where fluctuations in both identities and interests may be more likely.
secure these means, unless the fighting itself would endanger survival more and/or faster. Once actors get into this dilemma in their relationship, I understand that to be the ultimate zero-sum game.

Here is where the big powers’ means of survival (securing vital geographic locations, norms and favorable balance of power) meet domestic factions’ means of survival (securing external support).

In this section, I disaggregated states based on their internal cohesion and the way they secure their survival. This has two important implications. The first is that the primary actor is not a state, but a sub-state group. The second is that this conclusion requires conceptual reappraisal of sovereignty and its place in international conduct.

5.3. “Conflict Groups” and Sovereignty

The essence of civil war is the militarized struggle over authority in a certain territory (Kalyvas 2008, 399). The primary actor therefore must have sufficient fighting capability (Burchill 2005, 27). This problematizes both the elite and an individual person as singular actors. The elites do not have enough manpower to enter the theater, while resorting to an individual as the primary actor does not capture the intersubjectivity in actor formation and subsequent ranking of preferences. This does not mean that there is no room for the elites or an individual in the analysis. It only means that the search for actors excludes those without sufficient potential to enter the theater of war.

Abandoning states as primary actors is natural in studies of civil wars. However, even in international studies, the idea is hotly debated. Some examples of substate actors include: Gilpin’s (1983) “conflict groups”; Azar’s (1986), Fisher’s (1997) and Wimmer’s (2013) “identity groups”; Ashley’s critique of state-centrism (1986); Singer and Small’s “political entity not a
member of interstate system” (Sambanis 2004, 817); Hironaka is not specific, but resolutely criticizes state-centrism (2005, 11); Wagner’s “economic predators” (Fearon 2010), while Mylonas (2012) employs the concept of “core and non-core groups”. Schwarzenberger (1951, 13) wrote that: “…power politics may be defined as a system of international relations in which groups [my italics] consider themselves to be ultimate ends; use, at least for vital purposes, the most effective means at their disposal and are graded according to their weight in case of conflict.”

I opt for Gilpin’s “conflict group” to be understood as the primary actor, because it captures both civil war as a collective action and the self-confidence of group members regarding use of violence. Gilpin (1983, 17) draws on Dahrendorf’s marrying of conflict group with the territoriality in order to recognize a state. While Gilpin then proceeds to employ nation-state as a principal actor, he is clear about state being “coalition of coalitions whose objectives and interests result from the powers and bargaining among the several coalitions” (Ibid, 18).

It is logical that some of these coalitions may nurture resentment for the existing internal balance of power. They may be minorities of different kinds: students, trade unions, ethnic groups and others. If they do not show signs of an ability to mobilize, arm and control their membership in violent punctuation of the existing domestic equilibrium, they are of no interest for the study of civil war.

The “conflict groups” can be recognized by their history of violent exchanges with the dominant group. The primary candidates are large ethnic minorities with traditional ethno-nationalist movements. Also, they can be groups achieving their cohesiveness along the lines of the predominant ideological global confrontation. For example, class based ideology during the Cold War was more likely to mobilize masses than religion. With the collapse of such global
ideological confrontation, class conflict has been replaced by, or perhaps reframed in, ethnic, tribal and religious divisions.

Likewise, as mentioned in the previous chapter, states within which a certain “conflict group” exerts full control are usually conflated with the state itself. Then, such states are perceived as unitary actors, which, in my view, is not useful. This is especially so when those states maintain their internal cohesion by relying on external support.

Understood this way, the world politics’ principal actors relate to the formally recognized states in a similar fashion as the “surface web” relates to the “deep web”. While the “surface web” is indexed and easily found by search engines such as Google, “deep web” contains websites not indexed and therefore invisible for the search engines. Nevertheless, they operate, serve their users and can surface at any time upon being registered. This “registration” of websites is in a way comparable to the recognition of groups as “sovereign”.

Just like the owners of websites do not always want to register and surface in the visible part of the web, the ethnonationalist movements do not always surface in demand of “registration”, i.e. recognition of their sovereignty. However, when they do, they throw themselves at the mercy of the international system, hoping that the forces in support of their sovereignty will prevail before they are crushed by the government they challenged. Sovereignty, then, should be reappraised not as an “objective” component of international system, recognized upon fulfilling certain objective criteria.

Most famously, sovereignty has been problematized by Krasner’s (1999) work powerfully titled *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Krasner persuasively showed how the Westphalian norm of non-interfering in other’s internal affairs fails whenever “the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences are in conflict” (Ibid, 66). That is, whenever a vital means of states
need to be preserved or acquired, they will breach the existing norms if they can get away with it.

Krasner, of course, was not the first, nor the last to notice this. Schwarzenberg was no less blunt at the time when decolonization and sovereignty were among the most important topics in world affairs:

Conception such as State sovereignty and sovereign equality are merely ideological symptoms of a reality which they symbolize or disguise. Terms of this kind are dangerous. They strengthen the illusion that all that is needed to remedy the situation is to deal radically with the legal superstructure to which they belong. Such self-deception is facilitated by the apparent ease with which, in certain circumstances, even world powers are prepared to agree to departures from these principles. (Schwarzenberger 1951, 19)

Most recently, the famous professor of international law, Eric Posner, invited his country to reckon with the post-Cold War world in a strikingly similar fashion. His gripping passage deserves to be quoted at length:

[T]he liberal order that was born with the Soviet Union's collapse rested on a fiction: that all nations were equal and submitted to the same rules because they reflected universal human values. In reality, of course, the rules were Western rules, and they were enforced largely by the United States, which was no one's equal. Today, the fiction has been exposed, and the world order looks increasingly like the one that reigned during the 19th century. In this order, a small group of "great powers" sets the rules for their relations with each other and interacts under conditions of rough equality. Smaller countries survive by establishing client
relationships with the great powers. The great powers compete with each other over these client relationships, but otherwise try to maintain conditions of stability that allow for trade and other forms of cooperation. The major challenge for the great powers is to ensure that competition for clients does not erupt into full-scale war. In the late 19th century, the great powers were Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States. Today, they are the United States, China, Russia, and Europe. (Posner 2014)

It is quite hard to escape reviewing international order as hierarchical and sovereignty as a value existing along a continuum, rather than in categorical terms. Lake (2009, 50) warned against the refusal to see hierarchy in international relations. Critical constructivists have been especially keen on deconstructing sovereignty (Cox 1997, 249).

However, Wendt (1992) seems to assign much more significance to the practice of sovereignty than I think is due. Wendt (Ibid, 412) asserts that: “The essence of this community is a mutual recognition of one another's right to exercise exclusive political authority within territorial limits. These reciprocal "permissions" constitute a spatially rather than functionally differentiated world…”

The idea that states issue “permissions” to each other cannot but seem cynical if we imagine Russia and Georgia exchanging “permissions” establishing their exclusive control within the confines of their borders. As a matter of fact, Russia has “taken back” its “permission” from Georgia regarding its northern regions and assigned it to the two breakaway provinces: Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The attribute of sovereignty has been employed as a tool of foreign policy, with all its implications. To draw a parallel with the surface/deep web, we can say that South Ossetia and Abkhazia have “registered” with the “Russian internet search engine”. Hence,
Russia finds two more “independent, sovereign, countries” in the world. In effect, what people of those regions are left with is uncertainty and fear over a disputed status and a frozen conflict in which they live. Hironaka (2005) reminds how insisting on the norm of sovereignty has served to protract civil wars in states having no structural preconditions to exercise monopoly of violence.

The examples of this kind abound. Few people remember that, for example, United States has never recognized Soviet occupation of Baltic states. The quarrel over China-Taiwan recognition issue, division of Cyprus and recognition of Palestine are some examples of the same phenomena. The status of southern Serbian province of Kosovo remains disputed, even dividing EU and NATO members. One thing is certain, though. The criteria for extending recognition to some “conflict groups”, but not the others, have not been grounded in the provisions of international law. The awkward lack of any consistency in the policies of recognition is evidence too large to be neglected. The geopolitical and normative interests of big powers drive their policies of issuing “sovereignty” to conflict groups they find useful or appropriate. In that way, “conflict groups” receive a permit to enter formal relations with their sponsors, legitimize agreements and send costly signals to other groups and big powers sponsoring them.

What are the international constraints and how they guide actors’ foreign policies will be discussed in the following chapter. Here I will replicate the fundamental hypothesis of this dissertation, so the reader can have a better understanding of where we are.

**Ultimate Zero-Sum Game + Relevant Systemic Change ➔ Civil War**

*H₁: The civil war onset is most likely when a change in the international balance of power is differently perceived by domestic actors antagonized in the ultimate zero-sum game.*

I will now move on to conceptualizing the second variable: “relevant change in the international system”.
Chapter 06: International System and Civil War

If international context is crucially influencing domestic conflict’s dynamics, it is natural to think about how to conceptualize that context as a variable. Very few states, if any, are self-sufficient. Even the ones whose trade with the external world is almost non-existent (North Korea today or communist Albania during the Cold War) must have some security concerns and cultural or ideological affinities. In any case, the elites in all states at every point in time have some idea of how the “perfect world” would look like. Of course, the issues are not all of the same value. Some are considered more important than others and they are often labeled as “vital national interests”, or what I would like to call them “vital means”, sought and employed in securing survival. How are those means defined and how search for them structures the international system?

6.1. The International Structure

Possession and use of military power is the fundamental means in securing survival. For offensive realists, such as Mearsheimer (2001), states want as much power as possible. For defensive realists, such as Waltz (1979) and Walt (1987), states seek only the amount of power that guarantees their security, and not preponderant power. Very few states are blunt about their strategic interests and instead they coat them by promoting norms they see useful (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

So, whether we talk about realist, constructivist or Marxist-inspired approaches, they all assume the existence of power structures limiting actions of international actors. The weaker the actor, the more limitations it runs into. The strength of actors is based on their material and ideational capabilities. These power centers are driven by their domestic economic needs,
systemic incentives, perceptions and norms. These concerns shape their foreign policy.

There are two basic approaches grounded in realism discussing change and stability (i.e. question of war and peace, conflict and cooperation) in international system: balance of power theory and power transition theory.\textsuperscript{85} Balance of power posits that equal strength is most likely to keep actors away from aggressive moves. Within balance of power approach, the debate is centered on the effects of polarity. The question is which system of power distribution is more peaceful: multipolar (several powers shifting alliances), tripolar (three dominant powers), bipolar (two stable alliances) or unipolar (hegemonic).

The power-transition (power-shift) theories assume the contrary. It is balance of power that is the most unstable environment for preserving peace. More precisely, it is hegemony that keeps international system in optimal stability. What highly increases the risk of a major war is when a rising power challenges a hegemon. Fearon (2010) praises Wagner’s critique of the concept of balance of power, since there is no method to calculate the polarity of the system. Since it is very problematic to establish whether the system is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar, in consequence it is hard to state which type of the system is more conducive to peace and stability.

Regardless of whether it is or it is not possible to measure polarity, all types of international system contain some dose of friction between main powers. The guiding concern driving my research is focused on civil war as a possible form expressing this friction between great powers in the international system.

States normally utilize hard, soft and smart power (Nye 2004) in deterring competitors and attracting allies. However, there is a big difference between modes of operation of powerful

\textsuperscript{85} For a comprehensive overview of these two approaches and prominent authors, see Danilović (2002, Ch. 4)
actors in past and modern times. Dominant powers did fight direct wars in the past, but the advent of nuclear weapons, high-tech economy, mass urbanization and dependence on complex infrastructure have made a direct violent confrontation a defeat in itself. A society may survive a frontline conventional war, no matter how destructive, as seen in the World War I. Societies may even renew themselves after prolonged occupation, mass killings and conventional carpet bombings, as seen after World War II. But the nuclear destruction of highly developed (infrastructure-dependent, very urbanized, technology-driven) societies would also destroy a distinction between victory and annihilation.

The “wise man” of American strategic thinking in the 20th century, George Kennan, saw only five power centers after World War II. They were the United States, Great Britain, Germany and central Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan (Gaddis 2005, 29). The centers of industrial, educational, financial and technological excellence are also most likely to be culturally attractive, that is, in possession of “soft power” (Nye 2004). By no means is this rank list fixed. The end of 20th century saw changes in India, Brazil and especially China that would have most certainly amended Kennan’s list (Cooper 1996, 18).

In a debate appropriately titled “Clash of the Titans”, Mearsheimer persisted that nobody can predict whether Chinese growth will remain peaceful or not (Brzezinski 2005). Brzezinski replied that nuclear weapons “changed everything” so the direct war is ruled out. Mearsheimer essentially uses Fearon’s “credible commitment” problem to question the possibility of peaceful rise of China. Since China cannot credibly commit not to abuse its power once it surpasses the US, the US will have to check China’s growth. However, the essence of credible commitment problem is in the absence of guarantees. One cannot allow for another power to get stronger, because there is no guarantee it will not abuse its newly acquired dominant position.
This is the conventional way of thinking, presupposing that military might depends on the industrial and technological strength. Therefore, an actor will be able to translate its economic and military preponderance into domination once it surpasses its rivals. However, a power maintaining a nuclear arsenal can always resort to nuclear holocaust deterrence, regardless of the relative size of its economy and conventional forces. Precisely because one cannot know whether nuclear holocaust would happen or not, because nobody can credibly commit that it would NOT happen in case of war, the direct conventional war between nuclear powers is ruled out for all practical purposes, regardless of their relative strength. It becomes impossible to translate economic and military preponderance into domination in the direct confrontation.

Since major wars between great powers have become highly unlikely, the battleground thus moved fully to the space between the borders of major powers — third countries, smaller and more exposed to external pressures. Danilović (2002, 171) goes as far as “… identifying national interests with the inherent credibility of threats, defining their essential aspects in major power extended deterrence in terms of the geopolitics of regional stakes, and providing robust findings about their strong impact on major power behavior.”

Smaller states, unlike big powers, have fewer chances in altering the structure of international system (De Nevers 2007). They can pick sides (balance or bandwagon) and they even may try to remain neutral. Of course, more powerful states are inclined to attract smaller
countries into tighter cooperation or outright domination. The following CIA study (1987) may have been written by any power’s intelligence service analyst:

Commotion in foreign countries often is bad news for US policy. Conversely, a potential for change may be good news (in a country currently unfriendly to the US). Even when the main news is not good, as long as the issue is the potential for change there may still be an opportunity for US policymakers – guided by US intelligence – to do something about it, such as shoring up a friendly regime or by cultivating opposition movements in the hope that a new regime will be friendly as well. (CIA 1987)

In the 19th century it was fairly easy for colonial forces to spread their control over the vast territories of Africa and Asia. The population inhabiting those areas lacked infrastructure, technology and ideology enabling massive mobilization and more effective employment of their numerical superiority. The 20th century and especially post-World War Two period saw sharp rise in nationalistic anti-colonial mass mobilization. The infrastructure built by colonial powers, education provided to local elites and the availability of modern weapons enabled politicized masses to effectively harass colonial troops. The pressure on European colonial empires, exhausted by World War Two, was too strong. Sooner or later, with more or less bloodshed, colonies acquired their independence.

The modern potential for mass mobilization drastically elevated the costs of outright military occupation. The problem persisted to this day, as noted by Hechter and Kabiri (2009) in their analysis of US efforts in Iraq. The high costs of imposing direct control over the population drove the decision-makers to turn to local leaders. The indirect rule via local leaders reduces resentment of population, which directs at least part of its anger to “their rulers”. This fine
balancing requires constant vigilance on the part of the dominating power, in order to keep their protegés protected from competitors.

As we have seen, intervening in internal affairs of smaller states is a primary frontline of big powers’ rivalry. Constrained by costs of nuclear exchange and economic warfare, they compete for influence in regions they find to be of national interest. Also, great powers compete in norm-building, promoting norms legitimizing their interest and also soliciting support of smaller actors in this respect. The outright occupation is the least favorite option, while helping cooperative factions gain power is the most favorite mode of interference. Not only that internal instability and external interventions may sway that particular country toward one power or the other, but they also influence alliance preferences of neighboring states (CIA 1981). Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that external support to some revisionist domestic faction may not be driven by the goal of dominating that particular country. The goal may be to exploit a weak regional country in order to attract the whole region into closer cooperation.

Having established the rationale behind external interference in domestic politics, the question arises about means and priorities. It cannot be assumed that any power can and is willing to intervene everywhere all the time. Internal and external constraints have to impose prioritization on the part of foreign policy elites. This problem has been highlighted by Van Evera (1991) at the eve of post-Cold War American global domination. Also, on similar grounds, Walt (1992) warned against the indiscriminate US interventions around the globe in his debate with Kaufman and Labs.

Since powers cannot intervene everywhere all the time, they discriminate between

---

86 The U.S. State secretary, John Kerry, used the phrase “line of fire”, to describe the string of states from Baltic to Balkans torn between Russia and the West (“B92” 2/25/2015)
priorities. That does not mean they maintain a fixed “ranking list”. The shifts in international balance of power, economic shocks, domestic affairs and even natural disasters can affect priorities. The most important point to make here is that, despite constant shifts and fluctuations in international dynamics, countries do prioritize. Powers are focused on international developments that may disrupt their vital economic and ideological structures. For those reasons, they maintain relatively constant interest in certain vital regions. Some authors label these regions as “pivotal” (Chase, Hill and Kennedy 1996; Brzezinski 1997).

This is a rather geopolitical approach, because it focuses on the primacy of spatial location of critical hubs. They may be centers of demographic activity and industrial production, sources of precious commodities, large markets or simply strategic transportation lines. Maps on the next page bring closer some vital geopolitical indicators: shipping routes and their “choke points” (map 5) and 2015 major hydrocarbons distribution networks in Northern Africa, Middle East and Eurasia (map 6). These are simple visual representations of some indicators important for global power distribution.

(See Appendix: Map 6.4 “Domains of maritime circulation”, Rodrigue 2013)

(See Appendix: Map 6.5 “Eurasian and North-African oil and gas pipelines in 2015”, Harvard World Map 2015)

They reveal how some actors and areas are more relevant than others for international dynamics. Furthermore, it implies that all big powers have to shape their foreign policies with some idea on how their relation to these key regions will affect their standing in the international system. Besides, they are also pushed to consider the relative importance of smaller countries and actors, whose political orientation may help or complicate powers’ regional interests. This
approach is classical geopolitical thinking, since political goals are largely dependent on geographical constraints.

Given the fundamental premise of the whole dissertation, that civil wars are a function of the international system, the key question of that connection is: how changes in balance of power in the international system affect the civil war dynamics? For instance, does balance of power among competing great powers ensures peace and stability within fragile states, or it can contribute to war onset? Or, perhaps, it is for the most part irrelevant. Since fragile states are torn between powers, any change in the balance of power leads to renegotiations among great powers’ regarding their relative standings, which then sends signals to factions within weaker countries. The importance great powers attach to those weaker countries determines credibility of signals, thus disturbing domestic balance of power within fragile states.

For example, the rise of Soviet Union encouraged communist insurgencies, while the increased economic output of USSR sustained those insurgencies against western sponsored governments. Therefore, the balance of power among the US and the USSR prolonged fighting in some countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, once USSR collapsed, communist insurgencies subsided where they flourished and peace was forged. Not only that communist insurgencies subsided, but disappearance of an ideological alternative to liberal democracy enabled peace agreements and transitions from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones (Wood 2003). On the other hand, civil wars erupted elsewhere.

Kalyvas and Balcells provided a useful chart of civil wars from 1944 to 2004:

(See Appendix: Chart 6.1 “Civil War Trends 1944-2004”; Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 419)

As we can see, the dramatic change in the balance of power correlates with decreasing numbers of ongoing civil wars. The number of civil war onsets and endings was roughly similar,
with the endings a bit more numerous. However, change in the balance of power also somewhat correlates with the spatial “migration” of civil wars. Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa and Eurasia saw increase, while Latin America and Southeast Asia saw decrease in civil wars (Ibid, 422). While Kalyvas and Balcells focus on the change of technologies of rebellion, I find this spatial shift in civil wars to be quite intriguing.

The end of the Cold War did not only see the collapse of the Soviet Union, but also the rise of China and its dramatic surge in cooperation with the West, mostly through outsourcing of production of cheap goods. This trading partnership and Chinese liberalization stabilized the strategic outlook of that region, by giving an incentive to regional regimes to get on board of economic improvement. The US-China tensions have developed in two parallel frontlines during the Cold War. In military terms, US intervened directly or via proxies to suppress communist movements and insurgencies. In economic terms, its aid and investments aimed at increasing both states’ capacities to channel popular political expressions and to increase standard of living. The US involvement was not a spontaneous effect of transnational capital movements. It was rational and driven by strategic imperative of containing Chinese influence in the region (Evans 1987, 209-210; Stubbs 1994, Ch. 22). Since US strategy mirrored Chinese, the more Chinese were cooperative, the more military de-escalation followed.\(^\text{87}\)

As we can see, both military engagement in civil wars (Vietnam, Korea) and the economic

\(^{87}\) On the other hand, economic collapse and inflamed anti-Russian nationalism in former USSR, coupled with Moscow’s attempts to keep newly independent states in its orbit, correlated with the explosion of civil wars in Caucasus and Moldova. The importance of the USSR’s collapse for the war in Yugoslavia will be detailed later in this dissertation.
support in building up state capacity and standard of living (“Asian Tigers”) were tools employed in securing vital means of US survival — strong allies in South-East Asia blocking Chinese expansion. If one power declines, its protégés are defeated, but the window of opportunity opens up for until then suppressed revisionist forces in its shrinking sphere of domination. This is the spatial shift of civil war. Theoretically, it is possible that no drastic change in the number of civil wars could be detected, yet the change in balance of power remains behind the mechanism. If statistical analysis neglects this, it might conclude that changes in balance of power are not significant for civil war onset, which would be erroneous.

Geographic representations may be helpful in depicting the tangible dimensions of global power distribution in a classic geopolitical sense. However, they are not very useful in presenting perceptions of actors, their identities, as well as changes in international norms. As constructivists and post-positivists in general have observed, we cannot simply assume the interests of states to be given. They are rather a product of the social interaction and the meanings attached to it. Not exogenously given by the anarchical structure (Wendt 1992). If this is so, it is important not only to study the “objective”, tangible, variables under positivist assumptions. Research must necessarily be supplemented by considerations of actors’ perceptions, identities and norms to which they subscribe.

Powers are not necessarily driven only by their sheer power considerations. Sikkink and Finnemore (1998, 894) resolve a constructivist problem of explaining international change by insisting on emerging norms as a driver of such changes. Emerging norms may influence powers’ foreign (and domestic) policies regarding considerations that are not directly affecting vital means of their survival. However, when it comes to questions of national security, it is questionable whether norms guide the imperative of survival or they legitimize the resulting
For example, although widely regarded as the eminent realpolitik scholar-practitioner, Kissinger (2014) surprised many (Lynch 2014) with his book on world order drawing heavily on constructivist considerations. Culture, norms and legitimacy feature prominently in his account on the possibility of international order. Professor Lynch (Ibid.) effectively summarized this constructivist turn as he offered a couple of characteristic Kissinger’s views:

This absence of a normative consensus is a recipe for instability: “any system of world order, to be sustainable, must be accepted – not only by leaders, but also by citizens.” [Kissinger’s] question, ultimately, is this: “Can regions with different cultures, histories, and traditional theories of order vindicate the legitimacy of any common system? That’s the sort of question that could have served as an epitaph for Alexander Wendt’s foundational work of constructivist international relations theory. (Lynch 2014)

However, the truth is that Kissinger is not a newly convert to constructivism, but his evolution started long before. In his seminal 1994 book Diplomacy, he maintained that a stable international order required both power and legitimacy:

Equilibrium works best if it is buttressed by an agreement on common values. The balance of power inhibits the capacity to overthrow the international order; agreement on shared values inhibits the desire to overthrow the international order. Power without legitimacy tempts tests of strength; legitimacy without power tempts empty posturing. (Kissinger 1994, 77)

Therefore, norms legitimizing the existing order can sometimes be vital means in securing
survival, especially so in times of changing balance of power. Shared norms defuse the revisionists’ legitimacy and serve to cut them off from the masses that are increasingly politicized in the modern era of instant communications and easily mobilized by modern technology and infrastructure.

Summarizing the ideas laid out above, the international dynamics relevant for the domestic stability of smaller states can be expressed in the following three dynamics.

The first relevant dynamic is the classical geopolitical competition for critical geographic locations. For example, a military aid to a regional client. If that policy is countered by another power, both domestic factions (status quo and revisionist) are most likely to resort to violence. This idea presupposes the changes in the relative capabilities of powers. It depends on one power growing enough to challenge the status quo in a geopolitically vital region. A model would look like this:

\[
\text{Geopolitical Power Competition + Domestic Ultimate Zero-Sum Game} \rightarrow \text{Civil War Onset}
\]

The second relevant international dynamic is the emergence of new norms legitimizing changes in the balance of power and the emerging new regional/international order. Here, civil war may in fact be an unintended local consequence of a global shift. For instance, promoting the norm of self-determination against the norm of sovereignty is a signal picked up by many revisionist ethnic groups.

The confusion and conflict between norms as they fluctuate in reflection of the changing balance of power heightens the domestic uncertainty in \textit{highly polarized societies}. It may prompt revisionist groups to violently challenge central government \textit{in expectation} of external support, while the central governments may resist that challenge in the name of until then established
norms. In this case, status quo and revisionist groups operate under different assumptions regarding the ruling norms of appropriate conduct. A status quo faction frames the situation referencing traditional norm, while revisionist faction is invoking the emerging norm. A model would look like this:

| Norm Confusion + Domestic Ultimate Zero-Sum Game | Civil War Onset |

The third dynamic is pressuring powers to check each other’s geopolitical or normative power projection even in insignificant matters, simply in order to protect and/or maintain their own image and credibility. In the previous two dynamics (geopolitical and normative), powers were driven by positively formulated goals. Here, powers are driven by a negatively formulated goal - preventing competitor’s gain is a gain in itself. The effect on highly polarized societies is, nevertheless, independent of powers’ motivations. As noted in a CIA study (1981): “A struggle in a country of little economic or strategic significance would evolve into a major crisis if it came to be perceived as a test of the power, resolve, or restraint…” For example, some Cold War cases of US-Soviet rivalry were driven largely by the need to maintain credibility among allies (Ibid.). Big powers’ in a hostile relationship thus cannot but have their credibility as a zero-sum game.

If civil war is a function of changes in the international system affecting highly polarized societies, there have to be some conditions reducing the scope of such effects. Otherwise, this hypothesis would over-predict. Firstly, the changes in the international system affect only the regions lost by the declining power and the regions insignificant to the growing power.
Therefore, whether one subscribes to the balance of power or power transition theory of change and stability in the international system, both imply civil war onset/termination as an expression of fluctuations in the balance of power. Such proxy wars can also feed on prolonged balance of aid provided by external sponsors and thus last for long. Once a sponsoring power in such a relationship yields, its clients will lose capacity to resist and the civil war is most likely to be over. However, other clients of the declining power, who were enjoying dominant position within their countries, may then be challenged. The chart below sketches the expected results of external interference on stability within highly polarized countries. The chart is partly inspired by Miller and Kagan (1997).
Powers’ influence on a **highly polarized country**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship:</th>
<th>Equal</th>
<th>Hegemony</th>
<th>Changing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Protracted war, Frozen conflict</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>War Onset War Ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>War Ending Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Frozen conflict</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>War Onset War Ending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chart 6.3 “The effects of powers’ presence within highly polarized countries”)

Another factor limiting effects of the international system on the domestic stability is the inherent trade-off powers’ make when they throw their resources (material and/or diplomatic) into one region. As discussed above (Van Evera 1991, Walt 1992 and, perhaps most famously, Kennedy 1987), resources are not limitless and powers have to prioritize. The problem is that, while we can expect powers to assign top priority to regions and norms they consider vital for the security of their survival, ranking of non-vital regions and norms is problematic. Rather than having a rank list of priorities, there is a constant fluctuation in the importance of the non-vital regions and norms. This fluctuation depends on their internal developments, actions of the competing powers and the effects all that can have on the credibility of the power in question or the interests of its allies.

Both of the above mentioned limitations (the importance of the region or the issue at stake and the limits to powers’ capabilities) are joined by another one. It is rational to assume that the declining power will try to impede or slow down the spread of its opponent’s influence. It is most likely to try to entrench itself in a “reserve position”. A “reserve position” means
strengthening and securing its influence in a selected country/region considered vital for recovery. The confusion and miscalculation in such situations results from the “unexpected” behavior of the declining power — its relative power is declining, but it simultaneously invests extraordinary effort to strengthen its influence in a selected country.

Lastly, I need to remind that only the countries in the ultimate domestic zero-sum game (i.e. highly polarized and highly antagonized within) are most likely candidates for major internal violence. Other countries may decide to bandwagon or balance against the emerging threats (Walt 1987). However, foreign policy of countries with low polarization is not a subject of this research.

Since the driving hypothesis of this research is that civil war is the result of the “ultimate zero-sum game under the “relevant change in international system”, I should conclude this section by clearly outlining what I consider to be that “relevant change”. In my understanding:

*Any change in the international system that makes ethnic elites disagree over their relative capacity for violence, over true interests of external powers and over prevailing international norms, should be considered as relevant for civil war propensity of the society in question.*

These changes are usually associated with the changes in the balance of power, indicated in various ways. Often, chronic economic crises within big powers lead to degradation of their foreign policies. These manifest most notably in shrinking of their economic aid to cooperative regimes, as well as having their allies distancing themselves or completely breaking of ties with them. As mentioned before, the new realignment of international or regional order requires redefinition (including reconfirmation) of prevailing norms. Both strategic and normative confusion that ensues is opening a window of opportunity for both revisionist and status quo
factions within societies entangled in the ultimate zero-sum game.

6.2. Justifying Regional Focus

The fluctuations in international politics and the trade-offs powers have to make in order to avoid the overstretching are inevitable. This makes me highly suspicious of the possibility for an overarching theory predicting timing, location and duration of civil wars. Hence, I think a theoretical compromise is necessary. This compromise should marry the grand strategy with the area studies, that is, the involvement of big powers within specific regions. Narrowing down the scope of the research demands justification of area studies, not only regarding theoretical reasons, but also regarding policy prescriptions.

Theoretically, we should start with assessing powers’ grand strategies, in order to have a basic framework of their strategic priorities, as they guide their commitments and resource allocation. Once we decide on the topic of our research (issue and/or region), powers’ capacities should be understood relationally (regarding the issue and region in question) and not structurally (relative to other powers in its totality, however measured), as argued by Baldwin (2013).

Quackenbush (2006) builds a concept of a “relevant neighborhood”, since actors (especially great powers) need to be able to overcome the “tyranny of distance” in order to engage each other. Most recently, Porter (2015) warned against forgetting the problem of distance in his forcefully titled piece “Why Distance Matters: Putting the ‘Geo’ Back into Politics”.

Policy wise, large-N correlation studies can hardly substitute in depth knowledge of area specialists. As persuasively put by Baldwin:
Policy-makers, however, tend to have notoriously short time horizons. If they are considering going to war, it is not very helpful to point out that if they fight fifty wars during the next century, they are likely to win most of them. Nor are they likely to care much about what factors were important in most of the wars for the past 500 years. Most policy-makers are likely to be involved in only one war. They want to know whether their country is likely to win a particular war, fought in a particular context, during a particular time period, against a particular adversary. (Baldwin 2013, 287-288)

Justification of area studies has been offered by scholars of different persuasions. Perhaps most famously, Wendt argued in favor of distinguishing cooperative and conflictual institutions as “stable self-other relations” (1992, 399). He specified three types of such “systems” within which states may find themselves in: “competitive”, “individualistic” and “cooperative” (Ibid, 400). Later on, he would assign labels: “Hobbesian”, “Lockean” and “Kantian”, respectively (1999), as if echoing Schwarzenberger’s (1951, 12) distinction between “international society” (relations based on interest and fear) and “international community” (relations based on sacrifice and love).

Developing constructivists approach in the security studies, Buzan and Weaver (2003) built on their previous work on “securitization” and widening of security as a concept, to develop a “Regional Security Complex Theory”. In this way, they attempted to build on the fundamental premise that “…threats in [political and military] sectors travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, [therefore] distance clearly plays a role in producing regional security complexes” (Ibid, xvi).
Applying essentially liberal approach, Solingen (1998) investigated how conflicting domestic coalitions (statist and internationalist) interact with global economic trends. The victory of one or the other then determines whether the cooperation and internationalization will prevail over the logic of nationalism, fragmentation, protectionism and ultimately conflict in regional context. She focused on the Middle East, southern Latin America and Korean peninsula. She used regional approach again in establishing why East Asian countries have largely been avoiding nuclearization, while Middle Eastern countries have been showing significant interest and effort to nuclearize (Solingen 2007).

Several works are representative of realist strain of thought distinguishing regions according to their role in the international system. For instance, already mentioned Danilović (2002), emphasized how regional stakes determine credibility of big power’s commitments. Thomas P. M. Barnett (2004) divided the world into the “Functioning Core”\(^{88}\) and the “Non-Integrated Gap”.\(^{89}\) The map on the next page is a simplified version of Barnett’s original map.

While the exact borders may be disputed (most recently by the civil war in Ukraine), the map fairly accurately depicts the polarization of the world. The task of the researchers is to disaggregate this accumulation into a meaningful subset of regional patterns, which can help policymakers conceptualize vital trends.

(See Appendix: Map 6.6 “The Pentagon’s New Map by Thomas P.M. Barnett, simplified”, Eaves 2008)

---

\(^{88}\) The “Functioning Core” is composed of: North America, Europe, Japan, Australia, China, India, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Russia.

\(^{89}\) The “Non-Integrated Gap”: Middle East, South Asia without India, Africa, Southeast Asia, and northwest South America.
A similar idea has been developed by the British diplomat Robert Cooper, who was also an advisor to the former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. The difference is that Cooper (2006) saw the world divided into “post-modern”, “modern” and “pre-modern” worlds. However, Cooper developed his approach in order to justify inability of the postmodern world to escape applying double standards. One set of standards applies to its own members (respect for the rules, sense of community and cooperation), while the other applies for interacting with populations captured in the mind frame of zero-sum game international relations (“modern world”) or failed states (pre-modern world”). In relations with them, “post-modern world” cannot escape acting in accordance with the “law of the jungle” (Ibid, 74).

Perhaps the most famous geopolitical account of the role of the regions nested between powers can be found in the bestselling Brzezinski’s book, The Grand Chessboard (1997). The map below depicts the Cold War “frontlines”, strings of states where anti-communist governments had to be preserved in order to “contain” communism.

(See Appendix: Map 6.7 “The Sino-Soviet Block and Three Central Strategic Fronts”; Brzezinski 1997, 7)

Indeed, the map is charting only a part of the global theater for the policy of “containment”, most notably articulated by George Kennan (Gaddis 2005). The “containment” inherently depended on the quality and durability of “containers”, that is, the “strengthening of the natural forces of resistance within the respective countries which the communists are attacking” (Kennan 90 There is a rough similarity with the Wendtian distinction of three possible types of interactions. “Post-modern” world is driven by Kantian cooperative type of relations, “modern” world is driven by Lockean state individualism and “pre-modern” world is driven by Hobbesean competitiveness.
Lastly, the evidence of recurring civil wars and/or history of violence (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Hoeffler 2012, even Posen 1993) indicating a higher probability to have new wars support regional/country focus. A foreign policy of a highly cohesive country is like a conduit transmitting changes in the balance of power (indicated by balancing or bandwagoning). However, a foreign policy of internally highly divided country is like a “damaged conduit”. The changes in the international/regional balance of power are not “transmitted”, but cause a “short-circuit”. Even Jervis (1976, 220) recognized the power of analogies made in regard to previous interactions between actors.

The rich narratives of past violence and specific local traits are highly relevant for domestic elites. How they translate and relate external changes to their domestic agenda is largely limited by the available options of historical identities. A history of inter-group mass violence indicates keen external involvement. Otherwise, groups would have either eliminated each other (genocide and/or ethnic cleansing) or forged a common identity (civic nationalism and/or assimilation). This does not mean that a completely new internal strife is impossible in societies without strong internal cleavages. Identities emerge and evolve constantly. It is only that such new identities are constituted within the established traditional unified political structure and culture, which limit revisionist groups’ contention repertoire. They are, therefore, less likely to resort to violence, because group memory does not contain a script for that role.
Before I lay down my approach to explaining civil wars, I would like to start with a brief review of how hypotheses derived from the existing theories fare in case of Yugoslavia. These hypotheses, of course, should be derived from the existing body of theory which one finds to be lacking in some relevant aspects. Fearon and Laitin (2003) have provided a useful summary of illustrative hypotheses that can be of help here.

**Perenialist** hypothesis, associated to the “ancient hatreds” argument has a problem in general to explain periods of cooperation, rise in ethnic intermarriage rates and even evolution of new, supra-ethnic identities. Clearly, in the case of former Yugoslavia, we saw rise of Yugoslav national identity, even before Yugoslavia was created. For example, Gavrilo Princip, the assassin of Franz Ferdinand in 1914, famously self-identified as a “Yugoslav”.

**Modernist** hypothesis revolves around problems with the upward social mobility (Fearon 2004) and are associated with the *grievances vs. greed* approach. It is expecting people pressured to choose between upward mobility and their culture to stick to their culture and violently challenge the system. However, in former Yugoslavia and especially socialist Yugoslavia, minorities enjoyed strong state support. For example, Albanians in Yugoslavia increasingly occupied prominent positions in political, cultural, sport and economic spheres of life. The official policy that was actually implemented was to support use of one’s native language in both education and administration. Furthermore, if economic modernization in an ethnically diverse country should lead to higher chances for civil war onset, it is very hard to explain the timing. Also, both the richest and the poorest parts of Yugoslavia engaged in secessionism and subsequently civil war. One of the richest federal units, Vojvodina and one of the poorest, Montenegro, firmly stuck against secessionism. What they both had in common was Serbian
nationalism that swept their populations. Sheer “greed” concerns played no part. In parallel, other modernizing multiethnic countries have avoided civil wars, and even any major mass violence.

_Lack of democracy_ hypothesis (Walter 2004; Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2002) predicts countries without democratic forms of expressing grievances will not be able to defuse violent forms of expression. However, Yugoslavia is actually one of classic examples where democratic transition and civil war coincided.

_Lack of civil society_ is Varshney’s (2001) hypothesis focusing on absence of cross-ethnic ties. It deals primarily with the micro-level and finds local setting with a lot of personal interaction among different ethnicities to be an impeding factor to mass violence. Rural areas tend to be less conducive to violence than urban areas without institutions that bridge ethnicities. However, in Yugoslavia, this argument fares bad. Not only that numerous organizations cutting across ethnic lines existed, but the number of mixed marriages was impressive in some cities, such as Sarajevo, Mostar and Vukovar. They will experience some of the worst fighting in the war.

_Time since last war_ is a correlation offered by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) which shows that the longer the peace — the more likely it is that it will be maintained. In Yugoslavia, the period between wars extended to 45 years. The problem is how to define “peace”. Yugoslavia experienced ethnic based terrorism throughout its existence and fight against enemies, domestic and foreign, was an ever present official discourse.

_Insurgency_ hypothesis focuses on structural (geographic, infrastructural and demographic) opportunities. Insurgents are supposed to enjoy the protection of rough terrain, lack of roads and support of population. While the latter was undoubtedly there, rough terrain and lack of
infrastructure were not important initially. The war in Slovenia was led mostly in urban areas. War in Croatia sparked in plains of Slavonia and Srem, where federal army’s tanks drove in with ease. In Kosovo, rough mountain terrain did provide some cover, but not enough to effectively challenge Yugoslav troops, once political decision was made to use them. Yugoslav troops forced Albanian insurgents to retreat deeply into mountains, once they were ordered to do so. This hypothesis also has a problem with the onset of insurgency. Terrain is constant, but insurgency is not. Another aspect of insurgency hypothesis is that the proximity of foreign assistance is important. Since this is part of my own approach to civil war, I accept it and will discuss it more in the rest of the dissertation.

*State capacity* hypothesis expects high GDP per capita to indicate a state strong enough to quell any insurgency. Given that Yugoslavia was richer than most other East European countries, some of whom were also ethnically diverse (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Baltic states, Czechoslovakia), it is surprising only Moldova experienced civil war.

*Relative strength of insurgents* highlights aspects that might reduce the power advantage central governments usually enjoy. These include, among others, political problems at the center and external support - “insurgency as international politics by other means” (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 85). Since I subscribe to this approach, I will elaborate on my understanding in the rest of this research, since Fearon and Laitin acknowledge difficulties with measuring this variable.

Territoriality implies rationality. More precisely, the goal of establishing a monopoly of violence over a certain territory, populated by masses of ordinary people, necessarily forces aspirants to have at least a minimum of instrumental rationality. Territorial control, therefore, requires planning and calculation involving tangible assets (solving collective action problem, mobilization, acquisition of arms and provisions, securing communication lines, etc.). One’s trust
in ideology, religious beliefs and even supernatural forces cannot be a sufficient substitute.

It can be reasonably expected that, even within groups believing in help from supernatural forces, the leaders would be more practical than their followers. Simply, leaders (or at least their advisers), need to *organize* the membership. There has to be some instrumental rationality employed on their part. Moreover, with the advent of modernity, it has been increasingly harder to invoke supernatural help as the sole source of assistance and encouragement to a territory-seeking movement. Even Melians, as I noticed in the first chapter, believed in “gods and Lacadaemonians” and not only gods. Challengers to the government and/or rival groups need to assess their chances against the government if they are willing to survive. Survival is a condition required to establish control over a territory.

### 7.1. Civil War Hypotheses: an Integrated Theoretical Explanation

Challengers start from a position of inferiority. They are challengers because they do not have the desired level of control over the desired territory. Governments usually control majority of instruments of coercion and economic activity. What makes it easier to challenge the government and/or other competitors is the ability to appeal both to masses and external sponsors. These two processes are mutually supportive. The more masses a movement attracts, more likely it is to find external backers. The more external backers one has, the more attractive it becomes in the eyes of domestic population.

There are two building blocks of this dynamic. One is the battle between the challengers and the government to frame the narratives shaping popular attitudes toward both the legitimacy of the existing order and the preferred alternatives. The other is the battle for the external backing of domestic groups’ agendas. The former corresponds to the Aristotelian emphasis on
factions’ disagreements over what is proportional and therefore just, which Thucydides observed in the way narratives employed by factions change. The latter corresponds to Thucydides’ focus on the external (systemic) context conducive to the escalation of strife into a full-fledged civil war.

In a domestic strife, factions’ elites usually participate in state institutions. Therefore, they can gather intelligence on others, even without revealing their own allegiances. In segregated societies, the oppressed group members can usually move around relatively freely and collect intelligence on the dominant group’s forces. Often, some of the oppressed are co-opted in the system, which gives them access to knowledge and communications (MacDonald 2014). All of this is significantly reduced in inter-state relations, so estimating what other states might do to help the rival faction is much harder. This is what makes external signals so important in encouraging or discouraging sides to war.

Revisionist faction, eager to improve its standing, tends to perceive changes in international context as opportunities. Therefore, the advocates of non-violent methods within the revisionist faction clash with the advocates of violent methods. The closer the strife-affected state is to the vital national interests of big powers, the powers’ interference is more likely. The more tangible are the forms of external interference, the more likely is the escalation of demands and actions of the revisionists.

Status-quo faction cannot easily compute how the signals coming from the international context transform revisionist faction’s preferences, capabilities and thus the internal balance of power. This is in line with Thyne’s (2006) external powers’ “cheap signaling” theory of civil war. Therefore, it is most likely to stick to the existing international norms and legal framework

91 See also Murrow (1999).
as a first step in the bargaining under new conditions of uncertainty.

Next, status quo faction is likely to offer only accommodations that would preserve its vital interests. In the same time, it will be trying to assess the capabilities of the revisionists: the level of popular support, resoluteness, unity and capability for violence. The revisionists, of course, will be trying the same in regard to the status quo faction. Since the external support remains the most elusive part of actors’ capability in the times of changed international balance of power, that is also the time when the domestic ultimate zero-sum game is most likely to throw antagonized masses into a civil war.92

However, the more vital the value is threatened, the less important the external support is. For example, if there is a belief that the alternative to war is extermination or a brutal form of slavery, the purpose of violent struggle is to survive a day longer, if escape is impossible. If one’s alternative to war is to be economically exploited, but there is a reasonable sense of personal safety in case of obedience, the insurgency largely depends on the trust in external support. This reasoning was largely captured in the popular “X-Files” movie “Fight the Future” (1998, video edition). One of the leading figures behind the conspiracy (involving negotiations with the alien invaders)93 explained the rational choice to Mulder.

Well-Manicured Man: Until Dallas, we believed the virus would simply control us; that massive infection would simply make us a slave race. Imagine our surprise when they begun to gestate. Survival is the ultimate ideology. Your father

92 This does not exclude the possibility that the domestic zero-sum game has produced other forms of localized and/or instantaneous violence, such as riots and/or terrorism.

93 Amusingly, Wendt (in his seminal 1992 piece) illustrated his argument in part by using a scenario of an alien invasion.
wisely refused to believe this.\textsuperscript{94}

Mulder: Why are you telling me this?

Well-Manicured Man: For the sake of my own children. (The X-Files: Fight the Future, 1998)

The chart below should help illustrate this point.\textsuperscript{95}

![Chart 7.1 “The likeliness of insurgency relative to external support and threats”](chart)

The vital interests, as it was said before, comprise both values and means. The supreme value is group survival. Among the vital means for securing survival we find a veto position in the political system to top the rest. A veto position can be legal (the right to block legislation)\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{94} The Well-Manicured Man refers to Mulder’s father’s distrust toward the alien invaders. We can say that, following Fearon (1995), the aliens were unable to credibly commit not to exterminate humans, but “only” to make them slaves.

\textsuperscript{95} External support typology (“minor”, “valuable”, “critical”) is from Byman (2001)
and violent (the credible threat of violence resting on group’s strength). The elements of group’s strength need to be acquired and/or preserved in order to sustain veto position and therefore secure group’s survival.

The ultimate zero-sum game involves the choice between fighting for the veto position and yielding, thus throwing self at the mercy of a rival. If a group cannot resort to external backing, it is most likely to give up on its veto position (though, as in the “X-Files” movie, the efforts might continue clandestinely). However, this is highly dependent on the internal context: ideology, identities and therefore goals of domestic groups. Ultimately, if a group believes to be facing extermination, the relevance of external support plummets and the sheer fight for survival erupts.

The bargaining theory regarding the onset of violence has been discussed in chapter 3. Simply described, it is a refinement of Fearon’s (1995) bluffing (“asymmetric information”) and “credible commitment” problems. The refinement consists in insisting that the bargaining does not “fail” with the onset of violence. Rather, it continues as acts of violence reveal the “real” structure of relations (strength, resolve, external backing, etc.). Then, along with the episodes of violence, actors redefine their demands and exchange new offers and counter-offers (Wagner 1999, 2000; Reiter 2003).

If war removes uncertainties regarding relative power which led to the war, the problem of explaining protracted wars remains (Reiter 2003, 30). Why some wars can last for long if it is true that the length of a war and uncertainty regarding relative strength of actors is inversely proportionally correlated? For a useful review of some counter-insurgency literature emphasizing the external support as crucial in insurgents’ success, see Reider (2014). However, the question of civil war onset and the failure of status-quo faction (i.e. government) to yield to the demands of insurgents remained out of scope.
proportional? Lake (2010) makes an important contribution by turning attention to a wider international context in explaining calculations within war-dyads (Ibid, 8-9). This is important. For example, Scott (2010, 130) claims that war might be the result of one side’s trust in its prevalence in manpower, while the other may trust its superior technology.

However, Lake (2010) would add that a revisionist actor might be (and insurgents usually are) both numerically and technologically weaker, but their relationship with external actors may give it sufficient hope to enter the war and endure in it. If all sides in a war can count on long-term external supplies of war material and political backing, such a war can indeed last for a long time, with varying intensities.

The introduction of external context into domestic rivalry serves to explain the miscalculation that leads to war. In this sense, changes in the external context change the domestic balance of power, but internal factions cannot agree on the nature and scope of the change. Lake (2010) insisted on the need to include misperception in the analysis, thus acknowledging that bargaining’s rational choice approach is not sufficient to capture the onset of violence. I think this is reasonable and in practical policy-making it is inevitable anyway.

Since the problems of misperception are largely in the domain of cognitive psychology (Jervis 1976), it’s important to exhaust all other theoretical aspects before leaving it to the decision-makers and their specialized aides to assess the biases of particular foreign leaders. This means following Lichbach and Zuckerman’s (2009) important suggestion to integrate rational choice, structure and culture in a unified research program. A decade earlier, Lichbach (1998) proposed unifying McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow’s research program based on structure and culture with his own research program founded on rational choice.97

97 See also Bates, DeFiguiere and Weingast (1998).
There is indeed a loud call for theoretical cross-fertilization. I can remind of, for instance, Ashley’s (1986, 271) critique that: “When we think as positivists, we cannot question ends, only means…” Since ends dictate means, it is inevitable to immerse ourselves in understanding the ends of the actors. In domestic politics, immersing in the ends of actors largely means understanding the formation of actors’ identities, the tension and shifts in choosing between ethnic, regional and (civic) national identities, not forgetting class identity either. That rational choice depends on understanding actors’ identities has been most powerfully advocated by none other than Fearon and Wendt (2002), the champions of rational choice and constructivism, respectively. Similar views can be found in Fearon and Laitin (2000) and Kalyvas (2003). Bates (1997, 129-130) was adamant: “Use of game theory requires complete political anthropology and history, because without history of interactions it is impossible to understand the meanings of actions.”

While understanding identity formation (or perhaps more precisely, “identity dialectics”) is a logical starting point, assessing the structures limiting the politicized mass identities enables narrowing down possible courses of action. My contribution is in expanding the domestic structural component to include the suggestions of scholars advocating against the “artificial” separation of domestic and international politics. Recognizing connections between domestic and international structures fundamentally changes our understanding of opportunities and constraints of domestic factions.

This has a direct implication on the rational choice in actors’ bargaining, since the domestic game changes dramatically after including external context. As a result, insurgency stops being irrational from the perspective of the rational theory of war (given that insurgents are by

---

98 See chapter 3, section 4: “External Sources of Internal Dynamics”.
definition weaker). Moreover, not only that the insurgency becomes rational, but the refusal of the status-quo faction to yield becomes rational as well, since that is often the only way to assess how serious both the external intervention and domestic revisionists are. But, there is more to the government’s use of violence.

More importantly, the status-quo faction (usually government) is most likely to violently engage revisionist faction in order to remove the justification for external meddling. The justification for external interference is not in the sole existence of the revisionist group, but in the revisionist group’s political identity, that is, its stated political goal. That goal is perceived as a threat to status-quo faction’s vital means for securing its survival. As described in chapter 5, civil war is usually preceded by the escalation of strife (*stasis*), as it spills outside the institutional contention and back into society. As it gains momentum among masses, strategic use of symbols “incarnates” the struggle from verbal-political dimension into the three-dimensional, physical space, after verbal bargaining reached a stale-mate.

In the section 5.1, I outlined how internal conflict escalates in transition from:

1. Physical violence aimed at non-human symbol carriers (for example, posters), to
2. Non-physical violence repertoire targeting humans (for example, threats), and then to
3. Physical non-lethal violence targeting humans (for example, tear-gas)

These sequences are, of course, highly context and regime dependent and often they overlap and last for unequal amounts of time. However, their elements, I hold, can be detected in most societies suffering deep internal strife. They also serve to test collective action capability of the group, since those who march together, inhale tear-gas together and get bruised together, are most likely to throw stones together, accept guns together and shoot the enemy together. Who will start shooting first, status-quo or revisionist faction, cannot be predicted. However, since
status-quo faction is usually fine with the equilibrium, the white set of figures in this chess-game should expectedly belong to the revisionists.

However, shooting does not imply the onset of civil war. As I stated before, I see the onset of civil war once artillery and armed vehicles, that is, the strongest available conventional weapons, have been used by one side. The sequence 4, then, “lethal targeting of humans”, is essentially the crossing between social public violent unrest and various forms of lethal political violence (terrorism, riot, genocide, guerilla and civil war). This is the heart of the violence understood as continuation of the bargaining. Which form will violence take, depends largely on the organizational and material constraints of actors. Without taking external context into account, I suspect it is possible to explain vast majority of civil wars, especially civil wars in smaller countries.

The status-quo’s violent reaction to revisionists’ violent challenge is thus sending a message (a new bargain!) in three directions. First, it aims to change revisionists’ political goals and find new or preserve old equilibrium by raising the cost of participating in insurgency. Second, it both signals resolve and tests possible external backers of revisionists. Third, it signals demand for help and tests status-quo’s possible external backers. Depending on the responses, all actors in domestic strife readjust their identities, goals and strategies. It is highly improbable that a revisionist faction escalating violence against status-quo faction is acting without external support - intended or unintended, tacit or explicit, real or perceived.

I am essentially adopting a theory Mylonas (2012) termed “reversed neoclassical realism”, where domestic politics is driven by relations of domestic groups with international, external, actors. I am applying it to civil war onset, while Mylonas deals with nation-building policies. Mylonas is too much of a realist, while I emphasize ideational variables in domestic politics
much more. This is especially so regarding the intra-ethnic majority’s conflicts over how to deal with minorities.

For example, Mylonas’ theory is likely to have a hard time explaining communist states’ domestic policies. Communist ideology is class based and not nation based, thus it affects identities and subsequent policies of ethnic groups. Even more, the fight against the hegemony of the dominant nation is in the heart of the communist ideology, which I will elaborate on in chapter 9. As I noted before, Krasner (1999, 6) observed that the logic of consequences is more appropriate in studying international relations, while logic of appropriateness is more appropriate in studying domestic politics. Once logic of appropriateness leads domestic factions to identify each other as primary threats, the logic of consequences takes over. How this happens needs to be explained if we are to understand goals and therefore rational choices of ethnic elites.

We should not forget that the stakes of internal factions in the game are “vital”, which justifies escalation of violence to assess the “real” power relations. Usually, the vital means sought to be employed in securing groups’ survival revolve around veto powers. Minority groups need veto powers to prevent the hegemony of majority. Majority groups fear veto powers would slow down decision-making and impose additional costs, which might be dangerous in adjusting to both internal and external changes. As mentioned before, in domestic rivalries, there is the least chance of misperceiving other’s power. However, the external component of internal power is the most elusive.

After narrowing the scope of possible actions actors’ might undertake by charting their choice of identities, the available internal and external support and the rational choices their leaders can make (Lichbach 2009, 47-64), we are left with the possible psychological aspects.

---

99 Compare with the similar remark by Byman (2001, 23).
Most famously, Jervis (1976) offered a range of possible misperceptions affecting rational choice. While there is no reason to reduce misperceptions only to inter-state relations, I found one to be particularly relevant for intra-state relations.

Jervis (1976, ch.6) posits that people have a problem to perceive a change when it occurs and instead cling to their beliefs. This can be applied to the inherent internal tensions in highly polarized societies between centralization and decentralization. Namely, I think there is a room to expect that revisionists will be eager to exaggerate changes in international/regional balance of power as opportunities for them. In the same time, status-quo faction will be more likely to cling on to the inertia of the preceding period. Since the central question of internal tensions revolves around veto powers, level of autonomy and secession, the status-quo faction is more likely to expect that the norm of state sovereignty will somehow insulate it from the external pressures in favor of the revisionist faction. A graphic representation of how this process funnels from identity choices, through structural constraints, toward rational choice and (mis)perceptions can be represented like this:

Fluid identities:
- Civic/state
- Ethnic
- Religious
- Class

Structural limitations:
- International context
- Domestic politics

Political elite’s rational choice
- Political elite’s mis/perceptions

Peace or Violence

A caveat is due here, since this psychological tendency captured by Jervis can also be an expression of a strategic choice. As I mentioned above, resort to violent reaction against revisionists’ violent challenge sends a signal three-ways (toward revisionists, their external supporters, and external supporters of status-quo faction). Not only that this can be a “gut reaction” conditioned by what Jervis recognized as psychological tendency to neglect changes, but it can also be a rational attempt by status-quo faction to enforce the sovereignty norm and
frame the conflict aiming to pressure powers’ in supporting the sovereignty norm.

In chapter 5, I laid down the basic model of my approach to civil war as a function of changes in international system and it looked like this:

**Ultimate Zero-Sum Game + Relevant Systemic Change → Civil War**

*H₁: The civil war onset is most likely when a change in the international balance of power is differently perceived by domestic actors antagonized in the ultimate zero-sum game.*

In explaining the “ultimate zero-sum game” variable, I resorted to the following sub-model:

**High Ethnic Polarization + Homogenized Ethnic Elites → Ultimate Zero-Sum Game**

*H₂: When mass grievances in a highly polarized society homogenize ethnic elites in antagonistic positions regarding their vital means, their relationship transforms into the ultimate zero-sum game. The ultimate zero-sum game is a choice between fighting a war and giving up on vital means securing survival (veto powers, autonomy, arms).*

My attempt to dissect the concept of a “relevant systemic change” resulted in relying on two aspects: changed balance of power and the “norm confusion”. As a matter of fact, the changes in balance of power cannot but instigate the confusion regarding the new norms promoted to justify the change and/or preserve the newly established international situation. I am therefore offering a sub-model depicting “relevant systemic change” in the following way:

**Geopolitical Power Competition + Norm Confusion → Relevant Systemic Change**

*H₃: A geopolitical power competition affecting balance of power and disturbing dominant norms will cause confusion among domestic factions, thus becoming “relevant systemic change”.*

The whole process of internal conflict-to-war escalation due to international/regional balance of power changes can be laid down in the following schema:
1. Political contention, but power equilibrium\textsuperscript{100} among revisionists and status-quo faction

2. International/regional balance of power changes, followed by a norm confusion\textsuperscript{101}

3. Domestic revisionists demand change regarding vital means (veto powers, autonomy)

4. Domestic status-quo faction rejects

5. Both factions escalate, including use of \textit{limited lethal violence} (see chapter 5.1)

6. Both factions reappraise the credibility of both external support and competitor’s resolve

7. Both factions re-adjust their identities, goals, framing and demands accordingly

8. Status-quo faction is

   - Minority
   - Government – \textbf{violent reaction} likely (due to sovereignty norm bias)

9. Does it believe in external support/domestic genocidal threat?

   - Yes – Civil War Onset
   - No – It yields

      - Rally around the flag
      - Ideology/Identity shift likely
      - Factional splits and \textit{Other violence} possible (Riots, terrorism…)

10. Both factions learn about quality and sustainability of support actually received

    This process cycles back from point 10 to point 7 until the new equilibrium is found, indicated by return of artillery and armored vehicles to the army depots, per the definition of
definition of

\textsuperscript{100} Equilibrium does not imply equality or balance of power. It is used here in the sense of “Nash equilibrium”, that is, no player can gain, and is most likely to lose, by changing its strategy.

\textsuperscript{101} Recognized most often when a power experiences relative economic downturn, relative military reduction, internal legitimacy crumbling (riots), some allies move closer to another power and other indicators.
civil war I adopted at the end of chapter 2. During that cycling, new actors might emerge, most likely on the side suffering losses.

As it may be concluded, I take economic fluctuations impacting powers to be exogenous to my model, although I acknowledge that in the era of globalization this can be a problematic sacrifice at the altar of parsimony. To a certain extent, the economies of central power hubs have been integrating and profiting from each other so much so that this interaction might resemble a sort of economic twin of nuclear weapons. As much as use of nuclear weapons would threaten human survival, the collapse of any great power economy would be impossible to confine within its national borders. The economic effects of such an economic collapse of either US, China or EU might, of course, in the long run benefit the other two. In case of Chinese collapse, USA and EU might revitalize their manufacturing industries. The beneficial socio-political effects for the middle classes would subsequently relegate Western democracies currently suffering from plutocracy sufficit (in the US) and democracy deficit (in the EU).

However, in the short term, the economic shock may wreck havoc on regional economies. Not only that acidic nationalism might take over vast potentials of those powers, but such a collapse would dramatically increase risks of nuclear weapons activation and proliferation, as in the course of Soviet collapse. This would put a heavy burden on the West to step in and stabilize the region. The effort required would most likely challenge the political and economic routines in the West. Excessive demand for rapid and massive intervention may erode democratic procedures on a scale far larger than was seen immediately after 9/11 terrorist attacks on America. The alternative might be an eruption of regional violence that might dwarf the Middle Eastern chaos following “Arab Spring”.

For these reasons, I believe great powers will be careful not to let each other experience
anything close to the USSR’s collapse. Consequentially, the importance of attracting and/or coercing countries into alliances becomes an increasingly important tool in limiting foreign policy choices of other great powers. A combination of proxy wars, economic, cyber and propaganda wars is most likely to shape the global system in the 21st century.

Before proceeding to the justification of case selection and research design, a list of definitions and operationalizations is due.

7.2. Variables: Definitions, Operationalizations

The hypotheses I offered involve the following variables: civil war, ultimate zero-sum game, high ethnic polarization, homogenization of ethnic elites, relevant systemic change, geopolitical power competition and norm confusion. In this section, I will outline their definitions and the way they might be observed and measured. Given that it is notoriously hard to define and measure social facts, these definitions will be far from perfect. However, I hope my attempt to be as explicit as possible would remove avoidable ambiguities. Also, I hope this would provide at least a general idea regarding key variables, so that the reader will be able to recognize them in the chapters that follow.

Civil war – for a detailed discussion on my conceptualization of civil war, see chapter 2. Here, I will just reiterate the definition I adopted after adopting the basic approach of Kalyvas and Balcells (2010) - Civil war is a militarized combat over sovereignty among members of the same state, of such magnitude that sides resort to the combat use of strongest conventional weapons at their disposal, usually armored and artillery units.

Proxies for measuring the onset and the ending of a civil war are, therefore, self-evident. Finding evidence such as reports, photos, videos, testimonies of eyewitnesses, etc., on combat
use of armored and artillery units suffices to label violence as a war.

Civil war as a dyadic relationship is my *unit of analysis*. Where civil war included more than two actors with changing allegiances, my unit of analysis remains a dyadic relationship between actors. To reiterate once more, even though my unit of analysis is a dyadic relationship, I observe Gartzke and Gleditsch’s (2008, 32) warning that:”…the outcomes in one dyad are often strongly linked by ties to other dyads… extradyadic alliance ties and dispute inbetweenness condition the risk of war and prospects for peace within dyads.”

The ultimate zero-sum game – for a detailed discussion on my conceptualization of “ultimate zero-sum game”, see section 5.2. In brief, I consider the ultimate zero-sum game to be a situation in which factions in conflict have to make a choice between giving up on what they believe to be the vital means securing their relative safety and – war.

Wars are fought to secure these means (hence: vital means), *unless* the fighting itself would endanger survival more and/or faster. War is an optimal choice if it brings more uncertainty regarding survival than surrendering. This is why severe slavery and especially genocidal threats yield high risk of insurgency.102 Without a sufficient and certain threat to a vital property of the group, the group has low motivation to risk violence. When a group is highly motivated, however, it must pick between a fight and suffering further deprivation. Without a credible external support, it is reasonably certain that insurgents would be defeated. Removing this certainty of being defeated creates an opportunity. If the revisionist and status quo factions cannot come to an agreement on restructuring political system that would satisfy all side’s vital interests, they are entering the ultimate zero-sum game.

102 Admittedly, severe slavery puts serious obstacles before slaves’ collective action, though their motivation may be exceptionally high.
Proxies for measuring the ultimate zero-sum game are to be found in communication of leaders. Usually, as Thucydides recorded, the language changes so much that the war related terminology creeps in the political communication until it dominates it. War terminology is not the only thing required. There has to be an actual bargaining going on between actors’ political elites. They have to be making demands regarding veto powers, autonomy, levels of centralization. They have to voice their concerns in terms of survival of their group. The minimum of revisionist faction’s demands has to be in the collision with the minimum of status-quo faction’s demands.

High Ethnic Polarization – I understand high polarization to signify a society in which there are only few social (ethnic, religious, regional, class) groups, likely with a legacy of war fighting. The numbers and identities are always quite arbitrary, so it is hard to defend drawing a border between “high”, “medium” and “low” polarization. That is why I will resort to the historical record of a given region/country, besides using the word “few” to describe the risky number of social groups. If identities of groups and coalitions that fought wars in the past are preserved (in name or practice), they are the likely “poles” in a potential civil war and such society is highly polarized. If those groups are ethnic, such society is “highly ethnically polarized”. These are the groups I describe in section 5.3 as “conflict groups”.

Ethnic polarization is employed in a seminal Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2005, 802-803) article, echoing Vanhanen’s simplistic “genetic distance”. That is defined as “the period of time that two or more compared groups have been separated from each other, in the sense that intergroup marriage has been very rare. The longer the period of endogamous separation, the more groups have had time to differentiate.” Clearly, such mechanicistic approach implies neglect of identity fluctuations, which are of cardinal importance, as they might have concluded
when they were comparing ethnic and religious conflicts.

Moreover, civil wars are particularly brutal when and because inter-group borders are blurred not only geographically, but in identity as well. The higher degree of cross-border contacts, the bloodier the civil war is. The tragedy of brutal civil wars is precisely in the fact that the common (civic) identity has been in the making, when the war ripped the connections apart. That is why the statistical division of society in “objective” ethnic groups is useful, but only a first step in understanding dynamics of polarization.

The importance of group identity is also recorded by Horowitz (1985, 299), when he refused to grant “multiethnic” attribute to parties composed of smaller ethnic groups congregating around a large, central, ethnic group. Likewise, he refused to grant multi-ethnic character to parties composed of numerous smaller ethnic groups united in opposition against one large ethnic group. Such parties may be multiethnic “internally”, but “externally”, they are ethnic (Ibid.).

Proxies for measuring ethnic polarization are to be found in self-identification as a subjective attachment to a primary political identity, but also in “secondary” attributes. These include cultural, economic and physical features classified in popular narrative of a given society. For example, a person can be self-identified as “American”, but “secondarily” as a white, catholic, working class, Irish. Depending on the prevailing social issues and crises, different identities may trigger social mobilization along different identities, hence constant and contextual monitoring is a must. It is especially so in regard to the fluidity between civic and ethnic group identities.

*Homogenization of ethnic elites* – By “homogenous” ethnic elite, I do not understand that all, or even majority, of an ethnic political elite’s membership belongs to the same party or
organization. Homogeneousness is not only in the fact that there is no significant multi-ethnic party, either. A politically homogenous ethnic elite is the one in which there is a basic consensus regarding minimum of groups’ political rights and vital goals.

This variable is also hard to quantify, but it can be captured by a careful comparison of political alternatives within ethnic groups. These alternatives are usually found in political platforms of major government and opposition parties within ethnic groups. If not even major opposition party of one ethnic group can agree with vital demands of another groups’ ruling party, we say that the ethnic elite of the former is homogenous.

Relevant systemic change – I discussed the role of the international system in more detail in chapter 6. Here, I will repeat that any change in the international system that makes domestic ethnic elites disagree over their relative capacity for violence, over true interests of external powers and over prevailing international norms, should be considered as relevant for civil war propensity of the society in question.

Evidence for such disagreements should be found in the communication of political elites, in their speeches, minutes of their meetings, interviews they give, etc. In such verbal communication, one should look for leaders’ assessments of: external support they expect to receive, external support they actually are receiving and prevailing (international) norms.

This should not end with the leaders’ assessments. Byman (2001) offers a useful disaggregation of external support. Critical support involves: direct military, political support and propaganda, finance, safe haven and transit; valuable support is in weapons, materiel, training; and minor support consists of fighters, intelligence, organizational aid and inspiration. Grove (2001, 384) adds another very interesting proxy for external support - legitimizing a
leader by having her/him meet a high official of a foreign country.\textsuperscript{103}

While Diasporas’ support cannot and should not be disregarded, it should not be overestimated. Byman (2001, 59) concluded that Diaspora:”…does not offer the same broad range of benefits as state support (e.g., safe havens, military training, sophisticated weapons, diplomatic backing, etc.). Financial assistance is by far the most common form of support that migrants provide to insurgent movements. Money, in contrast to material support, crosses borders with ease.” Even if Diaspora can mobilize enough money and fighters, still, both money and fighters need weapons. In order to wrestle with organized standing armies, they need not only assault rifles and ammunition, but tanks and artillery. The flow of arms indicates tacit or explicit support of foreign countries.

\textit{Geopolitical power competition} – This variable encompasses both stability and change in the international system. \textit{Geopolitical power competition refers to conflicting efforts of great powers as they seek to protect and/or expand their spheres of influence and promote norms legitimizing both their actions and interests.}

This competition has to be expressed in foreign policy discourse of powers’ leaderships, whether public or behind closed doors. Often, it is laid out in strategic documents, speeches and also actual practices of powers’ regarding geopolitical points of their strategic interest, such as various types of assistance they provide to regional actors.

Expansion and contraction of great powers’ spheres of influence can be assumed to follow their: relative economic downturn; relative military decline; internal legitimacy crumbling (social unrests, political institutions’ failures). This is so, because, presumably, smaller international

\textsuperscript{103} For more definitions and operationalizations of external influence, see: Saideman (2001), Kalyvas and Kenny (2010) and Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2004).
actors are psychologically affected by trends within great powers which structure the international system within which smaller actors operate. Also, great powers experiencing problems are more likely to reduce their support to less vital allies and clients, so (potential) recipients are also tangibly affected, not only psychologically.

Now, smaller countries with high domestic unity do not risk civil war onset. Internally divided countries, especially the ones in an acute crisis, are at risk of civil war onset. Since the main worry of domestic factions is how to exploit international changes for domestic purposes, they need credible signals that the balance of power is effectively changing. The most important signal is the behavior of other smaller states regarding great powers. Losing allies and clients is an indication of which great power is really declining.

Losing/acquiring allies and clients can be recognized by accounting for the official membership in international organizations led by certain great powers, trends in relative level of external assistance, military and economic relations between a given country and competing powers, etc. When these trends conflict, for example, as declining power increases its support to an actor of vital importance, the chances for civil war are rising fast.

Norm Confusion – Following Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 891), international norm is defined as a “…standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity”. Consequently, I define the “norm confusion” variable as any disagreement among domestic actors regarding prevailing international norms. They can be regulative norms (the ones constraining behavior) and/or constitutive norms (the ones creating new actors, interests and categories of action), as exposed by Finnemore and Sikkink (Ibid.).

Finding proxies for norms is notoriously problematic. However, constructivist research agenda offers a reasonable guidance:
We can only have indirect evidence of norms just as we can only have indirect evidence of most other motivations for political action (interests or threats, for example). However, because norms by definition embody a quality of "oughtness" and shared moral assessment, norms prompt justifications for action and leave an extensive trail of communication among actors that we can study. (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892)

Hence, a recorded disagreement among domestic actors (ethnic elites) over the appropriate behavior in changing international/regional order indicates “norm confusion”.\textsuperscript{104} This includes records of public and private debates among factions’ leaders, the addresses of factions’ leaders to their followers, their communication with foreign representatives and especially with international institutions (as reference points supposed to establish international norms).

In the next chapter, I will discuss my research design, including: an explanation of why I focus on political leadership and justification of selected cases.

\textsuperscript{104} This does not mean that domestic actors interiorize norms they believe are valid. They can, and often are, framing norms favorable to their goals as the appropriate ones. However, this does not change the essential — the sides disagree over a norm and mobilize around the one they favor.
Chapter 08: Research Design

As the reader might have already suspected, in my understanding of civil war I mix several approaches, echoing Lichbach and Zuckerman’s (2009) recommendation for more integration of cultural, structural and rational choice research paradigms. However, before developing a closer look at my research design, I would like to clarify some commitments to research ontology and epistemology.

8.1. Philosophical Foundation

As advocated by Jackson (2011), each researcher must be transparent about her/his philosophical ontology. Philosophical ontology deals with the “hook up” between the mind and the world and should not be confused with scientific ontology, which deals with what exists in the world (Ibid, xii). Since it seems impossible to prove the true nature of “world” and “knowledge”, one should begin by acknowledging this and being transparent regarding his/her basic “beliefs” about the nature of “the world” and human ability to study it. Such a “wager” is a “matter of faith” (Ibid, 34) and it “…locates and specifies three things: the researcher, the world to be researched, and the character of the relationship between them” (Ibid, 35).

According to Jackson, no researcher can escape an implicit or implicit adoption of views regarding the possibility to study the world “objectively”. This is a known debate between those who claim mind to be independent from the world (“mind-world dualism”) and those who believe that mind is constituting the world, that is, that the two are indistinguishable (“mind-world monism”). Also, all research must fall within two camps: “phenomenalist” (trusting only phenomena researchers can perceive and/or experience) or “transfactualists” (trusting it is possible to go beyond mere perception and experience by introducing “unobservables” into the
research). Hence, researchers must fall within one of the four methodologies: neopositivists, critical realists, analyticists and reflexivists, as shown in the chart below (Jackson 2011, 37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship between the knower and the known</th>
<th>Phenomenalism</th>
<th>Transcendentalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mind–world dualism</td>
<td>Neopositivism</td>
<td>Critical realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind–world monism</td>
<td>Analyticism</td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chart 8.1 “Jackson’s philosophical ontological commitments 2x2 chart”, Jackson 2011, 37)

I will avoid sailing deeper into the ocean of philosophy of social sciences since maps are then becoming more and more complicated to comprehend. I will hope to both satisfy the reader and set the methodological ground for the rest of the dissertation by being transparent about my subscription to the neopositivism. However, neopositivism is a ship larger than one might expect, given the predominant influence of classical neopositivist works, such as King, Keohane and Verba (2006).

Neopositivist philosophical ontology “hooks up” the mind with the world by assuming that the two are separate, namely, that a mind does exist independently from the world. Thus, it can study it “objectively” by quantifying and measuring tangible social facts, running comparisons and regressions and subsequently making nomothetic conclusions waiting to be falsified, thus simulating natural sciences. This is, as we know, a problematic and heavily criticized attitude. However, the criticism mostly focused on scientific ontology of the early positivism, which was leaving no room for ideas, norms and other ideational variables. With the advent of constructivism and especially Wendt’s conventional constructivism, this started to change. Jackson tried to be very explicit about compatibility of neopositivism as a methodology and
constructivism as a *scientific ontology*: 

Let me be absolutely clear: *there is no special philosophical problem with this situation*. As a philosophical ontology, neopositivism is compatible with a wide variety of substantive theories about and scientific ontologies of world politics, and if one wants to be a neopositivist constructivist then there is no logical or philosophical barrier to doing so — the two are perfectly compatible, so long as one does not insist that the philosophical sources from which the operative concepts of ideas and social practices are drawn were somehow intending to generate falsifiable hypotheses or produce general covering-laws pertaining to social action. (Jackson 2011, 204)

The warning Jackson issued in the second half of this passage shows how introduction of constructivist scientific ontology is eroding nomothetic aspirations of neopositivism. In fact, it seems that introducing constructivism moves such research toward *critical realism*. As Jackson (2008, 138) accounts: “*Critical realism is just as dualistic as neopositivism*, and as such the differences between the two approaches may be regarded as more tactical and operational than strategic and fundamental.”

Critical realism is interesting for two reasons. First, it expands scientific ontology to include social reality (norms, markets, social group structures, etc.), which is different than material reality (favored by neopositivists) and discursive reality (favored by reflexivists). Second, it is much more ambitious than neopositivism regarding its quest for causality. It seeks to uncover “deep dispositional properties” (Jackson 2011, 198) in order to accumulate deep understanding of the world in context, thus sacrificing nomothetic ambitions in exchange. The
search for causality features prominently even among some distinguished realists, as they subscribe to the epistemology of scientific realism:

Theories, for us, are comprised of statements that accurately reflect how the world operates. They involve entities and processes that exist in the real world. Accordingly, the assumptions that underpin the theory must accurately reflect — or at least reasonably approximate — particular aspects of political life. Assumptions, we believe, can be shown to be right or wrong and theories should rest on realistic assumptions… the causal mechanisms that help produce the actual phenomenon being studied must operate in practice the way they are described in the theory. Of course, there will be unobservable as well as observable mechanisms at play in most theories… (Mearsheimer and Walt 2013, 438)

Contrary, neopositivists are less ambitious about discovering causality. They are mostly satisfied to discover a persuasive case of correlation, upon which causality can only be assumed or, at best, be highly probable. Jackson cites King, Keohane and Verba as they admit:

No matter how perfect the research design, no matter how much data we collect, no matter how perceptive the observers, no matter how diligent the research assistants, and no matter how much experimental control we have, we will never know a causal inference for certain. (Jackson 2011, 66)

Both methodologies use case comparisons, but for different purposes. Neopositivists seek testing of hypothetical covariations (using large-n, small-n, quantitative or qualitative methods), while critical realists aim to elucidate causal powers (Jackson 2011, 200). While I subscribe to
neopositivist constructivism, I cannot help peeking into the critical realists’ backyard, hoping to spot and isolate causes.

My attempts to push the search for causality beyond mere correlation takes me toward seeking answers to what seem to be irrational decisions, or sub-optimal decisions, if you will. The “unobservables” play an important role in such attempts. They feature prominently among researchers subscribing to critical realism, but they are NOT incompatible with the ones who subscribe to neopositivist philosophical ontology.

…under certain circumstances, logical positivists and falsificationists were not opposed to adopting an approach to unobservables that was neither instrumental nor provisional: as long as terms referring to such entities and properties and laws played an important explanatory function in scientific theories, there was no reason to declare that those entities and properties did not exist merely because they could not be directly observed... The [critical] realist position about unobservables is, then, a logical elaboration of two of the streams of philosophical thinking feeding into neopositivism, even though neopositivists themselves have generally refrained from taking that step. (Jackson 2011, 81)

Unobservables are important because my central hypothesis is that it can be assumed that an insurgency results from the belief among insurgents that they (will) have external backing. Furthermore, civil war is a result of insurgents actually receiving sufficient help, may it be material or political or both. External material support often comes by clandestine means, though that is not a rule. Usually, it is not easy to conceal arms and manpower shipments, at least not for a very long time.

However, political actions and diplomatic maneuvering, especially when they can serve
dual purpose and thus conceal intended or unintended consequences, can also encourage actors to make seemingly sub-optimal decisions. What is hard to be observed, then, are not only secret military and diplomatic actions of external actors, nor unintended consequences of overt actions. More importantly, it is hard to observe how domestic actors perceive, translate and evaluate external signals, before they plug them into their decision-making calculations.

The importance of this “unobservable” is perhaps best conveyed in Tsebelis’ (1990, 17) valuable conclusion: “[i]f, with adequate information, an actor's choices appear to be suboptimal, it is because the observer's perspective is incomplete. The observer focuses attention on only one game, but the actor is included in a whole network of games”. Hence, the “detectable unobservable” (Jackson 2011, 85) would be the decision-making of domestic actors involved in networks of relationships with external actors. The “detectability” refers to the observed material and political resources employed by the insurgents, including the evidence of direct material and political support rendered by the external actors.

Lastly, the evidence of the direct influence of the external actions on the domestic actors’ decision-making is what transforms “unobservables” into “observed” variables (in the neopositivist sense). However, since for the purpose of practical politics it may be too late to act exclusively upon finding unambiguous evidence, a scholar serving decision-makers cannot avoid operating with the unobservables. This is what Kissinger (1994, 27-28) referred to when he concluded that: “The analyst has available to him all the facts; he will be judged by his intellectual power. The statesman must act on assessments that cannot be proved at the time that he is making them; he will be judged by history on the basis of how wisely he managed the inevitable change…”

In chapter 7, I described my theoretical approach as “reversed neoclassical realism” with
strong conventional constructivist leanings. This is so because I assume, as if it is a given, that ethnic minorities will seek greater autonomy and veto powers, while ethnic majorities will seek greater centralization and preservation of unity. However, ideas, beliefs, images, ideologies, norms… they can influence both minorities and majorities and should never be neglected or dismissed. Below, I would like to visually present this thin line between neoclassical realism (rooted in neopositivist constructivism) and conventional constructivism (rooted in critical realism) or as Klotz and Lynch (2007, 14) labeled it, “constructivism on the positivist end of the spectrum”.

![Diagram](chart8.2.png)

(Chart 8.2 “Borderline between neoclassical realism and conventional constructivism”)

### 8.2. Cases: Puzzles, Justification, Selection

Justification of opting for case comparison approach is in part based on acknowledging highly contextual nature of ethnic conflict. This is especially so in regard to the external context which, in my view, either stimulates or destimulates escalation of conflict toward violence and ultimately civil war. My distancing from large-N approach is not only based on my skepticism
toward the success of quantitative research program. As I have stated before, the applicability of statistical findings is not very persuasive when it comes to practical policy recommendations.

Besides that, there is an inherent requirement in applying bargaining theory of civil war to focus on the succession of offers and counter-offers in a case study research design (Reiter 2003, 30). Process-tracing is then imposing itself on everyone who subscribes to bargaining approach. However, I opted not to rely on dissecting one case study only, for two reasons. First, while one case may provide more room for an in-depth research, the absence of other cases is likely to pose a legitimate question about the external validity. Second, offering several cases may strengthen external validity, but, as I have explicitly warned in chapters 5 and 6, the interactive effects of global power transition may complicate using a large-N approach.

The interactive effects of global power transition represent the effects of the powers’ overstretching management. The resources great powers throw into a vital region at one time period are the resources great powers will not be able to throw into peripheral region at the same time period. If we assume the same levels of internal conflict within two countries of different importance, the effects on civil war dynamics within them could be highly endogenous to the independent variable (i.e. power transition). Hence, instead of crucially contributing to the civil war onset in both countries, power transition may spur civil war in one and not in the other. Also, it could help end civil war or transform the technology of violence, since the sponsoring parties might decide region is not vital anymore and reduce or stop support (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010).

Therefore, it would be wrong to put regions of vital importance in the same regression as regions of peripheral importance. Since the timing of power transitions and the subsequent locations of vital regions affected by acute security concerns fluctuate, large-N analysis is not very promising because coding fluctuations of acute security concerns seem daunting. Without
solving this problem, endogeneity lurks from behind and is most likely to heavily damage large-N analyses. Kalyvas and Kenny (2010) offered a useful summary of literature critical to the large-N approach to civil war, mostly on the grounds of problems with causality, coding, data quality and endogeneity.

This is why I propose focus on regional (area) studies to be combined with the awareness of the international context within which ethnic groups in chosen regions/ countries interact. Small number of cases drawn from the same region should not only help narrow down the scope of possible causes, but they could also help with an in-depth and highly contextual understanding of regional politics that may offer practical and quick support to policy makers. As with all small-N studies, case selection presents a problem (Geddes 1990). Regional focus should not be exclusively focused on one region. For the purpose of this study, as well as given the variables demanding in-depth understanding of both ethno-nationalist identity formation and power transition in particular time period, I opted for focusing on Yugoslavia in the end of the Cold War period. In the future I hope to do more research involving cross-regional and cross-temporal cases.

There have been numerous influential studies focusing on a single region or a country. For example: Varshney’s (2001) study on Hindus and Muslims in India, Cornell’s (2001) work on ethnic conflict in the modern Caucasus, Toft’s (2003) focus on Russian relations to several ethnic groups in the region stretching from Tatarstan to Caucasus, Jenne’s (2007) research on ethnic bargaining in Eastern Europe, Kuperman’s (2006) analysis of moral hazard in Yugoslav war(s).

After justifying focus on one region or even a single country, there is a need to explain the logic of case selection. Blattman and Miguel (2010) find even a single case study helpful in
illustrating causal forces at play in explaining external support to insurgencies. Geddes (1990, 149) finds case selection on dependent variable to be useful for some purposes, for example: identifying plausible causal variables and detecting anomalies of existing theories. Ragin (1987, 42) also supports selection on dependent variable in cases where the outcomes are “unusual or extreme”. However, Geddes strongly supports selecting case against dependent variable as the only way to advance knowledge (1990, 149). I will follow her advice. I will look for dyadic relationships that did and the ones that did not experience escalation of conflict to civil war. I will try to answer the question about this variation. This naturally imposes the logic of the most similar systems design.

The criteria for selecting cases against the dependent variable within the Yugoslav context are inspired by Lichbach’s advice:

Puzzlers embrace intellectual discomfort and seek more than the merely interesting, stimulating, or exciting. Rather, they chase after the counterintuitive departure from commonsense belief or conventional wisdom. More than the curious anomaly, they are after whatever it is that makes a puzzle truly “thorny” – the unforeseen, unanticipated, and unpredicted, as well as the long unexplained and mysterious, the irrational and illogical. (Lichbach and Zuckerman 2009, 32)

Since I have subscribed to the bargaining theory of civil war, which is an offshoot of rational choice approach, the puzzles that I find to be thorny need to prick both rational choice and the established academic narrative regarding civil war(s) in Yugoslavia.

The first criterion seeks cases where weaker side initiated violence against the stronger side, or at least refused to yield to the threats of the more powerful. Along the same line, the side that could have achieved its goals in a peaceful manner, but opted for violence is presenting an
awkward anomaly. Along the same lines, an actor that refrained from crushing its opponent while in a position to do so presents yet another seemingly irrational decision in favor of suboptimal choice that escapes the expectations of the dominant strategy of a rational actor. Following Tsebelis’ remark I already cited before, it is a requirement of a rational choice to expand the context within which an actor’s actions are analyzed if actor’s decision seems suboptimal. There has to be something that the researcher does not see. There has to be an unobservable at work.

The second criterion, disturbance of the dominant academic narratives (or detecting gaps within the dominant narrative) is inspired in part by Lichbach’s view cited above and in part in a speech given by John Mearsheimer (2010): “You are supposed to seek out contentious issues, big and important issues, and you are supposed to make arguments that are at odds with the conventional wisdom…”

The second criterion can be recognized in some reviews of scholarship on Yugoslavia. Jasna Dragović-Soso (2009) demands more studies of nationalism in Croatia and Slovenia during 1960’s and 1970’s. The lack of focus on non-Serbian nationalisms has created a myopic paradigm within which scholars struggle to explain why non-Serbs, numbering about 65% of Yugoslav population, did not resort to democratizing Yugoslavia, rather than secessions and risks of civil war. This is even more so, since Serbs, as expressed by their leaders, from Rašković in Croatia, to Karadžić in Bosnia, to Milošević in Serbia, supported survival of Yugoslavia as a democratic federation. As Ramet (2004, 751) noticed: “…it is elites who decide in what order to hold elections, and it is elites who decide how to pitch their electoral campaigns.”

Hence, understanding ethno-nationalist identity formation and fluctuations could be a missing piece of the puzzle. If so, the “story” cannot start but at the beginning, which is the first

Regarding international context, Dragović-Soso (2009) finds Western contacts with local elites and the Russian influence to have been understudied. This has been a bit alleviated with the works of Kuperman (2002, 2006), Gibbs (2009) and Glaurdić (2011). I have described the main currents of thought regarding the role of external actors in section 3.4, and in chapter 4 I discussed Yugoslav case. In chapter 6 and 7, I offered my views. I will just reiterate here that, for example, Glaurdić’s insistence on Western support for Yugoslav unity as encouragement of Serbian “aggression” may answer only half of the controversy. The other half is – how does it make sense for weaker ethnic groups without external support to violently challenge both central government and the relatively strongest ethnic group? In case of Slovenia, the question is even more problematic.

James Gow (1997, 470) noticed that Slovenia was an important case, but neglected. The problem with Slovenia is that it opted for violence, even though the leadership of Serbs, the main advocates of Yugoslav unity, openly supported Slovenia’s right to secession. In a more recent literature survey, Radeljić (2010, 116) notices slightly increased criticism of Slovenia for being “self-centered” in its unilateral secession that provoked a chain reaction of violence and wars that spilled over. While there have been sporadic violent incidents during 1990 and in the spring of 1991 in Croatia, the unilateral Slovenian secession in 1991 and massive violence that ensued do
precede wars in other parts of Yugoslavia. What remains controversial is the logic behind Slovenian leadership’s decision-making, given that Slovenia was weaker than the federal army and even more so, given that the Serbian leadership supported peaceful Slovenian secession.

Next, Stokes et al. (1996, 154) registered what was already back then a controversy — the strategy of Kosovo Albanians who adopted “Ghandism” instead violence. This is indeed controversial, since Albanian community failed to deliver extremists who would instigate violence against Serbia when Serbia was at its weakest, drained by sanctions, refugees and wars in Bosnia and Croatia. Instead, they rose to arms when Serbia seemed much stronger, after the lifting of sanctions, end of the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, and economic rise of the 1997 and 1998. This is where I am to a certain degree at odds with Kuperman’s (2002) findings about Kosovo Albanian’s strategic reasoning, according to which it was fear of Serbian reprisals that kept them out of insurgency. The question is what made Albanians more courageous in 1997 and 1998?

While it is agreed that Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia were encouraged by support from Serbia, some episodes from the Bosniak-Croat-Serb war triangle remain controversial. Kuperman (2002, 2006) made a significant contribution that has largely gone unnoticed because his dissertation was not published. While he refrained from dealing with the identity formation and the logic of international context that influenced Yugoslavia, his in-depth research employing process-tracing and interviews with key decision-makers resulted in a valuable study.

105 I will refer to Bosnian Muslims as “Bosniaks” throughout this dissertation. This term, for the sake of brevity, will also refer to people who insist on their Bosnian national identity. This is to avoid confusing “Bosnian” in the sense of civic nationalism and “Bosnian” as a regional identity covering also Serbs and Croats.
He showed the logic of moral hazard behind the decisions of Bosniak and Albanian leaders to resort to violence, even though they were obviously weaker. Without external support, they most likely would have sought peaceful accommodation with the Serbian leadership.

Kuperman (2002, 343) chose three cases on the dependent variable (wars in Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda), with a small section explaining Kosovo’s “initial pacifism” with the absence of external support. While Albanian initial non-violence may be attributed to the lack of external support, Bosnia and Kosovo were also essentially quite different cases. Namely, Bosnian ethnic groups never experienced one ethnic group’s monopoly on violence. On the contrary, Serbs had full control over Kosovo since 1990, which provided credibility to their proclaimed commitment of maintaining order in Kosovo. Hence, unlike in Bosnia, Albanians and Serbs were not in the “ultimate zero-sum game”. Kosovo Albanians did give up on their autonomy and did not suffer atrocities. However, they did not accept the new position. They opted for boycott of Serbian institutions.

What Kuperman did not address, but I find quite puzzling, is this disciplined and prolonged boycott of Serbian institutions, including elections. A population that numbered over 1.5 million voters, Albanians could have decisively influenced Serbian elections and enable downfall of Milosevic already in the early 1990’s. Since that never happened, I suspect that not only did Western leaders fail to support Albanian insurgency, but they also failed to pressure Albanians to take part in elections. Why?

Kuperman’s analysis of the onset of civil war in Bosnia is one I also find largely persuasive. However, just like in the case of Kosovo, Kuperman is not interested in the larger (international) context, nor is he interested in the other cases of seemingly irrational behavior. For example, Gow (1997) notes how Bosniak leadership’s decision to reject 1993 peace plan
(while they suffered the worst strategic position) was followed by their decision to accept 1995 peace plan (while they enjoyed the best strategic position). While he rightfully sees Clinton administration’s influence essential, he is not very persuasive in finding moral considerations as drivers of Clinton’s policy. Gibbs (2009) attributes more sinister motives to Clinton’s administration, as he finds US-German rivalry to have been fueling the conflict. While I agree that realist concerns have been essential, and US concerns over fate of NATO serious, I think more focus on the unintended consequences of Soviet collapse on Yugoslavia is needed. In fact, Saideman (1995, 2001) paid attention to this connection and I think it is worth expanding research in this direction. Moreover, US-German relations seem to be more complex than Gibbs seems to represent, as they mix mutual suspicion and cooperation.

To summarize, the next chapters will offer my analysis of causes behind the collapse of Yugoslav ideology. I will justify my focus on dialectical relationship between Croatian and Yugoslav political identities as the main cause of the “ultimate zero-sum game” among ethnic groups. The key moment in this dialectics has been the period between world wars, when Croatian communists were infected by ethnic nationalism, which festered in the decades to come. Therefore, this chapter will build on the modern, constructivist, theory of nationalism and how it explains tensions between ethnic and Yugoslav identities.

The following chapter will discuss the international context of Cold War’s end, while charting the power transition and the resulting “norm confusion”. This chapter will detail the international structure and how it penetrated domestic structure, thus affecting domestic bargaining. Instead of introducing modern democracy as the instrument of taming Serbian nationalism, the bargaining process ended in the collapse of Yugoslavia, even at the price of war, as the optimal choice of all ethnic groups.
The cases I will compare in the last chapter will trace the bargaining processes that went seemingly irrationally, if taken out of international context. Slovenia opted for violent instead of peaceful secession. Albanians failed to exploit the wars in Bosnia and Croatia and rise to arms, but they also refused to take part in Serbian elections (unlike Bosniaks, Hungarians and Croats). Instead, they rose to arms at the time when Serbia was much stronger and even officially enjoyed Western support. Bosniak-Croat-Serb war triangle shows Bosniaks fighting when they were the weakest and negotiating when they were the strongest.

This research structure does not only attempt to synthesize three main paradigms within comparative politics: culture, structure and rational choice (Lichbach 2009), but it also attempts to bridge the largely artificial divide between domestic and international politics (Werner, Davis and Bueno De Mesquita 2003). While actors are assumed to be rational, the combination of process tracing and small-N hypothesis testing (Mearsheimer and Walt 2012, 15) should provide potent tool for answering why actors acted seemingly irrationally, at least in the case of Yugoslavia in the 1990’s.

8.3. Focusing on the Elites

Even though there is a growing interest in the micro-foundations of civil war\textsuperscript{106} focused on explaining common person’s decision to fight, my focus is on the political elite, top decision-makers. One of the first and most famous works in foreign policy analysis was Graham Allison’s (1971) rejection of political-elite-as-a-unitary-actor approach. Immediately after, but less famously, Krasner (1972) rejected Allison’s Governmental Politics Model in favor of a unitary actor model.

\textsuperscript{106} Some of the most vocal scholars in this respect are Lichbach and Kalyvas.
Even for the purpose of unifying domestic and international politics’ research, the role of political elites is essential, as concluded first by Putnam (1988) and later underlined by Werner, Davis and Bueno De Mesquita (2003), since it is the leadership that must balance between domestic and international imperatives and constraints.

There are numerous works questioning the neglect of individual leadership in the mainstream international relations theories. Perhaps the most famous person connecting both policy and academia, Henry Kissinger was quoted by Byman and Pollack (2001, 108): “As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces. But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make.”

Of course, a remark like this brings in several questions. The first may be — what is the point of theorizing? An authority among scholars-practitioners of international relations, Zbigniew Brzezinski, sarcastically observed (Brzezinski and Mearsheimer 2005, 48): “As an occasional scholar, I am impressed by the power of theory. But theory — at least in international relations — is essentially retrospective. When something happens that does not fit the theory, it gets revised.”

The second question may be: is all theorizing discredited if we throw all weight on individual leaders’ personalities? Two answers may be offered here, without necessarily contradicting, but in fact complementing, each other. A constructivist would say that “state officials… are intentional actors actively engaged in the construction of meaning… and they are… always already subject to the repertoire of meanings offered by the security imaginary that produces them” (Weldes 1999, 11-12).

\[107\] It seems that a good starting point to learn more about the thinking on the importance of individual leaders is Byman and Pollack (2001).
Hence, if we study prevailing “security imagery” within a society, we might get a better grip of the limits imposed on a leadership. As Byman and Pollack (2001, 114) observed, a realist with a constructivist touch (such as Walt 1987) would not be satisfied with a simple neorealist assertion that power itself has a meaning (where growth of power equals threat), but rather that intentions of a growing power may or may not be threatening. Since weapons do not have intentions, but people using them do, focus has to be on the leaders controlling the means of violence. Complementing the previous, studying strategic capabilities in the old neopositivist fashion may not lead to a direct observation of an actor’s goals and intentions, but it may help rank actor’s likely options.

Hence, the conclusion is that not all focus can be placed on the political elite, but that the political elites in the end do make war or peace. The political elite’s decision-making is limited by the number of available identities they can pick from and by the strategic capabilities they can rely on. However, I fully agree with Byman and Pollack’s (2001, 134-135) emphasis of the important role of individual leaders. One of the most useful hypotheses they offer is the one stating that the more power is focused in the hands of an individual leader, the more important the leader is (Ibid, 140). In cases of heightened ethnic tensions, where homogenization of the political elite (rally around the ethnic flag) occurs, the role of leadership can hardly be overstated.

Understanding the decision-making dynamics of the ethnic leaderships requires an in depth analysis of their motivations and perceptions. However, we should not neglect the structural and cultural limits to their strategizing; otherwise we might confuse often unintended outcomes with

---

108 This refers primarily to military, economic, demographic and diplomatic values, but also other, relevant for fighting wars (geography, culture, etc.).
the genuine intentions of ethnic leaderships. The foreign actors’ signaling and the interpretations on the part of the ethnic leaderships thus do not operate in the vacuum, absent of internal constraints.

The best way to approach the question of leaders’ perceptions of foreign actors’ signals is to review interviews with key politicians. The leaders themselves have been interviewed on many occasions, briefly and in depth by many journalists, so these interviews would also be valuable sources for understanding what was important for them in their decision-making and what was the place of the international actors in their considerations. Also, their public statements, speeches in parliaments, on TV and in public gatherings are indispensable sources of information, as Klotz and Lynch (2007) observed. This aspect of “open source” information is particularly important in further developing sensitivity for the analysis of the country and regional policies. Often times, it is impossible to conduct interviews with leaders during ongoing crises, so following the cultural and structural limitations within which actors make statements should help get the most information regarding their intentions and perceptions.

The next step would be to turn to the written primary sources, namely the minutes from the meetings (where accessible) of leaderships, the numerous memoires left by the many key persons on all sides and the precious records of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. Newspapers editions from the time when the events were taking place will also provide valuable information. In all these resources I will be searching for the explicit and implicit remarks by the leaders and their opposition regarding the importance of the positions of international actors in the Yugoslav crisis.

The abundance and further growth of the secondary sources on the Yugoslav conflict is a testament to the importance of this topic, but also a source of information on the most
controversial events in the collapse. The questions surrounding the key events and decisions that have not been satisfactorily answered will help establish the contexts for cases in this study.

The findings of this study might contribute to the literature on civil wars in regard to the timing of the transition from political conflict to civil war. It might also contribute to the literature on secessionism and state-building, as well as interventionism, through the emphasis of the international context of the intra-state conflict dynamics. The scholarship on Yugoslavia’s dissolution might appreciate new approach to the role of the end of the Cold War. Also, the possibility that external influences on Yugoslavia were in part collateral and unintended effects of managing Soviet collapse might draw some attention and criticism.

International relations theory would benefit in terms of increasing our understanding of the systemic sources of foreign policy making. Heightened sensitivity for the importance of the international actors’ signals and their possible interpretation by the domestic politics’ actors should contribute to the scholarship of intra-state conflicts. Nonetheless, it should heighten the sense of responsibility on the part of the middle and big powers for the well being and stability of fragile states. It should also serve to improve the sensitivity for the non-intended outcomes of their policies toward the fragile states.

In the rest of the dissertation, I will try to show: why Yugoslav ethnic groups ended in the “ultimate zero-sum game” and what was the international context that helped escalate this “ultimate zero-sum game” into mass violence. Then, I will offer a synthesis by applying bargaining theory of civil war in the cases of Slovenia’s “Ten-Day War”, massive Croat-Serb-Bosniak war triangle and Serb-Albanian rivalry over Kosovo.
Chapter 09. The Ultimate Zero-Sum Game: Ethnic Elites’ Homogenization

The collapse of a state can be found in the loss of central government’s capacity to govern, in its inability to have its will articulated by its leadership and/or imposed by its bureaucracy upon the majority of the population. The collapse is usually followed by internal violence. A peaceful split of the country into (de facto) independent states can also be an option.

In the previous part (chapter 7), I laid out my understanding of the relations among domestic actors preceding collapse of a country. I labeled that situation “the ultimate zero-sum game” and I modeled it like this:

\[
\text{High Ethnic Polarization + Homogenized Ethnic Elites } \rightarrow \text{ Ultimate Zero-Sum Game}
\]

\[
H_2: \text{ When mass grievances in a highly polarized society homogenize ethnic elites in antagonistic positions regarding their vital means, their relationship transforms into the ultimate zero-sum game. The ultimate zero-sum game is a choice between fighting a war and giving up on vital means securing survival (veto powers, autonomy, arms).}
\]

A country does not have to collapse because its domestic actors end up in an “ultimate zero-sum game”. The actor challenging the central government’s sovereignty can opt to give up on its vital means and yield to the central government’s demands. Or the central government can yield.

Explaining the collapse of Yugoslavia requires tracing the processes that took ethnic groups into the ultimate zero-sum game. In the Yugoslav case, it is fundamental to try to understand why ethnic groups ended up in the situation of considering their veto powers as vital means of survival. Vital means of survival impose serious deliberation regarding use of violence
in protecting them.

Following my model, this means describing and explaining why ethnic elites’ supported antagonistic political proposals regarding vital means of group protection. Also, it means describing and explaining mass ethnic polarization. The former requires understanding why fighting centrifugal trends and the ethnic polarization psychology was not an optimal strategy for political elites across ethnic groups. The latter requires explanation of why unifying, inclusive, elements of Yugoslav identity lost competition with ethnic and/or exclusive group identities.

These two trends, in fact, often reinforced each other, thus spurring ethnic conflicts and tensions throughout the history of Yugoslav ideology and its state. Understanding driving forces behind such trends requires deeper investigation of national identity formation and adaptation to significant historical turbulences. In the Yugoslav case, it requires understanding the dialectics between the Yugoslav identity as an inclusive, civic, identity and the identities of secessionist groups who sought refuge and security in detaching themselves from Yugoslavia. Such dialectics imposed itself on the ethnic elites and framed their understandings of Self, Other and therefore vital means needed to protect the Self.

I argue that in the late 1980’s ethnic elites were caught in the “ultimate zero sum game”, in which their vital means of survival (the way they saw it) were mutually exclusive. The intra-ethnic elites’ consensuses in this regard prevented creating an interethnic agreement. The ethnic groups then largely rallied around their elites’ consensuses, thus reinforcing them.

The international context, I hypothesize, expanded policy options of weaker actors within Yugoslavia. It gave them an option to violently resist the will of stronger domestic actors (the federal government, the federal army and Serbs), and in fact, impose their own. The international context will be examined in a later chapter.
However, this domestic “ultimate zero-sum game” developed within a patchwork of various groups’ mass perceptions within the Yugoslav polity. Mass perceptions of the Yugoslav crisis rewarded and punished the political programs elites offered in the late 1980’s. Furthermore, these mass perceptions were also being shaped and reshaped by the elites in the decades prior to the “ultimate zero-sum game” of the 1990-1991. Understanding these larger ideological currents within Yugoslavia should explain why pro-Yugoslav political option in the late 1980’s was not able to connect across major ethnic groups and help forge a new political framework within which Yugoslavia would have survived.

I argue that the key relationship to be examined is that of Croatian national identity and the idea of Yugoslav unity. Yugoslav ideology was born among the Croatian ethnic entrepreneurs in the first half of 19th century and their successors buried it at the end of the 20th century. Specifically, I reconsider how Croatian identity was being constructed in relation to Serb identity in the framework of Yugoslav ideology. In order to do this, I examine the formation of the Yugoslav idea from 1830’s, by focusing on the early writings of the main Croatian national awakeners and subsequent reinterpretations of Croat-Yugoslav identities dialectics.

In the next section I will briefly comment on the main schools of thought explaining sources of intra-ethnic conflict that paralyzed Yugoslavia into a stasis. I will show what I suspect to be the missing part of great importance in understanding the policy of devolution as the optimal choice for Croatian political elite. In the end, I will show why I assess that Croatia, that is, its nationalistic elites, was the key actor in the Yugoslav drama.

09.1. The Existing Literature’s Shortcomings

I decided to reconsider the ideologies of Croat national identity within Yugoslav context because I challenge the core premise of the predominant explanation of Yugoslav collapse. The
prevalent view that Serbian nationalism and Slobodan Milošević’s rise to power were the primary causes of Yugoslavia’s collapse is well documented in Ramet’s *Thinking About Yugoslavia* (2005). Ramet reviews the work of a wide range of scholars and finds majority of them concur with laying the blame on Serbian nationalism in general and Slobodan Milošević in particular. Ramet thus finds in the works of Anzulović (1999) and Cohen (1995) that it was Serbian culture that stood behind the aggressive expansionism and gruesome war crimes, though Cohen views political extremism to be characteristic to other Yugoslavs too.¹⁰⁹

For Perica (2002), the Serbian Orthodox Church played the key role in the rise of Serbian nationalism. Udovički and Ridgeway (1997) also point toward Serbian nationalism and place it’s eruption in 1987, together with the rise of Milošević. Jasna Dragović-Soso (2002) holds that Serbian intellectuals were key contributors to the violence and break-up of Yugoslavia. They misused the genocide narrative to instigate fear while dysfunctional post-Tito political system enabled collapse. She traces their revival to the mid-1960’s, as does Wachtel (1998).

On the other hand, there are scholars who are relatively more balanced in their approach. They find more explanatory power in ideological, economic, cultural and constitutional structures that were both providing incentives and limiting choices for the elites. Blaming the sudden eruption of Serbian nationalism, instigated by power hungry Milošević and/or nationalistic Serbian intellectuals, is not quite enough for most of them.

For example, Dejan Jović’s (2009) valuable book on ideological causes of Yugoslavia’s

collapse emphasizes the role of Marxist ideal of “withering of the state” in the policymaking of Tito’s main ideologist — Edvard Kardelj. In this respect, it was the ideological “Other” that kept Yugoslavia together, the idea that Yugoslav system’s “withering” is legitimized by the existence of corrupted, centralized and oppressive version of socialism in USSR. Once that version was gone, the legitimacy of the Yugoslav ideology was gone too. In that context, internal cohesion was seen as a feature of Soviet model and that is precisely why the internal political and economic structure of Yugoslavia was too weak to uphold the system once USSR’s challenge was gone (Jović 2004, 277-303).

Woodward (1995b, 56) pointed to economic structural problems in Yugoslavia, coupled with German foreign policy of pressuring other countries into recognizing independence of Croatia and Slovenia. Similarly to Woodward, Allcock (2000, 84) looked at the importance of economic and wider structural problems, best represented by growing regional differences. He also finds the threat of Soviet Union as an important cohesive factor for Yugoslavia. Gordana Uzelac (2007) in her worthy analysis on the development of Croatian nation points to the Yugoslav political structure as a problem that was worsened by the economic crisis. As both Ramet and Magaš in their works, she also finds 1981 Kosovo riots to mark the fundamental change in the course of Yugoslav politics, because what followed was Serbian nationalism. For Slovenia and Croatia, Kosovo was just a human rights issue (Uzelac 2007, 186).

Wachtel’s (1998) important work emphasized decentralization in the cultural and educational spheres in the 1960’s as the missed opportunity to create a Yugoslav nation that would uphold Yugoslavia after Tito. At best, he equals Tuđman and Milošević’s guilt for the war.

Hayden (1999) focused on the constitutional design’s effects in weakening the federal
government and thus stimulating ethnic nationalism. His focus is on the legal structures created by the victory of centrifugal forces in the 1974, when a new constitution introduced a virtual ethnic veto powers, requiring consensual decision-making in federal bodies.

Most of the aforementioned disparate arguments face significant shortcomings in explaining state collapse as the optimal solution for the parties involved. Authors concluding that Serbian religion, culture and nationalism were the sources of threat to others fail to explain the fluctuations in the Serbs’ attachment to their religion, culture and nationalism. These fluctuations are rather easy to follow when observing the abandoning of exclusive Serb national program in the course of World War I, when Yugoslav unification was officially adopted as Serbia’s war aim. Then, during the kingdom of Yugoslavia, insisting on Yugoslav, rather than narrow Serbian program, has led to the accommodation of Croat demands for ethnic separation and the creation of Croatian autonomous unit within the kingdom.

Even more so, if there were no identity and ideological fluctuations and Serbs predominantly adhered to exclusive and threatening forms of their religious, cultural and national expressions, it would be very hard to explain their embrace of Yugoslav communist ideology in general, and during and after World War II genocide in particular. This is especially so, since disproportionate majority of Yugoslav partisans under Tito’s command were Serbs. If their chauvinism was suppressed, rather than non-existent, the question remains — who and how managed to suppress it and force them to accept cross-ethnic cooperation under Tito’s banner? If, for example, the Kosovo myth and its most vocal poet such as Njegoš\textsuperscript{110} inspired anti-Muslim

\textsuperscript{110} Montenegrin bishop warrior leader from the 19th century, whose work “Mountain Wreath” has been accused of promoting genocide against Muslims (Anzulović 1999, Cigar 1995, Sells 1998).
hatred and subsequent war crimes in both World War II and the 1990’s, it should be surprising to see that Tito’s partisans drew inspiration from both Kosovo myth and Njegoš’ poetry.\textsuperscript{111}

The proponents of the idea that Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 was the key problem because it enabled federal units to veto fall short in explaining why that veto had to be used, as well as why the 1974 Constitution introduced veto powers as such in the first place. More importantly, they largely leave unexplained why constitutional interpretations were moving the whole system toward further decentralization. As a Serbian leader Draža Marković understood it in the late 1970’s, it was less about constitutional provisions as such, and more about “informal power relations in the federation at the time that strongly disadvantaged Serbia’s central position” (Pavlović 2009, 77). Even when the explanation is found in the “fear” of “Serb domination”, not only do the causes of such fear remain vague, as if they were obvious, but it also remains unclear how that domination could have been achieved. This is an issue I will address later in a bit more details.

In the same way, proponents of the idea that it was the economic crisis that propelled the ethnic conflict implicitly point toward the crucial question — why the economic crisis did not lead to alternative solutions, for example — stronger advocacy of centralization after decades of

\textsuperscript{111} For example, Serbian partisans in Croatia founded the Serbian singing society “Obilić” in 1944, named after the central hero of the Kosovo myth, knight Miloš Obilić. Partisans from mount Ozren in Bosnia called upon Serbs to follow Obilić’s heroism and reject treachery of Vuk Branković, Serbian equivalent of Judas (Šiljegović 1951, No. 148). Montenegrin partisans cited “Obilić-like heroism” of their fighters in a report from 1941 (Zbornik 1950, No. 96) and they used a quote from “Mountain Wreath” to publicly denounce “Branković-like” traitors (Ibid, No. 69).
decentralization? Perhaps the solution could have been found in the democratic liberalization that would cut across ethnic boundaries? Why was ethnic nationalism the first alternative to the economic and structural crisis? This is where economic explanation of ethnic conflict falls short, because it assumes that ethnic conflict is a natural expression of greed and/or grievance.

The search for causality does not necessarily have to be more persuasive if it presents the evidence and logic explaining why something did happen, because it often explains prior events with the ones that followed as if they were intended all along. It can be no less (if not even more) persuasive if evidence and logic show why something did not happen. That is, why it was considered sub-optimal for actors involved and thus avoided as a policy.

Following this logic, it should be explained why resorting to unilateral secessionism was the optimal policy of non-Serbs in Yugoslavia. There have been at least three other options other than violent secession. One was to recentralize the system, given over thirty years of decentralization’s poor record in solving chronic problems of society.\footnote{Since mid 1950’s to mid 1980’s.} Another was full transition to democracy and capitalism. Lastly, there was an option of peaceful dissolution of the country, whether along the existing internal borders, or after negotiating borders’ changes. The first options will be discussed in the rest of this chapter; the second will be discussed in the following chapter. The third will be discussed in the last chapter focusing on three case studies of strategic decision-making: violence in Slovenia (1991), Serb-Croat-Bosniak war (1990-1995) and Serb-Albanian conflict (1989-1998).

Explaining why both centralization (within the socialist political framework of the 1980’s or not) and democratization were impossible in the late 1980’s requires us to focus on Croatian nationalism and its relation to the evolution of Yugoslav ideology. Indeed, this path of inquiry
wouldn’t lead all the way to Adam and Eve, since nations and national ideologies are a modern phenomenon (Anderson 1991). Moreover, national identities are constantly being re-interpreted, and as most modernists would agree, the masses are being constantly taught by the elites about who they are. In this sense, considerations about the role of culture are important, but only to a certain extent. States do or do not have strong cultural policies, whatever the political elites decide. But the elite itself is influenced by the ideologies within which it operates, no less than with its pursuit of power and security. Answering how ethnic identities related to the idea of Yugoslavia demands explaining both ethnic identity and Yugoslav ideology formation. How was Croatian nation conceived and reshaped in subsequent waves of ethnic entrepreneurs, leaders and their followers? Now, I will try to conclude this section by justifying my focus on Croatian nationalism.

First, even though the main battle over the political system’s reform in the 1980’s was waged between Serbian and Slovenian communists (Jović 2009), the path Croatia took was decisive. Serbian communists advocated more centralization and a halt to further decentralization, while Slovenes advocated further dissolution, first of the party and then the whole country. Croatian communists had the power to either marginalize Slovenes as extremists, or to delegitimize Serbs and in consequence, label them as having vicious hegemonic aspirations. Even though I acknowledge that Slovenian nationalism and the consistent struggle for the devolution of federal powers has been virtually a constant in socialist Yugoslav politics, Slovenes were too small to challenge a Yugoslavia grounded in a Serb-Croat consensus (Ramet 1984a, 112; Jović 2003, 447). Milošević’s statement in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) supports this view. Addressing Ante Marković, former Yugoslav premier and a witness in Milošević’s trial, he said:
You [Marković] say: ‘In our assessment, there is a central issue which is one of the basic issues in our country.’ That is what you say. And that is the relationship between the Serbs and Croats or, rather, between Serbia and Croatia. So is your position clear, therefore? I also believed, and I still believe today, that this was the key relationship, that this was the central issue, as you had put it, one the basic issues in our country, that is the relationship between the Serbs and Croats…

(Marković 2004, 30878-30879)

Even if we consult the sheer demographics of socialist Yugoslavia, we can see that Croats and Serbs together numbered 56% of the total population (Ramet 2006, 304), dominating politically, economically and geographically. Given the Serb-Croat axis was the backbone of Yugoslav state’s capacity to deal with any centrifugal tendencies among smaller nations and ethnic groups, for the sake of parsimony I will not explore in depth the formation of Slovene, Albanian or Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) national identities in relation to Yugoslav ideology.

My rationale, thus, in focusing on Croatian nationalism is in the fact that, given Serbs’ support to Yugoslavia’s survival in the late 1980’s, the fate of the country was in the hands of Croatian political elite. Furthermore, Bosnian Muslims (8.9% of Yugoslav population) were largely in support of Yugoslavia’s survival under condition that Croats (and Serbs) remain part of it. Croatian political elites thus had the power to define the strategic political position of Bosnian Muslims. Were they to support a transition towards a democratic federation, Bosnian Muslims would have been one of the most loyal and passionate supporters of such an agreement. Even if that would not enlarge pro-Yugoslav sentiments among Slovenes and Albanians, their secessionist moves would have easily been checked by Serb-Croat-Bosniak axis. Together with
Montenegrins and pro-Yugoslav Macedonians, Slovenes and Albanians, I think it is a reasonable estimate that at least 75-80% of overall Yugoslav population would have been strongly in support of Yugoslavia’s preservation.

To the contrary, Croatia’s support for a further devolution of Yugoslavia into a confederation (Slovenian option), went directly against Serbs’ vital means of preserving security — Yugoslav unity. It also went against Bosnian Muslims’ vital means of preserving security — balancing between Serbia and Croatia within Yugoslavia and between Serbs and Croats within Bosnia. Macedonians and Albanians were in a somewhat similar position like Bosnian Muslims, though decentralizing Yugoslavia and achieving status of a republic for Kosovo chronically dominated Albanians’ political agenda.

As Yugoslavia’s unwavering economic problems worsened in the late 1970’s (Woodward 1995b), discussing economic policy inevitably involved questioning the role of the political system. Some voices, like the one of a prominent Croatian economist Korošić (1988), advocated more unity and less fractionalization characteristic for the preceding period. However, it was the acute security deterioration in 1980’s Kosovo that forced political elites to clarify “constructive ambiguities“, especially the ones at the heart of the center-periphery tensions over sovereignty. The elites, most likely, would have been more careful, thus slower, in tackling solely economic reforms. They would have rather preserved “quasi-confederal” (Johnson 1982) Yugoslavia than risked further dissolution (Serbia) or centralization (Slovenia, Croatia). However, physical violence in 1980’s Kosovo left no space for further escaping into ambiguities. In the next section, I will briefly portray how Kosovo became a Yugoslav political watershed,

113 For the sake of brevity, from now on, I will refer to the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina as “Bosnia”, unless specified differently.

114 I would like to thank Dr. Dejan Jović (University of Zagreb, Croatia) for bringing my attention to this author and his work.
thus crucially homogenizing political factions within opposing constitutional camps.

**09.2. Kosovo and Ethnic Elites’ Antagonistic Homogenization**

There is a certain symbolism in one feature of Kosovo’s geography. Namely, a small river — Nerodimka — seems to be the only known case of bifurcation in Europe. One branch of the river flows to north and ends in the Black Sea, while the other flows to south and ends in the Aegean Sea. The bifurcation is mentioned in an early 14th century king Milutin’s scripture. He was a member of the most powerful Serbian medieval dynasty, the Nemanjićs. Long thought to have been natural, it is actually man made, most likely in medieval times. The symbolism behind Kosovo being a watershed does not stop here. Although it is hard to learn how the river got its name, a native speaker of Serbian cannot but feel uncomfortable with it. When translated to English, it literally means “futile”, “barren”, or, literally — “infertile”, “fruitless”.

While different Serbian communist leaders and experts questioned levels of decentralization of both Serbia and Yugoslavia at least four times from 1977 to 1983 (Jović 2003, 202), the acute security problems in the early 1980’s Kosovo really disturbed the uneasy federal equilibrium. Ever since the oust of powerful chief of secret police Aleksandar Ranković (Serb) in 1966, and especially after the 1968 constitutional amendments, Albanians gained predominance in Kosovo based on their demographic superiority (about 85% of Kosovo’s population). Kosovo was a Serbian province, but also directly represented in the federal bodies. It had the power to veto Serbian legislative process, while being constitutionally protected from reciprocal powers of Serbia. Kosovo received significant federal funds to speed up its development.

Historically, frictions between Serbs (Christians) and Albanians (Muslims) under Ottoman
Turkish rule resulted in Albanian dominance and gradual expulsion of Serbs toward north. Once a central territory of medieval Serbia, site of the 1389 battle that in subsequent centuries served as a central pillar of Serbian national myth, by the 1980’s Kosovo was over 80% Albanian Muslim. Interethnic tensions were burdened by 19th century rise of a modern Serbian state and its push “back” toward south, where Serbs lived intermingled with Albanians, Turks and Macedonian Slavs. A nascent Albanian nationalism within collapsing Ottoman state went unchecked in oppressing Kosovo’s Serbs until 1912, intensified due to expulsion of northernmost Albanian settlements in present day central Serbia. In 1912 roles reversed with Serbian victory over Ottomans, only to be briefly reversed back with Serbia’s horrific loses in World War I. In 1918, Albanians were once again submitted to Serbian rule, with the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia). In World War II, backed by Italian fascists, Kosovo was incorporated into “Greater Albania”, but in 1945 it was taken back, this time by Yugoslav, rather than Serbian forces. The vicious cycle of Serb-Albanian violence was supposed to have been tempered after both countries turned communist. However, Albania sided with the USSR against Yugoslavia following 1948 Tito-Stalin clash. Soon, Albanians escaping brutal Stalinist communism were being welcomed and settled in Kosovo. This brief summary should help understand highly unstable Serb-Albanian relationship which scarcely improved before 1974. In fact, Kosovo Albanian riots in 1968 forced Tito to send in federal army.

One of the first reports in the West about inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo was a New York Times’ articles written by David Binder and Marvin Howe, following the 1981 wave of deadly riots.

Vice Chancellor Ali Turku said that [university] started out in 1970 with 7,661 students, more than half of them Serbians. Today, he said, the university has
47,284 students, nearly three quarters of them of Albanian descent... The authorities said that old claims of "Serbian domination" were unjustified. They said that ethnic Albanians have gained access to key jobs at every level in the provincial administration, the ruling Communist Party and the economy... "I am an Albanian and I can say we have complete independence except for a few trappings of a state like shooting off a cannon," a senior official in the provincial administration remarked. "We make our own decisions and run things without interference from the republic.' (Howe 1981a)

The medieval seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church was attacked and at least 9 people were killed in clashes with security forces in what started as a student protest. The violence inflamed chronic tension between Kosovo's Albanian communists and the rest of Yugoslavia, itself divided over uneasy equilibrium between partisans of federal and confederal reforms of political system. A controversy was summed up in the following questions:

Why not a [status of a] republic... [for] Kosovo, since 85 percent of the 1.5 million inhabitants are ethnic Albanians? ...It is just as difficult to understand why ethnic Albanians so fiercely demanded the status of a republic, when under their present status as a Socialist Autonomous Province they have virtually all the rights of a republic, including their own administration, banking, courts, flag and language - everything except the right to secede. (Howe 1981b)

One of the leading communist party officials, Stane Dolanc (Slovene), accused Albanian nationalists linked to foreign actors of instigating the violence (Howe 1981b). Federal interior
minister Herljević (Croat) lamented over “Slavic peoples” steady migration from Kosovo and passive resistance to authority (“Yugoslavia Adds Police” 1981). Even though by October 1981 the situation calmed down a bit, the American reporter observed how “Albanian nationalist slogans and underground activities are still in evidence in Kosovo. Foreigners are not allowed in the province without a special permit, and Serbs and other non-Albanian people continue to move to other parts of the country” (“Rioting by Albanian Nationalists” 1981).

By the next summer, a new phrase entered political dictionary of Yugoslavia. Besides “exodus”, a Kosovo Albanian political leader Bećir Hoti described the goal of Albanian nationalist in Kosovo as an “ethnically clean Albanian republic” that would later “merge with Albania (Howe, 1982c). In the same article, based on the local sources, it was estimated that about 57,000 Serbs fled from Kosovo in the previous decade, while the following article reported an estimate of 20,000 Serbs leaving Kosovo after the 1981 riots (Binder, 11/09/1982).

An interesting irony in Yugoslavia’s attitude was noted by Muhamed Kešetović (Bosnian Muslim), at the time an advisor in the federal Yugoslav presidency. He praised the principled and tough Yugoslav position in international fora regarding human rights abuses in South Africa, Mozambique, Rhodesia and “black ghettos” and “…last year’s grand rally in support of Palestinian refugees”. Kešetović went on: “…but we haven’t done anything like that in Yugoslavia concerning sad exodus of hundreds of thousands expelled from Kosovo. That, it seems, does not concern many, but it should!” (Intervju 02/03/1984).

Mass protests were ignited, particularly after the military tried to cover up a gruesome attack on a Serb from eastern Kosovo. Đorde Martinović, a civilian employed by the army who, like many others, tended his family farm as well. On May 1st 1985, woke up on his field with a

---

115 My italics.
half a liter beer bottle inserted bottom first through his rectum and into his abdomen, causing internal bleeding. He managed to get to the nearby ambulance by himself. The controversy was immediately raised as some local and army officials tried to present the wounds as accidentally self-inflicted by Martinović in the course of sexually pleasing himself. Given the years of high tensions in and over Kosovo, they had every incentive to challenge Martinović.

On the other hand, it would be unusual, though not impossible, that a patriarchal husband and a father from rural Kosovo was practicing such sexual activities in an open field and in broad daylight. The medical experts, both domestic and foreign, largely agreed that the bottle could not have been self-inserted; especially not bottom first and that deep.116 Regardless of what really happened, this case worsened the all-Yugoslav confrontation. Albanian, Croatian and Slovenian media largely doubted Martinović’s innocence, while Serbian largely did not question it.117 The fact that such an incident could have been controversial in the first place is a testimony in itself to the state of inter-ethnic relations within both Kosovo and Yugoslavia.

Numerous evidences have been compiled and presented in a book “Slučaj Martinović”, by Svetislav Spasojević (1986). Besides legal documents, interviews and news reports, the book brings speeches from meetings in different political venues. A particularly dramatic speech was given in parliament of Serbia by Slavka Javorina, a woman who earned the highest Yugoslav war medal of “People’s Hero” as a partisan in Kosovo during World War II. On June 25th 1985, she said:

116 Martinović was also treated in London, where experts confirmed that self-harm was highly unlikely (I.S. 04/30/2015).

117 For another account of the Martinović case, see also Mertus 1999.
I cannot but ask myself, and I ask some of those comrades from the wartime leadership… starting with Fadil, Alija…\textsuperscript{118} I don’t know, Milija\textsuperscript{119} or I don’t know anymore today which of the deceased comrades are gone, how come none of them remembered to ask why those families which so eagerly sacrificed a lot [in the war], are today leaving Kosovo, after they won freedom. I have to conclude, sadly, that my beautiful and dear sympathies toward my comrades, one really grand comradeship existed among us, is now under question a little bit in my heart, and now I wonder whether they were sincere back then, were they true communists, and how and what happened so that they changed and they can’t see some things? (Spasojević 1986, 94)

Any student of credible commitment theory of war (Fearon 1995) can recognize the effects of one actor’s doubts regarding another actor’s sincerity. Every interaction transforms into a test of credibility. Depending on how the testing goes, the identities of friend and enemy are attributed to the perceived sources of concern. The importance of identity malleability can be exposed if we dissect a representative statement such as Hardin’s (1995, 148): “The overwhelming problem of the thesis that ethnic hatred motivates the ethnic conflict we see is that, for most of the groups in conflict, relations have generally been good . . . [before the war]”.\textsuperscript{120} Now, a Serb is a Serb, before, during, as well as after the war. In that sense, groups may have been in good relations before the war, but the identities of those groups evolved from friendly to hostile exactly before the war, thus enabling it. For instance, a Serb praising 1974

\textsuperscript{118} Albanian names

\textsuperscript{119} Serbian name

\textsuperscript{120} My italics
constitution did not threaten a non-Serb, but a Serb criticizing it did. So, to speak of “good relations among groups before the war” does not capture identity changes.

A statement that shocked many came out of the June 25th session of the Serbian parliament. Dragoljub Ćosić, state secretary for local self-government and justice affairs of Serbia, referred to the country’s constitutional framework concluding that republic of Serbia’s “…public prosecutor, as well as other institutions of the republic, have no authorization to investigate this case” (Spasojević 1986, 79-80).

Perhaps the most interesting parts of the book are the minutes from the federal parliament, when a group of Kosovo Serbs met parliament’s leadership. The litany of complaints cited particular incidents, dates, names of victims and perpetrators, arguing widespread oppression of Kosovo Serbs and lack of any protection from Kosovo authorities. The stream of grievances occasionally “spilled over” into questioning the very foundations of inter-ethnic relations and even political system.

For example, one Žika Janković from Klina, cried in Yugoslav parliament before the presiding Ilijaz Kurteši: “My brothers, 12 years ago, they were smart and I was a stupid fool, I did not listen to my parents and brothers, I did not want to leave Kosovo. I thought, since I did not hate anyone, nobody was going to hate me. But, that was wrong… I relied on not hating anyone. I paid a heavy price for that” (Spasojević 1986, 383). Another, even more ominous statement, though expectedly following Janković’s, came from one Miroslav Šolević: “…what everyone of us says, refusing to confess openly here in parliament, but says so in his house…[is] — I have five members of family or I have six, I would sacrifice two, but the rest would live
free. What does that mean? Comrades, it means civil war” (Ibid, 407-408).121

A illustrative example of the legal and political wall against which the Kosovo Serbs’ appeals were bouncing was the exchange between Boško Budimirović, a Serb from Kosovo Polje and the president of the Yugoslav parliament, Ilija Kurteši, an Albanian. Budimirović questioned the way people were elected to run political offices. He emphasized that “a common citizen, Albanian, did not create this situation in Kosovo… this is not a Kosovo problem anymore, this is a Yugoslav problem…” (Spasojević 1986, 393). Applause followed. As he continued questioning the political system and accusing “those in the top”, Kurteši engaged him:

- I would like to ask you, please… I thought you came here to the parliament to tell me the problems you have. I will listen to that… We will organize so that everything will be checked and, of course, if needed, we will give political speeches… but here, please, we should not have discussions like the one now. I am not ready for such a discussion.

- …if there was any luck and if those things did not happen in Kosovo, maybe I am overreacting, I apologize… but certainly if the situation was as it should have been and if it was respected what was being proclaimed, to elect the best, and now I will say something about that as well, since that is also one of our goals - who is being elected, who is representing us here [in federal institutions].

---

121 Šolević would later join forces with Milošević in bringing down leaderships in both Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, as well as Montenegrin leadership. At the time of these events, Milošević was not a very prominent official.
That is not our topic today, comrade. I will not talk about that.

I think that is the fundamental topic, I apologize, comrade president, for entering into polemics with you.

But I cannot talk about that. If you agree, fine, if not, I will not talk about it, I will leave immediately and you can talk…

Comrades, if I was wrong about something, tell me… (noise in the chamber)

(Spasojević 1986, Ibid.)

It would be wrong to attribute Kurteši’s attitude to his ethnicity. He was more likely afraid to engage in any discussion about what was perceived as the root problem — the political system. That question was the essential question not only for Kosovo stability, but was at the heart of all-Yugoslav fragile equilibrium, already under fire because of the inevitable link among economic and political dimensions. Now, however, there was no place to hide.

By 1986, mass protest marches by Kosovo Serbs pforced top Serbian leaders, such as Ivan Stambolić, to admit grave concerns before western journalists, while others (both Albanian and Serbian) accused Albania (Kamm, 07/27/1986). The mass protests revealed the impotency of the Yugoslav leadership and lack of federal state’s institutional capacity to deal with some basic security issues. Federal government even used police to forcefully disperse Kosovo Serbs who gathered in Belgrade to protest (Belgrade Battles Kosovo Serbs 1987).

The following year brought an escalation when an Albanian army recruit killed four non-Albanians and Ivan Stambolić sent Slobodan Milošević to Kosovo. That was the year when Milošević became famous after TV broadcasted his personal encounter with Serbs who provoked Albanian dominated Kosovo police into a skirmish. Milošević famously stated: “nobody should dare beat you”. This was when Kosovo Serbs recognized Milošević as a potential ally. Milošević
probably also recognized he could get far solving the Kosovo problem, once he saw popular approval of his statement. Not surprisingly, New York Times reported that Milošević commands respect of Serbs because he demands reduction of provinces’ level of autonomy (Kamm 1988).

Some scholars suspected, in fact never doubted, Milošević manipulated Kosovo Serbs into protests. Vladisavljević (2008, ch. 3) denies that and shows grass-root essence of the social mobilization of Kosovo Serbs. Along the same lines, some authors would rather see largely economic causes driving Serbs out of Kosovo in the 1970’s and 1980’s, claiming that the level of violence was not significantly different in the rest of Yugoslavia (Horvat 1989, ch. 13; Malcolm 1998, 339). If that was the case, then the timeline of Yugoslavia’s collapse could start with Milošević’s ascendancy and revival of Serbian nationalism. However, even skimming through the historical record, one can easily find scores of reports recording various forms of oppression, including murders. Petrović and Blagojević (1989) offer a range of surveys and interviews with Serbs who fled Kosovo, recording personal safety as dominant driver of their decision to move elsewhere.

Branko Horvat was a world famous Croatian economist, an ardent advocate of socialism and Yugoslavia, and also a critic of Croatian nationalism. Horvat conceded that in the 1971-1981 period state “policy was to conceal unpleasant events” in Kosovo (Horvat 1989, 148). Yet, he used official Kosovo statistics to show how violence was evenly distributed, proving its non-ethnic nature. He concluded that targeting of Serbs was primarily non-violent after 1981 “explosion of nationalism” and a result of state repression of Albanians (Ibid, 149). Horvat claimed, “…upon more than incomplete data” (sic!), that crime rate in Kosovo was “significantly lower” than in the rest of Yugoslavia. Also, inter-ethnic violence was “not significant”, although “Albanians attack Slavs more than vice versa”. Furthermore, since Albanians were 85% of
population, Serbs perceived (sic!) “common crime as ethnic oppression”. Also, Albanians’ avoiding testifying and publicly condemning attacks only “contributed” to the perception (sic!) of insecurity among Serbs (Ibid, 155-156). Horvat repeatedly recognized some data as “unrealistic” (Ibid, 157). Yet, based on such “quite incomplete data, with certain reservations” he found economic and psychological causes behind Serbs’ migrations. 122 “Albanian chauvinism” was only a minor cause, itself a result of the primary two causes, but provoking “revengeful Serbian chauvinism” (Ibid, 158). Horvat struggled to spread guilt equally and thus contribute to defusing the situation. However, the times of half-measures and seeking refuge in ambiguities were over. Kosovo status had to be resolved in recentralization or further decentralization. Horvat advocated formalizing Kosovo’s status as a seventh republic. I say “formalizing”, since Kosovo (and Vojvodina) were republics in all but name (Johnson 1983, viii).

Hence, Kosovo has been a watershed for Yugoslavia both politically and academically. Namely, Kosovo forced Yugoslavia to either regain its capacity to govern by halting further decentralization, or to continue down the spiral of decentralization and impotence. Academically, Kosovo has been challenging scholars to reconsider the causes of Yugoslavia’s collapse. If Kosovo Serbs were not oppressed, or at least the reports were largely exaggerated, blaming Milošević and Serbian nationalism for aggressive attack on status-quo might be justified. However, if Kosovo Serbs indeed were oppressed, that opens an academic can of worms. Why was the oppression tolerated for so long? Why reducing Kosovo’s autonomy and imposing

122 Horvat’s analysis draws on Popović, Janča and Petovar (1990). They accused Serbian regime of fabricating and/or exagerating violence against Serbs in Kosovo, based on the available statistics. However, they repeatedly recognized both scarcity and poor credibility of the statistics (ibid, 3, 9, 37, 55, 75).
stronger Serbian and Yugoslav control was controversial? Why was Serbian reaction framed as offensive, rather than defensive? Questions multiply.

The Kosovo crisis was, in fact, a Yugoslav crisis because it revealed that it was nationalism and not communist ideology behind the continued weakening of Yugoslav federation. Once the “Other” stopped being a “comrade of different view”, but an ethnic Other (“Serb”, “Croat”, “Albanian”), the ideology became a weapon in an inter-ethnic conflict, rather than a prescription of solving social issues and advancing to a “higher stage of human development”. Therefore, Slovenian (and Croatian) communists refused to accept that the status of Kosovo was separable from the federal political framework, fearing that strengthening Serbia’s unity might reverse their achievements in weakening federal structures (Ramet 2006, 338).

Johnson (1983, 35) recorded a statement of a Serbian “party official” that he and his comrades did not know what was going on in Kosovo prior 1981 riots or “did not want to seem to patronize the Kosovar officials by asking too many questions”. This was a testimony of how decentralized Yugoslavia was and how reluctant Serbia’s officials were to poke their noses into Kosovo’s internal affairs. In his 1982 report, he picked up a widespread impression that return to centralization will be impossible. Reversing the decentralizing trend, thus, was seriously considered within the party. Mostly by Serbian, but also by a significant part of Bosnian communists (Ramet 1984, 293).

The status of Kosovo could not have been disentangled from the debates about the party and federation’s (re)organization. Johnson (1983, 52-53) charts disagreements within Serbian party officials centered around Miloš Minić and Draža Marković (including Ivan Stambolić), respectively. Former’s group was softer in its reaction to 1981 riots, while latter’s group was more vocal and confrontational. However, the rise of the moderate leadership of Nikola Ljubičić
after XII party congress in 1982 reduced the visibility of Marković’s faction, which further reduced tensions with Slovenian and Croatian leaderships. Serbia was not yet homogenized regarding right policy toward Kosovo. Serbs lacked consensus not only within central Serbia. Vojvodina leadership was against “unitarist” tendencies (Johnson 1983, 37). Any call for recentralization was immediately equated with “Serbian nationalism”, “unitarism” and “bureaucratic centralism” (Ibid). Slovenian, Croatian and Vojvodina’s leaders did not hesitate to agree on that.

That enabled continued cooperation with western republics and preserve the perception that Yugoslavia was doing something to remedy the situation. However, any change in the status of Kosovo would either reduce or strengthen federation’s power. Either will prove unacceptable for one of Yugoslavia’s Serb-Croat axis in only a couple of years. They were approaching the state of the ultimate zero-sum game. For example, Johnson (1982) noted that greater concessions to Kosovo Albanians were highly unlikely, since, like Croatia, Kosovo received so much autonomy in the 1970’s that it virtually isolated itself from the rest of Yugoslavia. Horvat (1989) recognized Kosovo’s self-isolation.

On the other hand, the frustration among Serbs grew since it seemed that no amount of concessions was satisfying Albanian, Slovenian, Croatian and Vojvodina’s leaderships, nor did they seemed likely to stop suspecting Serbia’s hegemonic ambitions. Gradual but steady decentralization of both Yugoslavia and the communist party not only failed to solve problems, but it seemed they were getting worse until the explosion of violence in Kosovo pushed the situation to the extremes. Therefore, the idea that the solution should be found in further decentralization put Serbs in a dilemma described by George F. Kennan at the outset of the Cold War:
Some of us here have tried to conceive the measures our country would have to take if it really wished to pursue, at all costs, [the] goal of disarming Soviet suspicions… We have come to [the] conclusion that nothing short of complete disarmament, delivery of our air and naval forces to Russia and resigning of [the] powers of government to American Communists would even dent this problem: and even then we believe — and this is not facetious — that Moscow would smell a trap and would continue to harbor [the] most baleful misgivings…We are thus up against the fact… that suspicion in one degree or another is an integral part of [the] Soviet system, and will not yield entirely to any form of rational persuasion or assurance . . . . To this climate, and not to wishful preconceptions, we must adjust our diplomacy. (Gaddis 2005, 20)

In 1988, a new Serbian leader emerged on the wave of the frustration over security deterioration in Kosovo and federal impotence to deal with it. Slobodan Milošević replaced Ivan Stambolić at the helm of Serbian communists.\textsuperscript{123} What many writers fail to appreciate is that Stambolić and Milošević largely shared the same opinion about Kosovo. Stambolić, after all, was “suspicious” to other leaders because he questioned the de facto independent status of Serbian provinces (Mihajlović 2008). If in comparison with Minić and Ljubičić he was “suspicious”, Milošević was going to make him a “moderate” and others as neglecting Serbia’s interests at best, or traitors at worse (Ramet 2005, 346). In fact, it was Stambolić who initiated discussions in both federal bodies and academia about Kosovo, carefully avoiding questioning the federal

\textsuperscript{123} A detailed account of the 1988 Milošević’s victory over Stambolić’s faction can be found in Pavlović, Jović and Petrović (2008).
However, Stambolić believed change had to be gradual, while Milošević did not want to wait (Vladisavljević 2008, 68). Patience, after all, did not make Milošević popular over night, but rather a firm and resolute stand in defense of Kosovo Serbs in 1987. Now, he wanted to reassert Serbia’s unity and reduce provincial autonomies, not abolish them, as is widely presented in the literature. The fundamental question is whether Milošević’s explicit political program advocating “modern federation” was really seeking Serbian hegemony or preventing collapse of the country.

The last readjustment of the Yugoslav equilibrium came in the fall of 1988. The popular “yogurt revolution” ousted Vojvodina’s leadership in massive protests of predominantly Vojvodina’s Serbs joined by Kosovo Serbs. At that time, Serbia already initiated changes to its constitution and required support from other republics (Jović 1989). Slovenian leadership granted that Serbia indeed was not equal to other republics, given that its provinces were virtually independent. However, in exchange for strengthening Serbia vis-à-vis its provinces, Serbia had to give up on amendments introducing stronger federation (Ibid, 100-103; Woodward 1995b, 94-95), and in fact accept some reductions regarding financing of the federal army (Papović 2011). The Slovenian leadership led by Kučan feared Milošević’s initiative might be a precedent that would later be used to strengthen the federation as well (Jović 2003, 458).

Following the ousting of Vojvodina’s leadership, Kosovo Serbs joined massive protest against Montenegro’s leadership, relying on pro-Serbian sentiments of Montenegrins. Here is where Slovenes and Croats interceded in favor of containing the wave of protests from Serbia.

---

124 The result of the academic debate will be the infamous “Memorandum” of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
However, it just postponed the deposition of the highly unpopular leadership, which happened in January 1989. This was the last line of defense for communist leaders of Slovenia and Croatia. They were ready to accept strengthening of Serbia only in exchange for keeping Yugoslavia as decentralized as it was, if not decentralizing it further. The communist parties in republics reached the final stage of the ultimate zero-sum game, since keeping the status-quo was not acceptable for anyone. Serbian communists wanted a “modern federation”, while Slovenian and Croat communists wanted a “confederation”.

What followed the November 1988 amendments to the federal constitution was a peak in massive unrest among Kosovo Albanians. Federal presidency had to send in troops to impose order and the central committee of Yugoslav party removed Kosovo Albanian leadership, triggering more unrest and drama when Albanian coal miners refused to leave the mine pit (Woodward 1995b, 94-95). Intimidated by federal party’s treatment of their leadership, Kosovo’s parliament adopted amendments to the federal and Serbia’s constitutions. This led to the final adoption of changes to Serbia’s constitution in March 1989, when autonomy of provinces was reduced to pre-1974 level. While it is a widespread opinion in the literature that without tanks aiming Kosovo’s parliament Albanian delegates would have refused changes, in fact it was the federal parliament’s amendments, federal presidency’s resoluteness and Yugoslav party’s directive that broke their opposition.125

Very soon, Slovenes hosted a number of events in support of Albanian demands, causing rough and, by some insider accounts, rash Serbian reaction including boycotting Slovenia’s products (Jović 2001). Slovenes moved decisively in the summer of 1989 by adopting

125 See Meier (1999, 75) for more details on bargaining in the federal party and presidency that resulted in removal of Kosovo’s leadership.
amendments to their constitution which denied the supremacy of the federal constitution. The federal bodies, including the federal constitutional court rejected these amendments. However, Yugoslav constitutional framework was impotent to deal with this (Buzadžić 1994).

Slovenes and Croats submitted their confederal proposal in November 1989, which Serbia rejected. Woodward (1995b, 128) and especially Hayden (2003, 70-71) show how Yugoslavia would become a state in name only, had this proposal been adopted. In the same year, Milošević published a book composed of his speeches at various occasions, in which his stance was clear — Yugoslavia as a “modern federation” (Milošević 1989). Just before the elections in Croatia and Slovenia in the spring of 1990, Jović wrote in his diary that Serbia would have accepted confederal arrangement only if Serbs’ rights on other republics could have been guaranteed, which was impossible (Jović 1995, 131).

Croatian Serbs in the summer of 1989 expressed support to Serbia, thus showing a serious crack along ethnic lines within Croatia’s communists. Ethnicity among communists was largely becoming correlated with their political attitudes. The homogenization among them was virtually complete. Serbs within Yugoslav federation and its communist party were divided along several lines during 1980’s. As Johnson (1983, ix) observed, during 1980’s, Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia were opposed to “Great Serbian” pretensions, just like Serbs in Vojvodina, while Kosovo Serbs were highly in favor of changes. These lines of division should not be hard to explain, given that it were Serbs in Kosovo whose lives were directly affected by violence and instability within that province. On the other hand, Vojvodina’s leadership enjoyed the power and benefits of running one of the richest parts of Yugoslavia as they pleased. Even though it was ethnically mixed, Vojvodina was the most peaceful part of Yugoslavia and remained so even during the wars of the nineties.
On the other hand, Serbs in Bosnia and especially Croatia were driven by their losses and narratives of World War II genocide and inter-ethnic cooperation within Tito’s partisan movement. They had to balance between maintaining Yugoslavia as a guarantor of their safety and not provoking their Croat and Muslim neighbors. Distancing themselves from Serbia’s calls to strengthen the federation was, paradoxically, the only way to appear credible in their own calls for Yugoslav “brotherhood and unity”. Now, with the question of Kosovo, they reached their ultimate zero-sum game. Any change in any direction would make them worse off. Less Yugoslavia would have made them an unprotected minority within Bosnia and Croatia, but advocating stronger Yugoslavia would have turned them against their Croat and Muslim comrades scared of “Serbian hegemony”.

Yugoslav communists’ last congress in January 1990 finally broke the illusion of negotiating the way out of the intra-party crisis. The status quo was unacceptable to both Serbia’s federalist and Slovenia’s confederalist demands. As Slovenia’s demand for confederalization of the party was flatly rejected by majority of delegates, Slovenes declared such “outright” as unacceptable and simply walked out of the congress. Croats followed and then delegates from Bosnia and Macedonia left. Torn between opposite projects and locked in an ultimate zero-sum game, the Yugoslav communist party committed suicide. The question remained: did the country have to follow the collapse of the party? Why was there no all-Yugoslav political force capable to keep Yugoslavia together, despite the failure of communists to keep their own party united? What ideologies were the most popular among Yugoslavia’s non-communist circles was soon revealed with the first multi-party elections of the 1990.

09.3. Ethnic Homogenization Outside of the Party

As Milošević’s faction was winning the loyalty of Serbia’s communists and strong
sympathies among Montenegrins, the homogenization of Slovenian and Croatian communists against him and behind confederal project pushed alienated Serbs in those two republics. As I showed in the previous section, the collapse of the federal communist party in the start of 1990 opened door for multiparty elections. By then, numerous non-communist groups emerged in the liberalization of the 1980’s predominantly in Serbia and Slovenia, often mutually supporting each other, though without clear unifying vision of the post-communist Yugoslav future.

The most vocal liberal circle in Serbia formed around a dissident writer Dobrica Ćosić. A communist from his youth and a partisan during World War II, he was ousted from the party in the 1960’s because he disagreed with Yugoslav policy toward Kosovo. He features prominently as one of the leaders of Serbia’s nationalist revival (e.g., Dragović-Soso 2002). On the other hand, Ćosić himself supported and defended, for instance, Alija Izetbegović — later, wartime president of Bosnian Muslims in the 1990’s — and others accused and imprisoned for “Islamic fundamentalism” in the early 1980’s.

While Ćosić never questioned Yugoslavia as the optimal solution for all Yugoslav nations, people close to him in the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in the mid 1980’s started thinking about the alternative. The leaking of the unfinished document now known as the “Memorandum” caused an uproar in 1986 among non-Serbs, since it listed fundamental Serbian grievances in Yugoslavia and questioned the purpose of such an arrangement. Serbian communists, including Milošević, rejected “Memorandum”, while non-Serbs saw it almost as an

---

126 In fact, according to the Croatian journalist Hudelist, Ćosić confessed that he “loved” Yugoslavia even after recognizing the country was going to collapse in the late 1980’s (Hudelist 2012, ch. 7; Jović 1995; see also Pavković in Đokić 2003)
equivalent to the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, a Serbian conspiracy.\textsuperscript{127}

Ćosić exposed his own view of Yugoslavia’s future in his proposal for the new constitutional arrangements, published in his book “Stvarno i moguće” (1988). In it, he advocated liberal political reforms, multiparty democratic elections and — “one person, one vote” principle for the lower chamber of the federal parliament. Again, even the leading communist dissident from Serbia was unable to accept the veto powers of federal units. Even more problematic was his insistence that Yugoslavia was formed by “peoples”, not by “republics”, which implied that borders between republics could not be the lines of separation in case of secession.

Rising nationalist figures, such as Vuk Drašković, writer, or Vojislav Šešelj, another communist dissident, were even more extreme. They questioned not only communism, invoking liberal democracy and free market system, but flatly challenged border between republics, especially in case of country’s further devolution. Both of them would cooperate for a short period, after which they split and went on to form their own political parties. Drašković was more successful in the beginning, but during the 1990’s Šešelj took over and by 1998 his party became the most popular party in Serbia.\textsuperscript{128}

A group of liberal pro-western intellectuals gathered in the end of 1989 and founded “Democratic party” in the early 1990 in anticipation of elections. Even though this party is now mostly remembered as the backbone of all movements against Milošević and for closer ties with the West, in the first couple of years of its existence, starting with 1990, it clearly advocated the

\textsuperscript{127} Stallaerts (2002, 153) compares Serb and Croat grievances over economic exploitation and concludes that the former were more credible “in purely economic terms”.

\textsuperscript{128} On Drašković, see Ramet 2006, 385.
right of Serbs to self-determination against the existing borders among republics in case of Yugoslavia’s collapse (Ramet 2005, 141). However, even just a few weeks before the war, the leader of this party hoped that the federal elections were going to save the country (Milošević M.1991).

By 1990, Serbs in Croatia and then Bosnia already had their non-communist alternative in the form of Serbian Democratic Party. Founded in Knin, Croatia, it spread to Bosnia as an idea, where it took an independent form and won vast majority of Bosnian Serb votes in the fall of 1990. However, Serbs in Croatia threw their support behind Croatian communists, struggling to bridge the differences between Croatian and Serbian communist leaderships, desperately attempting to balance the rise of Croatian nationalism. Serbian Democratic Party in Croatia, advocating stronger Yugoslavia, won only five seats in the new Croatian parliament. Hence, apart from some minor groupings, all major Serb political parties, both left and right on the ideological spectrum, rejected both confederal Yugoslavia and the sanctity of republics’ borders in case of dissolution.

On the other hand, both Croat and Slovene non-communists were in agreement that Yugoslavia cannot but move towards a confederal arrangement. While in Slovenia these alternative non-communist voices were clearly articulated in 1987, there was no history of Serb-Slovene animosity in the alternative, non-communist narrative. In fact, many Serbs prided in hosting Slovene refugees during World War II and Slovenes never missed to recognize that. Nevertheless, Slovene communists entered an uneasy competition for the title of the protector of

129 A brief review of dominant views among major Serbian political parties on the eve of the multi-party elections in 1990 was summarized by Dijana Vukomanović (2005).
national interests. As they competed against Slovene opposition groups gathered around journals such as *Mladina, Nova Revija* and various alternative and youth groups, their strategic goal became one — the vital means for protection of Slovenia’s future is the confederal Yugoslav framework (Jović 2003, 471). That was perhaps most visible with the results of the April 1990 elections — a communist leader, Milan Kučan, won presidential elections, while rightist opposition coalition DEMOS won the parliamentary elections.

The period from the 1971 purge until the late 1980’s was sometimes referred to as the “Croatian silence”. The dominant venue for expressing growing Croatian nationalism in Yugoslavia was the Catholic Church (Ramet 1985; Perica 2002). Croatia’s political alternatives to the reformed communist party came in two major groups. One was centered on the leadership of Franjo Tuđman, former communist general turned nationalist, while the other was centered on Croatian nationalist communist leaders evicted by Tito in 1971. If Slovenia’s anti-communists had few historical narratives of Serb-Slovene hostility, Croatia’s anti-communists had a full arsenal to choose from.

The former, Tuđman’s Croatian Democratic Community, included nationalists ranging from the right wing extremists openly adoring Croatia’s World War II Nazi puppet state. It also included nationalist communists expelled in the 1971 purge, such as Stipe Mesić, soon to become the presiding member of the Yugoslav presidency. The views of this party were obvious from the start, when in the founding speech, its leader Franjo Tuđman declared that

---

130 For an illustrative summary, see Dejan Jović 2001.

131 Croatian Democratic Community will be referred to from now on according to its original name’s abbreviation — HDZ (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica)
confederation and Croatian sovereignty cannot come into question (Tuđman 1990). The latter did not flirt with Croatia’s quisling legacy, but shared the same attitude toward the irreversibility of Yugoslavia’s power devolution, as clearly outlined by one of its central personalities, Savka Dabčević-Kučar (Butković and Grakalić 1990; Baletić 1990; Antonić 1997).

The level of homogenization among Croatian political elites is perhaps best visible by the fact that Croatian communist authorities enabled and passively supported its domestic nationalists and extreme right-wing emigration to set up contacts. For example, Franjo Tuđman was persecuted by Yugoslav authorities because of his extreme nationalist views expressed in written and in interviews with foreign journalists. However, in the mid-1980’s, he had his passport returned and was allowed to travel abroad and establish contacts with the extreme emigrant circles in Canada and the US. He was protected by top Croatian leader Mika Špiljak and Croatia’s intelligence chief Josip Perković (Hodak 2014, 110-115).

Politically the Croatian public was also extremely homogenized. Gagnon (2004, 135) relies on a survey conducted by a team of Croatian sociologists which shows that 15% favored total independence and 64% favored a confederal Yugoslavia. Combined, almost 80% of people in Croatia favored confederation. Given that Serbs and Yugoslavs at that time numbered at best 20%, the political division and national division was almost none.\(^{133}\)

\(^{132}\) Its branch in Bosnia was largely controlled from Zagreb, though it might be also said that members with family origins in Bosnia dominated in Zagreb.

\(^{133}\) Between the census of 1981 and the census of 1991, the 8% of Yugoslavs in Croatia melted down to just over 2%. Even if this fluctuation is taken into account, the number of Croats who favored federal Yugoslavia and especially Milošević’s idea of dispensing veto powers of federal units, is miniature.
By the end of the 1990s, after elections in Slovenia and Croatia, but before elections elsewhere, two fully contradictory proposals were put forward (Vukomanović 2005). The confederal model was proposed by the new governments of Slovenia (run by DEMOS) and Croatia (run by the HDZ). The federal model was proposed by the Yugoslav presidency headed by Jović, a Serb and a close Milošević’s collaborator. After 1990 elections in Serbia confirmed Milošević’s popularity and granted him full control over that republic, Serbia’s attitude against confederation was cemented.

Politicians were not the only ones locked into a complete gridlock; so too were intellectuals, writers, and artists. Perhaps the most dramatic episode comes from Dobrica Ćosić’s note on his visit to Zagreb in November of 1984. After a series of arrest and political trials, Ćosić’s Belgrade liberal circle initiated gathering of Yugoslav liberal intellectuals in defense of the freedom of speech. Ćosić went to Zagreb to solicit Croatian and Slovene intellectuals to join an all-Yugoslav committee, believing that strength was in numbers. Ćosić was deeply disappointed to learn from Rudi Supek that “Croats want nothing to do with Serbs and for Yugoslavia”. Slovene philosopher Kermauner had no better news for Ćosić, regarding Slovene intellectuals. As Ćosić was leaving Zagreb, Kermauner hugged him at the train station, intoxicated, and sobbed “Yugoslavia is done, Dobrica…” (Grujić 2010). Jović (2009, 6.1.1) noted how dissident writers agreed in their opposition to the regimes suppression of free speech, but were unable to find common ground regarding “national question”. The breakdown of Yugoslav cultural space was discussed at length in the works of Wachtel (1998) and Dragović-134 For Kermauner’s impressions about Serbia as a refuge from communist oppression, as well as his fears and resistance to Serbian cultural hegemony, as he perceived it, see Vasović-Mekina (2005) and Biserko (2006, 140-142).
The only all-Yugoslav alternatives came in the form of two loose political groupings in 1989/1990. One was gathered around the charismatic federal premier Ante Marković (a Bosnian Croat), while the other was a conglomerate of liberal intellectuals. The former was trying to exploit his brief popularity among wider Yugoslav public, based on his initial success in economic dimension. However, he carefully avoided siding with either federalists or confederalists, attempting to bridge the divide (Anđelić 2003, 153-155). It seems, however, that Marković had no chance from the start. At some point, he would have had to declare his views and thus antagonize one half of the country. The leader of Bosnian branch of Marković’s “reformists” (as they were known), revealed the true intentions in the end of the 1990, after the coalition of ethnic parties won the Bosnian elections. By Kecmanović’s account, “reformists” should have “more explicitly” demanded federation and not imply it in their program of economic reforms, since “most of Bosnians desired strong federation” (Ninčić 1990).

The other all-Yugoslav grouping was “The Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative”. Its program advocated modern federal system and even civic Yugoslav nation (Horvat 2003). This seemed very close to how Milošević envisaged “modern federation”, though it even went further than that. However, Milošević was regarded as a Serbian nationalist demagogue and was severely criticized. This group at first did not want to run in the elections, and refused to join Ante Marković’s “reformists” because he did not have a clear political program (Spaskovska 2012). What is interesting, however, is that both groups failed to run in the republic elections in Slovenia and Croatia, but did run elsewhere, with little success. They appeared too late.

In the end of this section, I will briefly discuss the position of Bosnian Muslims, especially
after the 1990 elections. Bosnian communists, before the collapse of the communist party in January 1990, were in favor of strengthening Yugoslav communist party and federation (Jović 2003, 463-469; Ramet 2006, 339). Bosnian Muslims’ non-communist political leaders, after communists were defeated in 1990 elections, did not abandon “all-inclusive” Yugoslavia as a vital means of survival. For example, one of the founders and leading figures of the Muslim Party of Democratic Action, Adil Zulfikarpašić, stated:

In [the election] rallies I often repeated that Croats were our natural allies… because they were threatened as well. Then my position was: in Bosnia you can’t do anything without Serbs, you must not do anything against the Serbs… The problem of Yugoslavia was the problem of joint life - joint life of Serbs and Croats, and at our place it was the joint life of Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. Hence, we had to be for joint life, we did not have any other alternative. (Đilas, Gaće and Zulfikarpašić 1994, 165-205)

Even though in November 1990, the leading Bosnian Muslim party (SDA) abandoned its neutrality and opted for confederation, very soon it retreated back to balancing, fearing grand Croat-Serb agreement about dividing Bosnia (Bougarel in Djokic 111-112). The leader of Bosnian Muslims, Alija Izetbegović, was thus balancing between Serbs and Croats as much as it

---

135 From now on, I will refer to the main Bosnian Muslim party according to its original abbreviation “SDA”, which stands for “Stranka demokratske akcije” (in English: Party of Democratic Action).
was possible.\textsuperscript{136} He was led by the imperative of avoiding both war and ending up as a leader of a minority within any “rump” state formation (presumably Serb-dominated), though the later seems to have been more troubling.

On January 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1991, Alija Izetbegović met with Serbian leader Milošević when both leaders agreed that Yugoslavia should be preserved, but on February 27\textsuperscript{th} Izetbegović advanced the “Declaration on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s sovereignty” and (in) famously stated that he would “...sacrifice peace for a sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina, but would not sacrifice its sovereignty for peace” (Kovačević and Dajić 1994, 32-33; see also Peic 2008). The Declaration was not adopted at the insistence of Serbian Democratic Party's delegates. Not only that the form in which Yugoslavia was to be preserved was ambiguous, but the relationship between the federal and republic's sovereignty was at the heart of this ambiguity. Different actors were promoting their agendas pretending that others share their implied understanding of the sovereignty controversy.

Attempting to satisfy both sides (Slovenia and Croatia's pull toward confederation and Serbia and Montenegro's pull toward “democratic federation”), in June of 1991 Izetbegović and Macedonian leader Gligorov\textsuperscript{137} proposed a compromise that was not able to sufficiently reduce ambiguities, but they clearly moved toward a confederal model — a“union of sovereign republics” (Kovačević and Dajić 1994, 38).

\textsuperscript{136} Alija Izetbegović was the leader of SDA and the president of Bosnia since 1990. He was arrested and imprisoned in the early 1980’s on the grounds of Islamic fundamentalism.

\textsuperscript{137} Gligorov observed firsthand how Izetbegović struggled between Serbian push for federation and Croatian push for confederation, recognizing that Bosnian Muslims “…were not able to go without Zagreb, nor without Belgrade” (Karabeg 2008).
Since in late June of 1991 both the parliaments of Croatia and Slovenia adopted their respective declarations of sovereignty, igniting violent clashes in Slovenia and escalating the existing ones in Croatia. Bosnia was caught in a nightmare Izetbegović was dreading — having to make a choice between Serbs and Croats. Izetbegović tried to balance between Milošević and “western republics”. He pleaded with US secretary of State, Baker, to pressure Milošević to agree with the election of openly secessionist Croatian representative Stipe Mesić to preside over Yugoslav collective presidency. However, he asked Baker to pressure Croatia and Slovenia into respecting the “minimum of state powers of Yugoslav community”, as well (Praljak 2005).

While Izetbegović tested the ground by sending Zulfikarpašić and Muhamed Filipović to seek agreement with Milošević, he was suffering tremendous pressure from Croatian leadership in Croatia and even more in Bosnia (Peić 2008). Fearing Croat-Serb war within Bosnia due to Bosnian Croats' threats to secede in case of an agreement between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, he distanced himself from Zulfikarpašić and Filipović's agreement with Milošević. Instead, he sought an exit in furthering equivocal political platforms that would give him space to both preserve peace within Bosnia, keep it whole and internally undivided.

In mid-October 1991, the last attempts of such sort were made, when joint Bosnian Muslim and Croat initiatives were pushed in the Bosnian parliament (Praljak 2014, No.8-9). The first was as contradictory as the second, for it supported Yugoslav institutions and in the same paragraph (Ibid, No.2) declared that Bosnia will not send its representatives to partake in federal bodies' meetings, unless representatives of all other republics (read Slovenia and Croatia) attend. In the following paragraph (Ibid, No.3) it stated that no Yugoslav constitutional solution was going to be accepted if both Serbia and Croatia were not going to be members. The second initiative

---

138 This is known as “Belgrade Initiative”
stipulated inviolability of Bosnia's borders, its full sovereignty and “neutrality” in any Serb-Croat conflict, but invited others to preserve Yugoslav “community” (sic!) of all six republics.

Since Serbia has been supportive of Yugoslavia's survival all along, the Bosnian Muslim leadership thus inevitably tied itself to Croatian strategy. That was obvious with the intensification of fighting after the three month “moratorium” on Croatian independence expired on October 8th 1991.\textsuperscript{139} It provided a perverse incentive - the more fighting there was between Croatian troops, on one side, and Krajina Serbs and the federal army, on the other side, the lower were the chances to find a compromise and enable Bosnian Muslim leadership to remain in Yugoslav “community”. Since Bosnia’s residents were actively picking sides in the ongoing war, the stream of ethnic violence was already trickling in from Croatia. Bosnian Muslim leadership was in the ultimate zero-sum game: any decision would confront them with someone. Even remaining neutral would make them passive Serb allies, since federal army was using Bosnia's territory to supply its troops in Croatia, while Serb volunteers and war material followed. Moreover, remaining passive would simple make them a minority within a larger Serbia — that is, a rump Yugoslav state.

On October 15th, Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats outvoted Bosnian Serbs, adopted Memorandum on Bosnia’s sovereignty and agreed to have a referendum on independence. On January 25\textsuperscript{th} 1992, they outvoted Bosnian Serbs and adopted decision to hold a referendum on Bosnia’s independence. The strategic decision-making process will be discussed in more details in one of the chapters dedicated to case studies.

In the end, Kosovo Albanians were the last major ethnic group to play an important role in the Yugoslav collapse. The traditional polarization among Kosovo Serbs and Albanians was

\textsuperscript{139} It was imposed in early July 1991 under European Community's pressure.
most visibly represented on the main street in Kosovo’s capital. Namely, taking a traditional
evening stroll for purpose of meeting friends and people watching was regulated by a custom—
Albanians walked on one side of the street, Serbs on the other (Howe, 1982c).

When it comes to the political elite of Kosovo Albanians, Johnson (1982; 1983) details a
nearly unanimous position based on preserving the status quo at minimum, and reaching status of
a republic for Kosovo as an optimal solution. His assessments are confirmed by Shkëlzen Maliqi,
one of the leading Albanian activists and intellectuals in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Maliqi (2014)
explains the differing concepts among the Albanian political elite in the 1970’s. The more
extreme faction, the “enverists”, sought Kosovo’s elevation to the status of a republic as a stop
on the way to the unification with Albania. 140 The moderate faction, the “titoists”, took a more
cautious approach in their quest for Kosovo’s status of a republic. They wanted first to solidify
Kosovo’s status within the 1974 constitutional framework which was granting Kosovo virtually
all the competences of a republic.

In comparison, the former were more radical and impatient, while the latter were more
realistic, cautious and slower. Both, however, shared dissatisfaction with Kosovo’s de facto
status of a republic and strived for de jure status of a republic (Maliqi 2014, 163). With the
advent of the 1980’s crisis and the escalation of all-Yugoslav stasis, Albanian political elite
largely agreed on three acceptable solutions. In the 1990, under the leadership of Ibrahim
Rugova, an alternative Albanian movement brought together both “enverists” and “titoists”. The
Democratic League of Kosovo’s platform demanded a status of a republic for Kosovo, if
Yugoslav federation was to survive. If the internal borders were going to be redrawn along ethnic
lines, Rugova’s movement demanded an Albanian republic within Yugoslavia that would include

140 “Enverists” were named after Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha (1908-1985)
some territories of Macedonia, Montenegro and central Serbia. If Yugoslavia was to collapse, Kosovo should have a referendum on independence, not excluding unification with Albania (Ibid, 164-196).

In conclusion, the homogenization of political elites by the mid to late 1980’s cannot be easily disputed. The homogenization did not mean that there were no differences within one ethnic group’s political elites, but that no major ethnic faction was able to find an ally in another ethnic group. However, the main argument in the literature, that non-Serbs’ secessionism was caused by Serbian nationalism (rather than vice-versa), must be reappraised. In the next section, I will discuss the missed alternative — transition to a liberal democracy and why Yugoslavs avoided that path.

09.4. Why Not Democratization?

That further dissolution of Yugoslavia was the only way to avoid Serb domination and Milošević’s aggressive ambition to replace Tito implies that Serbs did enjoy and were able to preserve and/or strengthen their domination. Given that Serbs numbered about 36% of Yugoslav population, justification for further dissolution of Yugoslavia also implies that Milošević and his political alternatives rejected transition to liberal democracy in order to make up for their lack of numbers.

However, upon closer inspection, none of this seems correct. Serbs did not enjoy dominant position during socialist Yugoslavia, nor did their political elites reject transition to liberal democracy. For example, an academic debate on introduction of political pluralism in 1989 gathered some of the principal constitutional lawyers and academics from Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Serbian intellectuals, some of whom went on to become ideologists of Milošević’s party, were unanimous in the need to introduce multiparty democracy and “one person one vote”
principle in the lower chamber of Yugoslav parliament (Đorđević et al. 1990).

For instance, esteemed academic Marković, one of the founders of Milošević’s Socialist party, was explicit — Serbs number 36.3% of population, hence there is no mathematical possibility of their domination (Đorđević et al. 1990, 29). Constitutional law professor Najdan Pašić worried that without political pluralism Yugoslavia was not going to survive (Ibid, 40). Vučetić (Ibid, 50-51) lamented over citizens being reduced to their national identities by the present system. Instead, he believed Yugoslav communist party must fight for legitimacy in a “democratic competition” and “elections”, just like any other political organizations. In 1991, he was appointed a judge to the constitutional court of Serbia. One of the most prominent Serbian constitutionalists, Jovan Marjanović (Ibid, 64) stated that a “complete privatization of rights and freedoms of political participation is a precondition for a rule of law and political sovereignty of a citizen”. He even claimed that a membership in a political party should be as voluntary as a membership in a pet society, obviously referring to the omnipotence of communist party at that time. Professor Šoškić (Ibid, 87) saw two chambers, lower representing citizens and upper representing federal units, as an optimal solution, since “Yugoslavia is a federation”. Professor Vasović (Ibid, 99-100) recognized voices demanding rights of federal units, but balanced them with the rights of Yugoslavia.

On the other hand, Croatian sociologist Puhovski (Đorđević 1990, 74-76), after sharp criticism of “Stalinization” in Serbia under Milošević, predicted that amending constitution in “present circumstances” was impossible, even though he considered “institutionalized pluralism at the Yugoslav level” as the least bad option. He predicted democratization only if majority of actors were going to favor “risk of radical changes” instead of “gradual dissolution”, and if military apparatus was to fail in imposing a “militarized unity”. The bottom line, according to
Puhovski, democratization was possible only if majority of actors were going to “risk it”, as if “gradual dissolution” bore no risks at all. One of the leading figures of Slovenia’s communists, Ciril Ribičič (Ibid, 108) seems to have been very careful not to say anything directly about all-Yugoslav democratic elections. However, he did not fail to emphasize that the “constitution, as an expression of the will of majority in all republics and provinces, delineates positions and limits everyone’s actions…” Putting federal units before federation was quite consistent with the political platform Ribičič was loyal to. He was, in fact, leading Slovenia’s party delegates as they were leaving the 14th congress of Yugoslav communists, after the congress rejected confederalization of the party.

In the fall of 1989, Milošević flirted with the vague idea of “non-party political pluralism”, fearing that multi-party system would “crush Yugoslavia” (Jović 1995, 61-62). In the summer of 1990, federal government proposed all-Yugoslav multiparty elections. However, Slovenia vetoed that proposal (Zimmerman 1999, 56). Slovenia’s leadership obviously feared that a democratically elected, thus legitimate, federal parliament would have strengthened Yugoslavia and diminished the liberal image of Slovenia just after it held the first multiparty elections. On the other hand, Milošević needed Yugoslavia to survive as the only way to keep all Serbs within one country and that is why he did not oppose multiparty federal elections (Ibid, 60; Ramet 2006, 338). Moreover, saving Yugoslavia was the only way to keep Serbs in one country, without having to pay the price of war.

If “non-party political pluralism” was not appealing to academia and Milošević’s close

141 On this Slovene’s move, see also Jović 2009, 199; Woodward 1995b, 118-131; Hayden 2003, 45.
associates such as Borisav Jović, there had to be another way to prevent centrifugal forces to “crush Yugoslavia”. The insider account coming from the testimony of Borisav Jović in Milošević’s trial reveals the alternative. While Jović disagreed with Milošević about postponing multiparty elections in Serbia, he confirmed that Serbian leadership at that time desired a federal law regulating multiparty elections in republics to be adopted first (Jović 2003, 29384-29385). Moreover, it seems that Milošević wanted to kill two birds with one stone. By insisting on the primacy of the federal law on multiparty elections, Slovenes and Croats would have had to work through the federal parliament, thus confirming its competencies and its legitimacy, in effect strengthening federal institutions. Also, Albanians would not have been able to win elections in Kosovo that early (Jović 1995, 2001).  

However, Slovenes and Croats did not wait for federal legislation to be adopted, and preemptively had their elections in the spring of 1990. Serbia followed only in the end of the year and not earlier, since its leadership advocated federal law on multiparty elections to be adopted first. Both Milošević and Jović had no doubts about winning elections in Serbia (Jović 2003, 29384-29385). Much to Jović’s displeasure, Milošević insisted on the federal law preceding multiparty elections in republics. However, the benefit of having federal elections first was lost with Slovenia and Croatia’s unilateral decision to have their own elections disregarding federal legislative. That Serbia desired federal elections to precede elections in republics for the purpose of strengthening the federation was confirmed by one of the insiders at the time, Budimir Košutić (Janjić 1992). In the end of the 1990, Serbia held its own multi-party elections

---

142 Jović also confirmed that Serbia was at the forefront of the economic liberalization throughout 1980’s, while Slovenes never wanted to give up on planning. Not because they were not appreciating liberal economic reforms, but because planning presupposed powers of republics’
and expected the same at the federal level.

Notwithstanding serious conflicts between Serbian leadership and Yugoslav government of Ante Marković over his economic policy (Jović’s diary is full of suspicions and accusations against Marković), it seems that Milošević wanted to use Marković to strengthen the federal structure. As Marković himself testified, in the fall of 1990, Milošević offered him support to become the first president of Yugoslavia in exchange for replacing eight-member federal presidency with one, all-Yugoslav, president. Marković dismissed the proposal as “not serious”, given the virtual impossibility to change the constitution without consensus (Marković 2003, 28205).143

As the situation escalated in the spring and summer of 1991, Milošević proposed the most elastic political system he and his aides could have devised, the so called “Belgrade Initiative”, agreeing to leave many competences at the hands of the republics, but still keeping the essential state competences in the hands of the federal bodies. More importantly, the proposal envisaged bicameral parliament representing citizens in the lower chamber and republics in the upper chamber (Kostić 2006). As already noted before, Izetbegović rejected this proposal, while Slovenia and Croatia never took it seriously, after they proclaimed independence in June of

143 This moment brings into question the widely held belief about Milošević’s priorities in the presidency of Yugoslavia. Serbia controlled three votes in the presidency, since its provinces kept seats in the federal bodies, and Montenegro was loyal to Serbia. Thus Milošević counted on 4 out of 8 votes and needed one more to be able to command the federal army. His readiness to give up on that in exchange for strengthening the federation is revealing his preference to strengthen Yugoslav institutions, although he and his close associates believed leaders in Slovenia and Croatia were after secession.
1991, only to “postpone” it at the insistence of the European Community.

The question to be answered in the other chapters of the dissertation is: why they thought secession and risking an all out war was a better option than a federal Yugoslavia? In case of Slovenia, the question is even more puzzling, since Serbian leadership desired Slovenia’s peaceful secession and would have supported it (although clearly preferring Yugoslavia to become a “modern federation”). If so, why not seceding peacefully, but risking violence, no matter its intensity? If Slovenia and Croatia sincerely desired survival of Yugoslavia and transition to democracy and capitalism, without yielding to Serbian “hegemony” and without sliding into war, it is hard to see why a federal, democratic, capitalist Yugoslavia was not an optimal solution. Milošević, after all, was advocating that. Even Izetbegović felt comfortable enough in Yugoslavia where Slovenes, Croats and others would have been able to balance any possible threat from Serbia.

Moreover, Serbian pro-western and pro-Yugoslav opposition would have welcomed that cooperation. This view was shared by Aleksa Đilas. He is one of the most prominent Yugoslav scholars and son of Milovan Đilas, famous both as Yugoslav dissident and as Tito’s closest wartime associate. According to Đilas:

…Slovenia and Croatia that are pro-Yugoslav would have automatically neutralized Serbian nationalism; they would have reduced it to a section of Serbian society, while majority of Serbian society would have found some sort of an agreement with Slovenes and Croats, as long as they would embrace the basic framework for Yugoslavia. Therefore, that idea of an alliance of Slovene, Serbian and Croatian democrats against Milošević — that would have most certainly been successful. (Lukić 2002)
Widespread claim that over-representation of Serbs in the police force and army signaled Serbian supremacy would make sense only if it proven that they showed insubordination to the top echelons of government and army. If, however, they were subordinated to the army and state chiefs, the question of domination must be addressed in the structure of the top echelons. However, the ethnic composition in that segment was not showing Serb domination.

The broad camp of scholars explaining Yugoslav collapse as a natural reaction of non-Serbs to the Serbs’ quest for (perpetuating) their domination in Yugoslavia (whether blaming their culture or their greedy leaderships) is having a very hard time proving the unquestioned assumption of Yugoslavia as an inherently Serb-dominated vehicle of oppression against non-Serbs.

For example, the often cited remark about Serbian domination in Yugoslavia is so widespread that it does not even require much evidence (e.g.: Banac 1992, 144; Cushman 2005, 562; Meier 1999, 4-5; Ramet 1998, 176; Lampe 2006 in Đilas 2007, 330). It is especially so regarding the military, where it is often remarked that disproportionately more officers were Serbs. However, this fact fails to disaggregate and show relative presence of ethnic groups in the lower, middle and senior military ranks. Furthermore, there has been a consistent lack of evidence showing that these officers were refusing to follow orders of their superiors, let alone imposing policies on others. Even skimming through the roster of persons occupying most important positions in socialist Yugoslavia shows no signs of Serbs being over-represented, let alone an institutional mechanism that would enable so. As a matter of fact, Yugoslavia had a practice of “national key”, which required careful balancing against numerical superiority being translated into political superiority.

The most powerful person after 1945 was Josip Broz (Croat). He was an undisputed leader
until his death in 1980. Edvard Kardelj (Slovene) was the chief party ideologist and the main constitution-maker, so much so that Dejan Jović (2009) considers post-1974 Yugoslavia to be “Kardelj’s Yugoslavia”. Vladimir Bakarić (Croat), co-authored 1974 constitution and exercised immense influence on the development of political system (Bilandžić 1983). Aleksandar Ranković (Serb), chief of secret police, was removed from office in 1966. Milovan Đilas (Montenegrin), one of key associates of Josip Broz, was removed from the party only a couple of years after the war, due to his open criticism of the corruptive tendencies in the party. Another Serb from the top Yugoslav leadership, wartime military commander and post-war foreign minister, Konstantin Popović, resigned in 1972 in silent protest against Tito’s removal of Serbia’s liberal leadership (Nenadović 1989, ch. 13).

President of Yugoslavia, after Josip Broz’s death, was actually a collective body with a rotating “presiding member”. They were, in order: Lazar Koliševski (Macedonian), Cvjetin Mijatović (Bosnian Serb), Sergej Krajger (Slovene), Petar Stambolić (Serb), Mika Špiljak (Croat), Veselin Đuranović (Montenegrin), Radovan Vlajković (Serb), Sinan Hasani (Kosovo Albanian), Lazar Mojsov (Macedonian), Raif Dizdarević (Bosnian Muslim), Janez Drnovšek (Slovene), Borisav Jović (Serb), Stipe Mesić (Croat).

A digression here may be in order. While above mentioned Sinan Hasani rose to the rank of the president of the presidency of Yugoslavia, Fadil Hoxha was another powerful Albanian who was the vice-president of Yugoslavia in the late 1980’s. Azem Vlassi, who was the top Kosovo leader in late 1980’s, was the president of the Yugoslav League of Socialist Youth in mid 1970’s. Albanian participation in the higher echelons of power in Kosovo was visibly growing. For more details and names, see Pavlović (2009, 58).
Premiers of Yugoslavia were, consecutively: Josip Broz, Petar Stambolić (Serb), Mika Špiljak (Croat), Mitja Ribičič (Slovene), Džemal Bijedić (Bosnian Muslim), Veselin Đuranović (Montenegrin), Milka Planinc (Croat), Branko Mikulić (Bosnian Croat) and Ante Marković (Bosnian Croat).

Foreign ministers: Stanoje Simić (Serb), Edvard Kardelj (Slovene), Konstantin Popović (Serb), Marko Nikezić (Serb), Mišo Pavićević (Montenegrin), Mirko Tepavac (Serb), Jakša Petrić (Croat), Miloš Minić (Serb), Josip Vrhovec (Croat), Lazar Mojsov (Macedonian), Raif Dizdarević (Bosnian Muslim), Budimir Lončar (Croat).

Defense ministers: Josip Broz (Croat), Ivan Gošnjak (Croat), Nikola Ljubičić (Serb), Branko Mamula (Croatian Serb), Veljko Kadijević (Croatian Serb, Croat on his mother’s side). Chiefs of General-Staff: Arso Jovanović (Montenegrin), Konstantin Popović (Serb), Petar Dapčević (Montenegrin), Ljubo Vučković (Montenegrin), Rade Hamović (Bosnian Serb), Miloš Šumonja (Croatian Serb), Viktor Bubanj (Croat), Stane Potočar (Slovene), Branko Mamula (Croatian Serb), Petar Gračanin (Serb), Zorko Čanadić (Croat), Stevan Mirković (Serb), Blagoje Adžić (Bosnian Serb).
The Serbs’ over-representation in the military ranks, when put in the political context of a communist country with a strict civilian control over military, should not be immediately and uncritically translated as the evidence of “Serb domination” over policy. This is even more so, since officers were trained and indoctrinated to serve only Tito, Yugoslavia and the Party (Johnson 1983, viii). For example, Niehbur (2008) brings the following chart to illustrate the statistics:


However, Johnson (1977) shows a trend toward reduction of Serbs’ participation in the
military elite positions, starting in mid 1960's.\textsuperscript{144}

\begin{center}
\textbf{NATIONALITY OF MILITARY ELITE}
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
Nationality & 1975 Elite & 1966 Elite \\
\hline
Serb & 30 & 50 \\
Croat & 21 & 27 \\
Slav Muslim & 7 & 5 \\
Slovene & 9 & 8 \\
Albanian & 1 & 0 \\
Macedonian & 7 & 2 \\
Montenegrin & 11 & 17 \\
Hungarian & 0 & 0 \\
Other & 1 & 1 \\
Unknown & 17 & 2 \\
\hline
Total & 104 & 112 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

(Chart 9.3 “Nationality of military elite in Yugoslavia”, Johnson 1977, 83)

Moreover, when disaggregated, these numbers yield a somewhat more nuanced understanding of the Yugoslav army’s structure. Bellow, Johnson (1977) shows slight under-representation of Serbs in the military elite and clear over-representation in the officer corps. Croats and Slovenes, on the other hand, were represented proportionally, with the former even over-represented in the top echelons. Montenegrins were strongly over-represented.

\textsuperscript{144} See Johnson 1977 for the definition of the “military elite”. 
This structure hardly reflects a deliberate pro-Serb policy of the Yugoslav political leadership (by 1975 already lacking any strong Serbian figure at the federal level). Bieber (2007, 307-309) lists possible causes for the uneven representation, such as that more middle rank officers coming from rural areas and areas with strong military traditions. He concludes that central Serbia was under-represented compared to others, including Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia. In 1975, thirty years after the end of the World War II, the patterns of wartime participation were obviously still strong. Johnson (1977, 7) offers an example — out of 5000 “First-fighters” (“prvoborci”) from Croatia still alive in the late 1970’s, only a quarter were ethnic Croats, while half were ethnic Serbs, even though Croats numbered 78% and Serbs about 15% of Croatia’s population.145 The positions Serbs “earned” in war thus extended in the post-

---

145 “First-fighters” were those partisans who took part in the armed uprising in the summer of 1941. Those who joined later were not eligible to be honored as “prvoborci”.
war period, which is one important explanation for their disproportionate participation in the officer corps.

Yugoslav leaders, especially in the military, were aware of this discrepancy and were trying to ameliorate the statistics. For example, the enrollment in the military schools from 1984 to 1990 shows positive discrimination of non-Serbs, while slight under-representation of Albanians coincides only with the height of Kosovo crisis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serbs</td>
<td>18.51</td>
<td>16.01</td>
<td>22.16</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>30.51</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>22.18</td>
<td>36.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croats</td>
<td>33.61</td>
<td>23.31</td>
<td>30.87</td>
<td>34.81</td>
<td>35.79</td>
<td>34.16</td>
<td>25.57</td>
<td>19.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Albanians</td>
<td>18.92</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>12.53</td>
<td>17.60</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>20.73</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>7.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenes</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>69.19</td>
<td>69.94</td>
<td>65.81</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>43.59</td>
<td>45.88</td>
<td>7.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chart 9.5 “Yugoslav military schools 1984-1990: the ratio of admitted to applied, according to their ethnicity”, ICJ 2009, 190)

The discussion about military as “Serb dominated” concludes the review of ethnic homogenization and the zero-sum game over the future design of Yugoslavia. This section was supposed to show how that homogenization looked like and how the zero-sum game reached its final stage, that is, how the Yugoslav stasis metastasized.

This section was also challenging the justification of Slovene and Croatian secessions as caused by Serbian aggressive quest for domination and/or preservation of communism. No Serbian political proposal was stipulating such provisions that would enable and institutionalize Serbian hegemony. Even numerically, Serbs would have been unable to exploit liberal
democratic multi-party system to their benefit. Moreover, they were very much internally divided both over domestic (social-democracy, nationalism, liberalism) and foreign policies (East, West, neutrality). The question that imposes itself at this moment is - why was it not possible to forge democratic alliances across ethnic lines in securing democratic transition and survival of the state? Why was more integration, in Horvat’s words, “risky”? Bottom line, why was Yugoslavia incapable to stifle secessionist moves by sheer use of its state capacities? Yugoslav army was well equipped; hence, sheer physical force to execute any order and crush any resistance was not in question.

My claim is that nationalism was the key cause behind Yugoslavia’s collapse. Secessionist policy prevailed among Albanians, Slovenes and Croats as the result of longer ideological currents. Then, it spilled over into Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia, where ethnic nationalism was not considered opposed to Yugoslav national identification. Should explaining decay of Yugoslavia’s legitimacy and capacity require analysis of all these nationalist ideologies? Should it include an analysis of their interactions with both Yugoslav supra-national civic identity and other ethno-national identities? While that would be an interesting research for sure, it does not necessarily explain why Yugoslavia as a country lacked capacity to suppress nationalist movements and check their secessionist ambitions.

As I have already pointed out before, I hold that the key nationalism to be explained is Croat nationalism. The second most powerful ethnic group in Yugoslavia, Croats dominated in two republics (absolutely in Croatia and as a participant in the ethnic triumvirate in Bosnia). Croats also lived in all other republics but Macedonia. Together with Serbs, they could have policed any secessionist movement. Together with everyone else, they could have checked every possible Serbian attempt to dominate.
In the following chapter, I will argue that Croatian national identity was constructed by elites who viewed relationship with both modern Yugoslav identity and Serbs as a zero-sum game. I will also argue that subsequent reinterpretations of Croatian identity did not abort this imperative of Croatian national identity. First, I will review several theoretical approaches that can be useful in conceptualizing (Croat) nationalism. Then, I will move on to show the relevant aspects of the birth of Croatian nationalism in the late 18th and early 19th century and its subsequent development.
Chapter 10. The Ultimate Zero-Sum Game: Yugoslav Ideology and Ethnic Polarization

10.1. Theoretical Considerations

Umut Özkirimli (2000, 140) noted that even a leading theorist of nationalism, such as Ernest Gellner, had to admit that Balkans is hard to deal with theoretically. Giannakos (2002, 5) shared this notion. However, several standard theoretical approaches should be examined and tested, so that one can be picked to help conceptualize relationship between Croat national ideology and Yugoslav national/state ideology.

Primordialism has been widely rejected in theorizing the phenomenon of nationalism and rightfully so. As John V.A. Fine showed (2006), it is very hard to clearly delineate the identity of “Slavs” from the one of “Croats” due to fluidity of identities in what is today Croatia. It is hard to speak about either biological or cultural strand of primordialism in that case, especially when we take into account massive migrations from east to west caused by Ottoman invasions. Approximately 60% of medieval Croatian population fled toward the north and west due to the Ottomans (Jurković, 2006). The medieval identities were fluid and shared so many similarities (Geary 2002). It is not surprising that present day nationalist historians have plenty of opportunities to further their side’s interests. However, Geertz’s notion that it is not blood, language, religion and custom which is of prime order in regard to identity, but the perception of it, allowed Charles Tilly to consider him more of a constructivist (Özkirimli 2000, 73-80).

Perennialists, on the other hand, do not claim that national identity is given, but they do claim that it is a very old social fact that can be proven by many empirical findings (Smith, 2001). Two strands are present among perennialists: continuous (holding that particular nations have continuity in history) and recurrent perennialists (they hold that nations come and go, but
that the phenomenon is ever present).

_Ethno-symbolism_ is an interesting approach, as it holds that nationalism is about striking a “chord” of masses by the elite (Smith, 2001). That means that the elites are not completely free in manipulating the masses. It must find symbols that mean something to the masses; therefore they must reach into the existing mass culture. This is interesting, since it was the Catholic religion, besides language that linked the elites with the masses in the process of creating Croat nation. Nationalism in this view is what happens between the political action and the mass culture. There is no much room for “inventing”. In its lateral version, ethno-symbolism finds aristocracy and bureaucracy leading the nation building as a top-down process. In its vertical version, it is the intelligentsia employing vernacular to build a bottom-up nation. The idea that inability of communication creates groups is not of a much use in our case, as Serbs and Croats were able to fully communicate as they were living next to each other.

The most dominant paradigm in researching nationalism has been _modernism_. In opposition to the previous approaches, it finds nothing “ancient” in nationalism. It has several strands, classified somewhat differently by Özkirimli (2000) and Smith (2001). I will rely on former’s approach delineating between socioeconomic, socio-cultural and sociopolitical modernism.

_Socioeconomic modernism_ or “neo-Marxists” approach (Özkirimli 2000, 86) holds that nations are produced by industrialization and regional inequality. Inequalities create class conflict where nations assume positions of classes. Hechter’s (1975) work belongs to this approach. It was criticized largely for economic reductionism. In our case, this does not explain the Serb-Croat conflict, as they were supposed to cooperate against their exploiters, Austrians and Hungarians.
Gellner’s (1983) socio-cultural modernism finds nationalism as an effect of distribution of “high culture” through mass education. That was needed in order to have a workforce for the industry. Because of the mass literacy and technological advancements, the social mobility increased and spread “high culture” among lower social groups. However, very low industrialization in the XIX century Croatia and Bosnia runs counter this theory. There was no need for educated workforce, at least not at that scale. The process of national consolidation was almost finished when larger industry appeared in South Slavic areas of the Habsburg Empire.

Anderson’s (1991) seminal thesis about nations as “imagined communities” is another variant of socio-cultural modernism. He emphasized language, vernacular, as the means of communication in the modern era of print-capitalism. He finds nationalism to be a sort of a discourse, but with the effects in the range of religion and dynastic loyalty. Nationalism in this sense helps an individual to fight the “fear of oblivion” by reducing it to a cell within the “immortal nation”. Critics find that religious decline was not the case in many national revivals, but church attendance is not an indicator of religious fervor. The shortcoming of this approach in Yugoslav case is small literacy well into 20th century of the population in question, but that should not misguide us as. Most of the population relied on teachers and priests, as well as retired literate soldiers in their proximity, for the fresh source of information. Both Gellner and Anderson were criticized for cultural reductionism.

Sociopolitical modernism or instrumentalism presupposes rational elites vying for state power. They seek to unify and control masses by imposing culture legitimizing the elite-preferred social order. It is regarded as a power play, elite’s fight to control state resources. It is a top-down process in which there is no much room for the culture of the masses, except to be exploited by the elite. With modernization and labor market, the new connection had to be made
between the elite and the citizen and that is where nationalism stepped in. Özkirimli (2000, 104-127) lists John Breuilly, Paul Brass and Hobsbawm and Ranger as scholars advocating primacy of the elites’ rational choice.

It is hard to say that different modernist approaches ignore and neglect others. More precisely, they emphasize certain aspects of modernity, while not denying the relevance of others. For example, Smith (2001), considers Hobsbawm to be more of a socio-cultural modernist (or “constructionist modernist”), rather than an instrumentalists. I am particularly attracted to the instrumentalists’ arguments and their emphasis of the role of the elite. At the same time, Anderson’s account of nationalism as a modern religion particularly strongly resonates with me, given my personal experience with the nationalist fervor I observed during the civil war in Yugoslavia. Barreto (2009) distinguishes between the incentives based on material rewards and the ones based on non-material rewards, such as honor, duty and solidarity. This distinction can largely bridge the gap between the power-seeking elites and security seeking masses. It helps solve latter’s collective action problem, notwithstanding greed as an incentive across social groups. The elites’ invention of national ideology employs both material and non-material incentives. The material incentives come as promises of improved socio-economic conditions if certain political arrangement is achieved or preserved. The non-material incentives help fighting psychological and emotional sacrifices required by the desired political arrangement.

The elites are rationally motivated to produce narratives appealing to as wider audiences as possible. In this competition, elites are limited by their own interests — they cannot further a narrative reducing its creator’s importance in the ideal political order. Ideology needs both to attract as many individuals as possible and uphold the dominant social position of the elite. The
competing elites are thus inherently motivated to produce competing ideologies emphasizing, exaggerating or completely fabricating intra-group similarities and differences. It is then up to masses to decide which narrative is more attractive to them, given their cultural and economic imperatives.

This broad rational choice approach complements socio-cultural modernist approach of Miroslav Hroch (1985) which neglects the importance of political elites. He focused on the national awakening among smaller nations of central Europe including Balkans. His three level process of nation building located initial impetus among scholars, artists and writers, to be continued by agitators, educators and journalists. Hroch locates this phase in 1830’s Croatia. In the end, middle and lower classes are integrated within the nationalist movement. In Croatia, final phase was reached only after the constitutional reforms in the second half of the 19th century (Özkirimli 2000, 159), when middle and lower classes became fully integrated within the nationalist movement. This was the time when both Croatian and Yugoslav national ideologies emerged from the corridors of the learned societies seated in Zagreb, while Serbian national movement was already actively fighting Ottoman Empire.

Since the tensions between Croatian and Yugoslav national ideologies will be extending all the way to the 1990’s it is of utmost importance to see what ideological sources, controversies and hopes influenced subsequent Croatian elites, including Croatian communists. Without understanding the ideological menu feeding the Croatian political elites, as well as sociopolitical conditions limiting their diet, it is impossible to understand their antagonistic homogenization in 20th century against Serbs.

Some scholars of Yugoslavia did review the main developments in the 19th century. Nonetheless, it seems that not too much attention was given to the influence of the 19th century
frictions between and within the emerging national identities. For example, Cohen (1993), Udovički and Ridgeway (1997) and others covering early 19th century in their studies of Yugoslav collapse do not show enough sensitivity for how Yugoslav ideology (as it was conceived at that time) related to emerging Croatian nationalism. They largely maintain that 19th century Yugoslav ideology imagined “unity” in more or less unitary fashion, as if 20th century Yugoslavia was a logical extension of 19th century dreams. Historians like Banac (1984), Mirjana Gross (1976-1977) and even Ramet (1985) are more sensitive. They recognized 19th century Yugoslav movement and its predecessor (Illyrian movement) as essentially Croat national programs. Đilas (1991, ch.1) recognizes the great variance of thought within the movement, but by mid-19th century the Illyrians shaped into a clearly Croat party. The tension between Yugoslav ideology and Croatian national identity remained.

Both approaches to the nature of Illyrian/Yugoslav 19th century ideology largely agree that Yugoslavia (both as a state and as an ideology) was “hijacked” by a Serbian nationalism that was used as a cloak for greater Serbian hegemony in the 20th century. As we will see later, this reasoning is the ideological intrusion in academia. It is a relic of the ideological and political fights from the period between two world wars. That was the time when the legacy of bloody competition between Habsburg Empire and Serbia merged with the Croat-Serb frictions inherited from Austria-Hungary, joined by communist hostility toward the staunchly anti-communist Yugoslav kingdom. The path that most authors do not take is to focus on Yugoslavia not as an instrument of Serbian hegemony, but as a Croatian national program that was supposed to strengthen, not dissolve, two paramount ideals of 19th century Croat Yugoslavs: Croatian “political people” and Croatian “historical state right” (Banac 1993, 90-91).

Barry Posen (1993) wrote in his often quoted article that the zero-sum game between the
Serbs and Croats led to the war in the 1990’s. In fact, it is quite often to encounter descriptions of Tito’s policies as “balancing” one ethnic group against the other, or that that in the late 1980’s “balance of power” was disturbed. Burg and Shoup use these terms (1999, 4), so as Uzelac (2006, 85), for example. Posen rightly goes back in time for “about 125 years” and he is right to do so, but he oversimplified the “start” of the Serb-Croat conflict as caused by Hungarian “divide and rule” policy. The question is why did the conflict emerge at that time, and to what effect, given that both groups were Slavs subjected to German and Hungarian rule. That is why in order to approach this subject, it is of absolute necessity to go back to the start and address the creation of the Yugoslav idea, its immediate effects and subsequent generations of leaders who were shaping the Croatian nation. Just as Ivo Banac (1992) suggested that with the Balkans one must start the story from the beginning and with attention to the continuity of national and state elites and ideologies.

**10.2. Overview of the Pre-modern Development**

In the following section, I will give a brief overview of the main events that set the stage for the modernization era. I will try to explain how the territory and population associated with the Croatian name changed under the blows of the Ottoman invasion.

One of preeminent scholars of medieval Balkans, John V.A. Fine (2006) has demonstrated that Croats ruled over a small piece of land along north-east Adriatic coast in early medieval times. They expanded their state to include masses that identified as Slavs, rather than Croats, possibly extending to the region of present day Zagreb (capital of modern Croatia). This state was surrounding Byzantine cities along the Adriatic coast. Fine strongly disagrees with the standard Yugoslav scholars’ practice of assuming one’s ethnic identity by identifying in what
medieval state one had lived, or what medieval army he served. Here Fine goes along the lines of separating ethnic identity from political identity.

The medieval Croatian kingdom reached its peak, whatever its population sensed as its predominant identity, with King Tomislav in 10th century. However, following its weakening, in 1102, Croatian nobles were forced into treaty with the powerful Hungarians, the so called *Pacta Conventa*. This treaty earned an important place in later Croatian history, since Croatian nobility evoked it constantly in their fights against the ruling Hungarian kings and nobility. Croatian nobles were allowed to have their own parliament and their “Ban” (commander), but he was to be appointed by Hungarian kings. Following Fine’s findings, we see that “the oldest act of Croatian parliament” bears Slavic and not Croatian name on itself — “Congregatio Regni tocius Sclavonie generalis”. Other documents from pre-modern period clearly separate Croatia proper from what are today two regions of Croatia: Dalmatia in the south and Slavonija in the north-east. Since 1681, the assembly of nobility has had “Congregatio Regnorum Croatie, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae” as its official name.

Steady development and usual struggles between serfs and nobility in medieval Hungary (including Croatia) were interrupted in the 15th century. Ottoman Empire crushed the last Serbian resistance after a couple of decades of Serbian vassal status. It took Bosnia and attacked Hungary, including Croatia. The struggle that would ensue brought masses of refugees westward and northward. Slavic population from the territories of medieval Serbian and Bosnian lands poured into southern Hungary, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Croatia.

The medieval Croatian state’s heartland, northern Dalmatia, had been emptied for the most part of its previous inhabitants fleeing Ottoman onslaught. Ottomans were bringing new population to strengthen their economy (Allcock 2000, Ch. 6). This new population was
composed of Orthodox and Catholic Christians from present day Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia. Their language was the same and numerous authors refer to it as “Illyrian”. One commonality was that they all spoke “Štokavian” dialect, unlike the population of medieval Croatia which was “Čakavian” in dialect (Brozović and Ivić 1988).  

“Kajkavian” dialect developed around Zagreb under heavy influence of Slovenian language. Ramet (1985, 126) regards the early modern meaning of “Illyrian name” as “vague”, since some 18th century authors disagree whether it includes Croatia or not. Nonetheless, this can hardly challenge the predominant recognition of Štokavians as Illyrians or their modern heirs.

The numbers of newcomers grew as they were recruited by Hungarian and later Austrian rulers. They were supposed to make a specialized security belt around Ottoman territories in the western Balkans. They will later on become known as the Military Border/Frontier, or “Vojna Krajina” (see Appendix: map 10.5).

In order to attract Christians to cross from Ottoman territories in Bosnia to Christian territories in Croatia and southern Hungary, many privileges were being promised by Habsburgs. In some cases it happened that the newcomers were refusing to leave Ottoman Bosnia until Austrian officials accept their terms for changing sides (See Appendix: Map 10.1 “Migrations of Christian population from Serbia and Bosnia to Croatia”, Ilić 1995).

The special status of the frontiersmen and their vehement refusal to pay taxes to Croatian

---

146 For maps showing the geographic distribution of these dialects, see Appendix: maps 10.2; 10.3; 10.4.

147 The exact relation between these three dialects remains controversial in regard to whether they are dialects of one language or similar, but different, languages. More on linguistic controversies can be found in Kordić (2010).
and Hungarian nobles created bitter resentment not only on the part of nobility, but also on the part of their serfs. Seeing newcomers (a lot of them were not even Catholics but Orthodox “schismatics”) being protected by the Imperial court in Vienna\textsuperscript{148} caused envy and grievances. Once Ottoman Empire onslaught subsided and the tide turned, the privileges were being abrogated and diminished. The pressures for conversion to Catholicism grew and caused bitter divisions among converts from Orthodox Christianity to Catholicism and the ones who rejected such pressures.

A number of valuable insights into differentiating among the mentioned groups were recorded by Baron Johann Christopher Bartenstein. Around the 1760, he was in charge of the “Illyrian chancellery” in Vienna (Sandić 1866). He clearly delinated Illyrians from Croats. The Austrian census of Lika in 1712 (Kaser 2003) separated the population in four groups: Vlachs (Orthodox), Catholic Vlachs (also known as Bunjevci), Croats and “new-christians.” The last two groups were both Catholic, the later one consisting of converted Muslims who did not flee to Bosnia. The former two groups, although divided by religion, were considered as Vlachs — one group, speaking one language, Štokovan.

The problem of Vlachs remains the most controversial problem in Yugoslav medieval historiography. This name has been used to identify: pre-Slavic Romance-speaking Balkan peoples, a social group of mobile shepherds, as well as waves of westward moving migrants during the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century it solidified as an insulting term for Serbs. It should not be controversial, however, that by the time of the Ottoman invasion, the westward moving “Vlachs” were Štokavian speakers, largely Orthodox Christians, originating

\textsuperscript{148} Since 1527, Habsburgs took over Hungary and subsequently Croatia, with Croatian noblemen’s assembly approving the change.
from present day Montenegro, Southern Serbia and Eastern Bosnia (Roksandić 2008). The yellow color in the map 10.4 is an evidence of that.

In Dalmatia, the situation was also vague, except that Vlachs or Illyrians were predominantly identified with Štokavian. As a counter-Reformation measure, the Vatican administration instructed a Dalmatian jesuit, Bartol Kašić (Bartholomaeus Cassius, Bartolomeo Cassio) to compile a dictionary of the language dominating western Balkans. It was supposed to help communication of the Catholic faith in the region. As Kašić himself said, he received instruction from those “whom one should not oppose”, meaning the Jesuits (von Erdmann-Pandžić 1997, 20-23). His 1604 dictionary was titled “Institutionum linguae illyricae”. Kašić, even though he was Čakavian by birth, introduced Štokavian in his dictionary. This is one of many indicators that Štokavian dominated among the catholic population of Dalmatian hinterland and in Bosnia.

As reported by Abot Fortis in 1774, (Čakavian) people living on the shore and on islands had a common name for both Catholic and Orthodox Štokavian newcomers — Morlachs, or “Black Vlachs” (Bratulić 1984). These Slavic Čakavian speakers and Morlachs shared mutual animosity. Morlachs preferred to marry among themselves, though occasional incidents of conflict between Orthodox and Catholic priests did happen (Volarević 1991). However, as their chief task was fighting against the Ottoman Muslims, intra-Christian conflict was not widespread.

For instance, in Desnica’s seminal work on 17th century anti-Ottoman struggles in Dalmatia, there is a contemporary writing of one catholic priest:

In the name of God, in the summer of our Lord 1666 on May 1st. That same day
men from Kotari\textsuperscript{149} were killed near Zečevo and there were killed 73 men, among them great hero Vučko Močivuna. From very Filip-Jakov 16 were killed. I, Nikola Kužinović, wrote this, with sorrow and great grieving for our beautiful brothers, may God bless their souls.\textsuperscript{150} (Desnica 1950, 126-127)

This group of Morlachs was a mix of Orthodox and Catholics. While Močivuna was one of the Orthodox, he is also a hero of an epic song that survived to modern days. The author of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century note was, however, a Catholic.

Another example of shared understanding of closeness that confuses modern understanding of groups' boundaries comes from a 1648 letter written in Štokavian (with minor influence of Čakavian) using Cyrilic script. A Bosnian Muslim frontier commander addressed one of the Dalmatian “Morlach” commanders in Kotari:

…greetings to our brother and a friend… we are wondering why no letter has been coming from you, since you were a friend of our father. It seems you think we are not worthy of our father… please, if there will be no peace, let us secretly know through a friend… please, your grace, our mother is sending you her greetings and begs for one Turkish slave girl [to be returned in exchange]… Please, your grace, give our regards to your son… We have heard that he is a great hero in that border zone. God knows, we are pleased to hear that, because he

\textsuperscript{149} A region in northern Dalmatia, until 1990’s war it had a mixed Serb-Croat population.

\textsuperscript{150} My italics.
It is quite significant to see how Štokavian Muslims and Christians, even though serving rivaling empires and shedding each other's blood, nevertheless recognized each other as close kin. They even communicated in the same language and the same script.

In another instance, a mid 18th century letter sent from a catholic priest to an orthodox priest is addressed like this: “…del Padre Gaetano Deribak Parroco de’ Morlacchi di Rito Latino Al Padre Simeone Curaiza Parroco de’ Morlacchi di Rito Greco…” In English, it would read: “…from father Gaetano Deribak, priest of the Morlachs of Latin rite to the father Simeon Curaiza, priest of the Morlachs of Orthodox rite…” (Božitković 1935, 26).

The research of Desnica (Volarević 1991) in the archives in Zadar and Venice showed that reports usually mark the language of the Morlachs (“Black Vlachs”) as “serviano” or “illirico”, or “illirico e serviano” while military units are usually marked as “croato”, as in “milizia croata” or “cavaleria croata”. However, for their nationality (narodnost), they always use “Slav” (“Schiavona”). Desnica concluded that Venetians were mixing all names for “both tribes” (Serbs and Croats) (Ibid, 239).

Describing situation in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, Fine quoted Bukowski:

By the early nineteenth century, therefore, we may conclude that a sense of national identity was still absent among the Croats. The Croatian nobility as a whole identified with its Hungarian counterpart, and its spokesmen in the Diet wanted only to preserve their privileges as apolitical nation equal to the

---

151 Italics are mine. The words “jer je naš” can be translated as both “because he is ours” and “because he is one of us.”
Hungarians… The Croatian language was without a standard dialect or orthography, and its usage divided rather than united the Croats. (Fine 2006, 560)

The tide of modernization that rose by the end of 18th century reached the shores of Habsburg empire. Magyarization was being imposed onto Croatian clergy, nobility, early capitalists and masses in the Kajkavian region, the Croatia proper. In the meantime, Catholic Štokavians largely do not identify with the Croat name. In the following section, I will examine what were the dominant drivers of the founders of the Illyrian movement and ideological currents among their heirs.

10.3. Illyrianism

Illyrians were a pre-Roman tribe in the Balkans, whose name was recorded in old maps and was thus inherited by subsequent medieval scholars. At the early 19th century, Napoleon revived the name when he created the “Illyrian provinces” along the eastern coast of Adriatic sea.

In 1827, the assembly of Croatian nobility was pressured into adopting Hungarian language as mandatory, besides Latin, in schools. Initially, Croatian nobles fought to preserve Latin, but failed. In 1830, influential study by one Josip Kušević tried to prove the legal equality of Hungary and Croatia. Kusevic based his study on old legal acts regulating internal organization of the empire. Countering the political hegemony of Hungarians was not enough, as the battle was fought over the language too. Banac (1984, 76) shows the rationality behind abandoning Kajkavian dialect spoken around Zagreb and adoption of Štokavian dialect. Three moments were crucial: relative weakness of small Zagreb region which was at the time considered Croatia, strong regional names used by the inhabitants of the lands of medieval Croatian kingdom instead of a Croatian name and differences between Kajkavian and Štokavian that hampered meaningful
communication.

Ljudevit Gaj, the leader of the reform, solved the linguistic problem by promoting adoption of Štokavian for the “kajkavian” Zagreb area (“Croatia proper”), while the invented national name had to be, in Banac's words "...more neutral... which could override the regional differences" (Banac 1984, 76).

However, the key move, and here I depart from Banac's view, was to legitimize the movement by attaching its traditions to the medieval Croatian state. The sole change of the literary language would have been pointless without the content that was promoted by the new language. In his own poem "Croatia Has Not Yet Fallen" ("Još Hrvatska ni propala"), or as Banac (1984, 76) quotes it "Croat Concord and Unity", Gaj sings about "Croats of the old state". He finds them in present day Slovenia, Slavonia, Lika and Krbava, Bosnia, Istria and Dalmatia.

However, this original song was changed in 1835 by adding Serbs, as if they were a branch of Croats (Novak 1987, 53). One interesting debate sheds more light on the initial stage of formulating Illyrian program. Ljubo Babić explained (Pasarić 1892, 376) that this song was left out from the first books of Illyrian poetry because it was promoting pan-Croatism and as such, it could have been harmful to the cause of Illyrians.

Other prominent Illyrians also shared similar views, for example Count Janko Drašković held that even Montenegro was a Croatian land (Drašković 1991, 47-48). Gaj himself did not hide that he considered Illyrian to be, in fact, Serbian language. In Illyrians’ leading magazine “Danica” (Gaj 1846, 36), he wrote that “...the whole world knows that we have erected the Illyrian literature, yet we have never thought of arguing that it was not Serbian, but Illyrian language.” As Hungarian elites rightfully concluded, the Illyrian name became a threat and thus it was banned in 1843.
In the same year, Ivan Kukuljevic Sakcinski spoke Štokavian and not usual Latin in Croatian parliament, demanding introduction of “Croato-Slavonian language” into official political life.\textsuperscript{152} His move was adopted one year before the revolution of the 1848. The linguistic separation between Kajkavian Croatia proper and Štokavians populating “old Croatian medieval lands” in Bosnia and Dalmatia, Serbia and Montenegro was erased. Štokavians in those lands will now be able to communicate political ideas with the center of emerging Croatian nationalism. This will be a two way process in search of an equilibrium.

The problems of early Croatian nationalism are easier to grasp if we simplify the linguistic and ethnic map. In the chart “Early Croatian inclusion-exclusion problem” (Appendix: chart 10.1), I show how the strategic necessity of Gaj and Illyrians to attract more manpower triggered a chain reaction of a decade long negotiations, frictions and cooperations over group identities. The red circle above represents the population captured within the early notions of the Croatian “historic state right territories”: Croatia Proper, Military Border, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia (including Herzegovina). As I showed before, some, like count Drašković, went as far as claiming Montenegro for Croatia.

Therefore, the “…political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (Gellner 1983, 1), in Croatian case ran into three problems. First, the political unit was largely not under control of the political elite. Zagreb elite controlled only a small part of the desired political unit, Croatia proper. The desired larger political unit was imagined upon medieval political geography and demography. Medieval Croatian “historic rights” roughly

\textsuperscript{152} Since he mentioned Orthodox Christians and “Slavonians”, as well as medieval Serbian rulers, as belonging to the one and the same people, it is questionable whether he understood “Croat” and “Slavonian” identities to be only regional variants of a larger nation.
included present day Croatia and Bosnia at minimum. Hence, the demography of those territories had to be “Croatian”, whether the population was aware of it or not. Second, the introduction of Štokavian as Croatian literary language presented a question: if Štokavians of the Military Border, Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were to be included into “Illyrians” or “Croatian political people”, why excluding Štokavians elsewhere? Third, by the early 19th century, the national identity of Orthodox Štokavians firmly established itself as Serbian. The Orthodox church rooted in medieval Serbian state and the epic poetry worshiping Kosovo myth secured Serbian orientation among Orthodox Štokavians. Together with 19th century successes of the nascent Serbian states in Montenegro and principality of Serbia, this identity was not only embraced by the Orthodox, but attracted numerous followers among the Catholic, especially in Dalmatia and Dubrovnik.

The emerging class of Croatian political leaders sought the optimal ideology that would solve these problems. The optimal ideological construction was supposed to satisfy three demands: to strengthen Croatia proper against Hungarians, to spread Croatian political control to “old Croatian territories” and to attract large Serbian population to subscribe to this program. This is the tension that will split Croatian political elite and deliver its two dominant political movements in the second half of 19th century: the more sophisticated Yugoslav Party and the more extreme Party of Rights.

Allcock (2000, 331) thus correctly observes that Illyrianism of the first half of 19th century was a Croatian national revival movement confronted with significant regional differences. This view is shared by Uzelac (2006, 76) though she sees it as strictly cultural movement. Biondich (2004, 55) argues that all Croat political movements in XIX century promoted state right and historical right of Croats. Irvine (1993, 24) basically agrees in describing Illyrians as primarily
interested in uniting Croat lands, including Bosnia. Prominent Croat historian, Mirjana Gross (1976-77, 331) concludes that XIX century Yugoslavism, as an extension of Illyrianism, was the ideology of only Croatia integration.

In the next section I will sketch how the ideas of the Illyrians influenced two dominant political movements of Croatia in the second half of XIX century and how it shaped the perception of Serbs among their adherents.

10.4. Two Croat Parties: Party of Rights and Yugoslavs

The suspicions with which Serbs welcomed Illyrian movement were inflamed with the development of two political groups in the second half of the 19th century. The Party of Rights, formed by Ante Starčević promoted extreme Croatian nationalism. It was based on the “historical and state right”, according to which in Croatia there was only one “political people” — Croatian (Biondich 2004, 56; Cipek 2003, 73). Even more, Starčević held racist views toward the Serbs (Starčević 1876) while at the same time he appropriated their medieval rulers, and had outbursts of genocidal paroles against them (Starčević 1894).153

The attitude toward Serbs depended on whether they were accepting or rejecting Croatian (political) identity. Those who rejected that idea were exposed to the inflammatory insults and regarded as intruders and aggressors. Later on, Starčević would allow Serb ethnic identity but never their separate political identity. He was fiercely opposed both to Hungary and Austria and his goal was independent Croatia populated by one “political people” — Croatian.

153 One example: “Serbs should be put outside of the legal protection. Then the judge and the executioner is anyone who can do the same for a mad dog” (Starčević 1894, 77).
On the other hand, the People’s Party revolved around Strossmayer and Rački, both Catholic priests. Its main program was centered on Yugoslav idea inspired by Gaj’s Illyrians. Their ultimate goal was a Yugoslav federation. The way to achieve it was by strengthening South Slavic block within Habsburg Empire against both Hungary and Austria. The only means to achieve that was to attract South Slavic support behind Zagreb as the third center of the Habsburg Empire. However, two important points were characteristic for them: they always imagined Croat part of the federation as consisting of “old” Croatian lands comprised of, roughly, today’s Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro (Rački 1861). This would lead to the fall out with the then Serbian premier, Ilija Garašanin, who viewed Bosnia as Serbian (Cohen 1993, Ch.1). Second, they did allow for Serbian and Slovene “genetic nationhood”. What they did not allow was any deviation from Croatian “political people”, as long as Serbs and Slovenes lived on the territories claimed by Croatian historical and state right (Banac 1993, 91; Biondich 2004, 56; Strossmayer 1900-1904, 764-756).

Strossmayer, on the other hand, was noted by many authors as an advocate of “closer church relations” without being more specific about the kind of new relations he had in mind (Banac 1993, 90). However, in 1999, leading Croatian cultural institutions published correspondence between Strossmayer and Papal Nuncio in Vienna, Serafino Vannutelli (Balabanić i Kolanović 1999). In his numerous letters, Strossmayer clearly states his objectives as spread of Catholicism not only in Serbia and Montenegro but among all Slavs, as well as strengthening of Croatia (Krestić 2001). While one may allow that this correspondence was just a diplomatic game in winning support for interests of South Slavs in general, it does not seem realistic, given the ideological framework of Strossmayer and Rački, especially after 1878 occupation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary.
The subsequent events led to the cleavages in the Party of Rights, where the extreme wing led by Josip Frank warmed up relations with Vienna, while the moderate wing found compromise with the People’s Party. Later on it would even agree with Serbian parties that emerged after the Military Border was abolished in 1881. However, by the end of the 19th century, a pattern emerged, by which Serbs would cooperate with Hungarians whenever they were pressured to declare themselves as “political Croats”, that is “Croatian political people” (Bataković 1994; Ruvarac 1895). Ever since larger autonomy was granted to Croatia in 1868, the pressure on Serbs persisted and conflict soon become overtly hostile and antagonistic. Coupled with the conflicting views over the Austria-Hungary’s occupation of Bosnia in 1878, this friction reached the level of physical violence in many cities including Zagreb (Yelavich 2000, 255).

10.5. The Rationale of the Masses

The question we to address now is: why did the masses align themselves in a way that lead to conflict among the people who spoke the same language (they were able to communicate without problems), had the same oppressors (Italians, Hungarians, Austrians) and pretty much shared the same culture.

Religious difference comes to mind, but most of the national awakeners strongly advocated religious indifference when it came to the questions of nationality, including Croatian Ante

---

154 Ruvarac’s book was an answer to the open question of Strossmayer’s journal ”Obzor” in 1894. Because they were refusing to align themselves with Croats against Hungarians, “Obzor” asked Serbs to openly declare what were they blaming Croats for. Ruvarac titled his book ”Here is What We Blame You For!” and received many positive reviews in Serbian press.
Starčević and Serbian linguist Vuk Karadžić. However, we must notice that, with the exception of Dalmatia, for the most part religious affiliation determined the national identity: Catholics emerged as Croats while the Orthodox emerged as Serbs.

For the Serbs there is a general consensus that the institution of the Serbian Orthodox Church preserved the attachment of its flock to the Serbian identity (Banac 1993, 67-68; Smith 2001, 82). However, the epic poetry in which the glory of the lost Serbian empire was celebrated seems to have been at least as important pillar of the identity as church.

Late 19th century Croat intellectual Đuro Šurmin (1898, 16) pointed to a cultural difference between Serbs and Croats. While the former’s folklore was rich in references to Serbian medieval rulers, latter’s been silent about Croatian ones. His explanation was that Croatian rulers spoke Latin, while Serbian spoke their people’s language. Once Ottoman Muslim elite replaced Serbian, the memory of the “good old times” was preserved in folk poetry. Since Croats “…had no memory of any particular achievements of their elite, there was no reason to sing about them” (Ibid.). That was supposed to explain the absence of Croatian medieval personalities in the folk songs of Štokavians and the abundance of Serbian ones.

The primary 19th century Croatian cultural institution, Matrix Croatia (“Matica Hrvatska”) had to deal with such discrepancies. It relied on the ambiguity of the relationship between Serbian and Croatian identities. Sometimes they were treated as “two names for one people”, that is one “Yugoslav”, “Croato-Serb”/”Serbo-Croat” or “Illyrian” people. Other times that “one people” was referred to as “Croatian (political people)”. This dance along the ambiguity enabled Matrix Croatia to publish folk songs about Serbian medieval events and characters (real or

---

155 Large number of Catholic Serbs persisted even in the beginning of the 20th century in Dalmatia including Dubrovnik.
invented), under the title of “Croatian folk songs”. Hence, the 1890 volume of epic folk songs lists either religious songs or songs about Serbian events and heroes, including two songs about 1389 Kosovo battle; a song about prince Lazar, the Serbian leader in the battle of Kosovo (Božić i Bosanac 1890. The volume with 72 songs published in 1897 is fully dedicated to Marko Kraljević (Bosanac 1897). 156 The 1898 and 1899 volumes contain only Bosnian Muslim epic songs (Marjanović 1898; 1899).

Šurmin's colleague and a member of Strossmayer’s Yugoslav Academy, Vjekoslav Klaić (1878), researched self-identification of Bosnian population at the time of Austria-Hungarian occupation. At the very start of the book, he declared that he was going to use exclusively Croatian name for all the inhabitants of Bosnia, because he did not “like” “Croatian-Serbian” name, even though both meant the same (Ibid, xii). 157 Bosnian population therefore, according to Klaić, was Croat through and through, albeit divided only religiously into Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic Croats. He described Catholics as almost completely void of any national sentiment. Their sons only recently have started learning in Đakovo seminary that they were the “sons of Croatian people” (Ibid, 98). 158 However, when describing “Orthodox Croats”, he recognized that they did call themselves “Serbs”. He attributed that to the “false” identification of Orthodox faith and Serb ethnicity (Ibid, 90). The contradiction in his approach stems from his comparison between “error” of “Orthodox Croats” and the “error” of “Muslim Croats”. “Muslim Croats” identified themselves as “Turks”, solely on the basis of shared religion with the Ottoman Turks.

156 Marko Kraljević was a member of the powerful medieval Serbian Mrnjavčević family from the 14th century.

157 My italics

158 Đakovo was the seat of Bishop of Bosnia and Srem – Strossmayer himself.
In the same way, according to him, “Orthodox Croats” identified with Serbs from Serbia and Montenegro and “erroneously” adopted Serbian name (Ibid, 101-102).

If Klaić held his opening statement true, that Serb and Croat were the names of the same meaning, used for one and the same people, with the choice lying solely in the preference of the speaker, it is hard to understand why he equated the “error” of “Muslim Croats” and the “error” of “Orthodox Croats”. If it was an “error” for an “Orthodox Croat” to self-declare as a “Serb”, that is contradictory to the author’s initial statement that Serb and Croat names had the same meaning. There is only one way out of this contradiction - if Serbs in Serbia and Serbs in Bosnia were not the same people. Whatever may be the “real” explanation behind this highly controversial position of a leading Yugoslav figure among Croats, it is a stark evidence of a highly tensed and controversial three-way relationship between “Serb”, “Croat” and “Yugoslav” identities within the framework of Yugoslav ideology.159

Perhaps Klaić’s concluding remark points to the right direction toward better understanding of his sentiments:

An external force will have to remove or at least dilute grand religious barriers, which divided one people into three camps; external apostles of peace, but kindred in language and heart, will be able to eliminate discord and disagreements among brothers and inspire their hearts with the spirit of concord and communal love. But these apostles will fail if they do not develop the idea of nationality among Bosnian Croats, if they do not teach them, that all Bosniaks of any faith are sons of the Croatian mother, that Bosnia is the most beautiful pearl in the age-

---

159 Yugoslav or Serbo-Croat or Croato-Serb, as the names were used interchangeably.
old ancient Croatian crown, which will be able to shine in fullness of its old glory with the harmonic participation of all her sons.160 (Klaić 1878, 104)

The references to the ancient glory of Croatian crown reveal the ideological and emotional attachment to the credo of “Croatian historic state right”. It seems plausible (and most likely) that for Klaić and others, the Yugoslav idea in fact had two levels. At the first level, population in territories of “historic state right” (roughly, present day Bosnia and Croatia) were really only Croats. If not in the primordial sense, then they were or should have been Croats in the sense of “political people”. As such, these Croats were part of a larger Yugoslav people, including Serbs, Slovenes and in many accounts - Bulgarians. Any Yugoslavia these people were imagining had to respect the autonomy of Croatia over its old, “historic”, territories.

By 1878, the polarization vis-à-vis Serbs took hold among Croatian intelligentsia, and trickled down to the people through priests, teachers and newspapers. Party of Rights was at the helm of antagonization, while “Yugoslavs” were not very helpful with their ambiguous use of “Serb”, “Croat” and “Yugoslav” names. Otherwise the people inhabiting “Croatian lands” (per “historic state right”) using the Serbian half of the “two equal names for the same people” (as promoted by the Illyrians and the proponents of Yugoslav idea), would not have been perceived as an “error”, but as a legitimate choice. Just like the one Klaić explicitly made at the start of his book.

Another evidence of the emerging polarization is the reaction of Croatian public to the news that Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia in 1878. In majority of cities there were street celebrations and most of the leading public figures, as well as newspapers, viewed the event as a

160 While the emphasis on the word “nationality” is Klaić’s, the italics are mine.
chance for furthering Croatian interests (Mihaljević 2008). Croatian parliament and the leading People’s Party supported the move of the Monarchy, while Starčević’s support was followed by the demand for Bosnia to be annexed to Croatia.

Strossmayer’s view remains controversial, since he maintained contact with the Serbian government while at the same time striving for the creation of unified Croatian unit around Zagreb. In the beginning of the war, he was secretly endorsing Serbian takeover of Bosnia (Rohrbacher 2001; Grijak 2008), but in the end of the war he welcomed the occupation. Given his later correspondence with Vannutelli, it remains controversial how his thought was shaped by the events he witnessed and the popular support of occupation. Krestić (2014, 271) recorded how Strossmeyer fluctuated from advocating Austrian takeover of Bosnia to being against it that the time of occupation and then back to embracing it. He wrote to the bishop of Banja Luka in 1879: “What is Bosnia’s is Croatia’s, and what is Croatia’s is Bosnia’s” (Ibid.)

By the end of 19th century, Strossmayer realized that Serbs were not cooperating on any account (Ramet 1985, 124-125). Neither were they showing readiness to “return” to Roman Catholicism, nor were they ready to give primacy to Croatian “political people” and “state right” in Bosnia. However it may be, the general feeling among the Croatian masses developed strongly in favor of Austrian occupation and against Serbian pretensions to Bosnia.

Immediately after these events, Serbs in Dalmatia broke the anti-Italian alliance with Croats. The alliance struggled for union of Dalmatia and Croatia (including Slavonia) on the pan-Slavic bases. Dalmatian Serbs were passionately hoping that Bosnia would belong to Serbia which was the only free South Slavic country at the time. That wish did not make them “traitors” to the Yugoslav cause, the way they saw it, since Serbia was the only free part of the Yugoslav

---

161 In his letter to the Austrian minister of foreign affairs in the early 1860’s.
people. However, Dalmatian Serbs’ move did cause uproar among Croats, because Bosnia was perceived as the Croat part of the larger Yugoslav body.

Fierce debate and division erupted, pulling in the rural population. We are left with the graphic example of the elite political conflict penetrating into a local confrontation. Two pamphlets written by the opposing sides in the little Dalmatian town of Vrlika toward the end of the 19th century show how local disputes were woven into a larger narrative including “imagined communities” of larger Serb and Croat nations (X 1897; Y 1898).\textsuperscript{162}

The division did follow religious line, but not sharply. There were a Serb catholic and a recent convert to Catholicism involved. However, the leading figures were municipal leaders, priests and teachers. Croatian side held to the teachings of Ante Starčević, refusing to use Serbian name (instead it was using Greek). Serbian side was accusing the other of intolerance. They were accusing each other for clericalism. The clash involved a lot of personal animosities between the leading families as well as party competition. However, the crucial aspect was the transformation of religious micro-conflict into the national macro-conflict.\textsuperscript{163}

Orthodox broke the tradition of selling food and hosting Catholics during their traditional visit to the old church remnants that were in the Orthodox village. Orthodox villagers were accusing Catholics of disrespectful behavior on the previous occasion. What would have been a quarrel between the two villages or maybe even two priests some 100 years earlier, now became

\textsuperscript{162} Both the writers of these pamphlets decided to publish them under conspiratorial names “X” and “Y”.

\textsuperscript{163} This structure of actors and their personal motives corresponds to Kalyvas’ (2003; 2006) views on the micro-dynamics within a civil war, where numerous identities and motives weave into each other and build what at a macro-level is visible only as a civil war.
a bitter fight over political and historical legitimacy within the wider Serb-Croat contention. The important context in this conflict was the patriarchal culture of the rural population sensitive to the idea of seniority. Translated into the new political language, it meant that attaching one’s identity to the older historical presence in the region gave stronger political legitimacy to local demands. Catholicism of medieval Croatia and Orthodoxy of medieval Serbia were powerful arguments that played significant role in forging national identities. Also, Catholicism as the official state religion was an additional argument for Catholic Štokavians to embrace identity of the only old Slavic catholic state that existed in those areas — Croatia. Armed with the “older” name, favored by the Catholic character of the existing state, they were able to insist on the “seniority rights” against their Orthodox neighbors.

McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001, 331) devised a concept of “scale shift”, where a local contention grows into a translocal, national, or international by linking up with other groups who have similar interests or grievances. Until the second half of the 19th century, local intra-Christian religious frictions among the Orthodox and the Catholic were suppressed by joint action against the Muslim Ottoman Empire. By the end of the 19th century, as Muslim threat subsided, local religious competition was inflamed by the fervor of nationalist consolidation. The scale shifted from local to national. The brokerage of political and religious entrepreneurs secured mass-mobilization of Serbs and Croats into relatively clearly delineated national camps.

The Yugoslav bond, however, was not shunned aside, especially not among some youth groups. In the next section, I hope to show how firmly established national identities interacted in the following period, thus creating new material for reinterpretation.
10.6. Nationalist Consolidation

Around 1903, Croat and Serb parties in Austria-Hungary started renegotiating their policies in regard to the growing Hungarian pressure and in 1905 they were able to forge an agreement. However, their national identities were already formed in an interaction marked by mutual distrust, fight and zero-sum reasoning. Their political elites, even when agreeing on the need for South Slavic unification, had different perceptions of newly independent Serbian state in mind.

Following Austrian occupation of Bosnia in 1878, Croatian and Serbian intellectuals continued competing in promoting their national name among the Bosnian Muslims. While the nationalistic Franciscans were downplaying the importance of faith, zealous Catholicism of archbishop Stadler was intimidating to Muslims. Several Croat and Muslim intellectuals professing Croatian identity were writing poems and stories under Muslim names in order to attract Muslims to the Croat identity (Banac 1993, 394). In the same period (1900), the First Catholic Congress in Zagreb put the equation between Catholicism and Croatianism and thus solidified its control over large masses of peasantry, equating religious and national loyalty (Bataković 1994). That was to be sealed in the Second Catholic Congress in 1913 (Ramet 1985, 130-131).

Soon after, 1902 pogroms against Serbs in Zagreb occurred, triggered by the newspaper article foreseeing the end of “Croatianism” and the progress of “Serbdom”. The real cause was

164 Charles and Barbara Yelavich (2000, 255), vaguely referred to the voices heard in Belgrade at the time for the "war of extermination" between the Serbs and Croats, as if these voices were invoking genocide. Without any further reference given, I must conclude that they had in mind the article of Nikola Stojanović, lawyer from Bosnia. In 1902 he published the article "To the extermination, ours or yours’” in the Serbian magazine "Srbobran" in Zagreb, No 168-169.
in fact the visible economic successes of Serbs in Zagreb and throughout South Slav lands in the Habsburg Empire (Krestić 2002). In such political climate in Zagreb, the Croatian Peasant Party was formed by Stjepan Radić. Tensed political climate would reach its crescendo with the World War I. Mobilization against Serbia, propaganda and widespread terror against Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia at the hands of the Radićalized Croatian extremists were incited by Austria-Hungary’s authorities. nevertheless, segments of Croatian and Bosnian Muslim youth were attracted to liberal Serbia and frequently visited Belgrade, celebrating ideas of Yugoslav unity and brotherhood. Bosnia’s anti-Austrian youth included youngsters of all faiths, largely professing their loyalty to “Yugoslav” nation. One of them was Gavrilo Princip.  

Radić was the only Croatian politician who did not despair in the immediate end of the World War I, when Italians were attempting to regain Dalmatia and anarchy was stired by the collapse of the Empire (Pavlowitch 2003, 40). In 1917, the representatives of the “Yugoslav committee” from Austria-Hungary and the representatives of Serbian royal government adopted “Corfu Declaration” about the future common state. The unitary state was based on the premise

However, throughout the text, the author equates “Croatianism” as a political party and not as a nation. He claimed that clerical and foreign interests were behind “Croatianism” and that once clericalism falls, Croatianism will too. Nowhere did he advocate violence. The reactions to this article were Zagreb anti-Serb riots of 1902.

165 For the summary of political ideas and inspirations of Bosnia’s Yugoslav youth, see Vojnović (2015).
that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were one and the same people.\textsuperscript{166} Most of the leading politicians feared the effects of delayed unification with Serbia under clear threat of Italian, Austrian and Hungarian advancements. They also feared social revolution threatening the positions of the dominant class. Radić famously warned them not to hurry with unification until Croatian borders and autonomy within the new union state with Serbia were guaranteed. He was not willing to sacrifice Croatia’s autonomy and its separate identity. He was a staunch proponent of Croatian state right and in 1908 he wrote a book “Vivacious Right of Croatia to Bosnia.” In 1902 he wrote inflammatory articles against Serbs, while calling on Croats to defend themselves from Serbs (Uzelac 2006, 133).

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was created in a hurry in 1918 as a unitary state with small regional autonomies not based on ethnicity.\textsuperscript{167} Serbian elite commanded by King Alexander adopted the decades old ideology of Illyrians proclaiming Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as three names for one people. Hence, any ethnic based autonomy would run counter to the old ideology emanating from Zagreb elites. However, the Yugoslav ideology adopted by Serbian elite paid no attention to the ambiguity of concepts employed by Zagreb Yugoslavs. The goal of preserving Croat “historic state rights”, Croat autonomy and Croat “political people” were incompatible with the idea of “one people with three names”.

Catholic church in Croatia was virtually completely opposed to the newly formed South

\textsuperscript{166} Later, in 1923, the leading Croatian communist Ante Ciliga will refer to the “Corfu Declaration” as “capitulation of Croatian and Slovene bourgeoisies” who were supposed to demand a federal state structure (Pesic 1985, 150).

\textsuperscript{167} At that time it was proclaimed as the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes” and was renamed the “Kingdom of Yugoslavia” in 1929.
Slavic state, since its factions promoted different solutions to Croat national self-determination, such as union with Slovenia within Austria-Hungary, autonomous Croatia along Hungarian model or an independent Croatia with Bosnia as its part (Ramet 1985, 131).

I will not go into detailing the zeal of Radić’s and his successor Maček’s struggles for a separate Croatian political unit within the newly established South Slav state. The political life in the interwar period was dysfunctional precisely because of the “Croat question” — mass support to the policy of delineating an autonomous Croatian territory as the only means of solving the problem of Serb-Croat relations.

The problems facing that country would have been enormous even without the opposition of its second largest nation. Its new citizens were fighting each other fiercely in World War I just before they became citizens of a common state. What is ironic is that this struggle raged on in a country that was construed on the basis of “one people with three names” (“troimeni narod”), which was the slogan imported exactly from Croatian intellectual elite promoting Yugoslav unity. However, the idea was not to have Belgrade, but Zagreb as a center of South Slavic unity. The unity whose core idea was to protect the “Croatian historical state right” against hegemonies of both Vienna and Budapest.

By fulfilling the goal of the century-old calls for “Illyrian” and “Yugoslav” unity, the core idea within these slogans emerged as a struggle against another “hegemony” — that of Belgrade. This Serb-Croat struggle in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is important because it set the incentives’ framework within which the Yugoslav communists’ ideology would become terminally infected with nationalist concerns. These concerns would gradually take over and determine the structure of the political system in post-World War II socialist Yugoslavia. Since communists were the ones who will build the country after World War II, it is important to
understand how their ideology dealt with the problem of nationalism in the inter-war period.

10.7. Nationalist Communism

Communist approach to the national question, based on Marxism and the experience of the Russian revolution, was offering a new paradigm under which the Yugoslav question was supposed to be resolved. This was the ideological starting point of an organization that will find itself in the position to implement their policy after World War II. Understanding their beginnings and subsequent experiences will enable us to understand how practical implementation of their abstract ideological constructions.

The new state that emerged in 1918 did not unite only nations, or the three-named-people and its minorities. It also united classes and socialists who were already contacting prior and during the World War I. An additional complication was presented with the emergence of a powerful country where communists had all the power — the Soviet Union. Socialist parties from former Habsburg territories joined Serbian socialists in order to establish a common political organization.

All of them carried their experiences and worldviews shaped in the previous period, which would influence their goals and their perceptions of each other. Even though they did share one ideological base, the way they were interpreting it depended on their previously acquired worldviews. While before 1917 the strongest ideological arbiter was Austrian social-democratic party, in the inter-war period, Soviet party and Communist International took over.

Croatian and Slovene communists, besides class struggles, experienced threats and pressures on their language and ethnic culture by the imperial centers in Vienna and Budapest. Their political thought was influenced by accentuated problem of internal cultural oppression.
Serbian socialists lived in a mono-ethnic social context and had little domestic experience with cultural and nationalist aspects of socialist teachings. Perhaps this was the reason why they did not hesitate to clash with their own nation’s leaders accusing them of imperialism. They were also not shy to clash with the victorious Russian communists over national question in Stockholm in 1917. They condemned Russian double standards for Bosnia and Macedonia as compromising ideology for strategic interests (Redžić 1977, 421-422).168

The early frictions among Serbian and Croatian leftists sparked in 1908, over the opposing views on the annexation of Bosnia by Austria-Hungary (Đilas 1991, 45). Following the annexation, Croatian social-democratic party’s journal passively acknowledged it as an objective result of capitalist expansion (Redžić 1977, 278), instead of condemning the annexation the way Serbian social democrats campaigned against Serbia’s “imperial ambitions” in the southern regions. However, in evaluating effects of annexation on the “national question”, one can sense a significant dose of ambiguity in the party position. It emphasized that Austria-Hungary’s “… [one] people of Croatian and Serbian name [have the right]… to demand national unification with the people of the same name in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. Moreover, Serbia’s aspirations to Bosnia were viewed as equally immoral as Austria-Hungary’s. Also, in a bit hostile tone, it underlined that Yugoslavs of Austria-Hungary had no lesser right to demand “national unification with their kin in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, than “Serbian chauvinists in Serbia” did. Hence, the position was controversial, since it labeled all those demanding Bosnia’s unification with Serbia as “Serbian chauvinists”, while at the same time it was not hesitating to explicitly demand “national unification” of Bosnia with Austria-Hungary’s Yugoslavs (Ibid, 444).

---

168 This ideological independence of Serbian socialists will continue until mid-1930’s and the downfall of Sima Marković.
No doubt, Croatian social-democrats viewed Serbia’s bourgeoisie as equally imperial as Austria’s.\textsuperscript{169} They also knew, however, that Serbian social-democrats advocated referendum to be held in Bosnia, so that population can decide which way it wanted to go. They had no doubts that majority of Bosnians were going to vote for unification with Serbia (Redžić 1977, 266; Ibid, 385). They also rejected Serbia’s Piedmont role and expected annexation of Bosnia to help defeat Empire’s dualistic structure favoring Austrians and Hungarians. While Croatian bourgeoisie parties advocated trialism, with Zagreb as the third center of the monarchy, social-democrats followed Austro-Marxist line of “personal autonomy” and “cultural federalism”, albeit not disputing the need to strengthen Yugoslav unity within the monarchy and ultimately destroy dualism. Unification of all Yugoslavs was considered “utopian” at the time (Redžić 1977, 280-284). Utopia, however, was not even ten years away.

Since they did not believe Austria-Hungary was going to be short-lived, it seems Croatian social-democrats hoped that adding Bosnia to the South Slavic community in the monarchy was going to strengthen their voice. Some of them, like Cvijić, explicitly rejected the argument of the “Croatian state right” as incompatible with the socialist teachings. Ironically, they ended up agreeing with Croatian bourgeois parties that annexation was strengthening ties between Bosnia and Croatia.

Next year, in 1909, a social-democrat congress adopted “Tivoli resolution” in present day capital of Slovenia. It advocated construction of Yugoslav people with one language and one culture, but only within the Austria-Hungary’s political framework. Already then, strong voices

\textsuperscript{169} Quite expectedly, Austrian social-democrats clashed with Serbian ones as well. Moreover, they identified Yugoslav movement in Austria as an instrument of an expansionist, greater Serbian policy (Redžić 1977, 451)
of some leading Slovenian socialists reacted against losing Slovenian language in favor of another (Redžić 1977, 212). Following year, the first Balkan social-democrat conference in Belgrade proclaimed that national unification in one Balkan federation was the solution of the “Balkan question”. Serbian social democrats adopted the idea that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes are one people (Ibid, 400).

Exploiting the weakness of the empire due to exhaustion after three years of fighting in World War I, Croatian parliament (“Sabor”) adopted “May declaration” of 1917 demanding Yugoslav unification within Austria-Hungary, based upon “Croat state right”. Viewing Croats, Slovenes and Serbs as one people, Croatian social-democrats countered that proposal and demanded unification in one state, regardless of state borders (Redžić 1977, 297). However, they split over appropriate reaction to Austria-Hungary’s collapse in 1918. “Left” faction was for an immediate social revolution following the Soviet model as a way to unite Yugoslavs who were, according to them, not yet one people, but three. “Right” faction was for a temporary coalition with other parties in order to secure national unification, not doubting Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were already one and the same people. German and Austrian defeats, Serbian offensive and lack of revolutionary zeal resolved the dilemma and secured the victory of the “right” faction (Ibid, 302).

From its start, communist ideologists considered Yugoslavia, as it was, a product of imperialism (Đilas 1991, 54). The question of whether Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were one people or not was decisive for the question of further application of Marxist ideology in practice. Even though they did proclaim belonging to one people, ideological differences among them were coinciding, if they were not the result, of their regional and historical contexts. Fully subscribing to the idea that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes constituted one people, Serbian social-
 democrats considered national question as resolved. Social revolution was next.

In the first party congress in 1919, single nation state was still viewed as an optimal option, but some Croat delegates sparked the discussion by advocating party federalization on the basis of old regional units (Irvine 1993, 60). Serbian communists were surprised and labeled such proposals as “social patriotism” (Čuvalo 1990, 28). Next year, a number of Croatian communists walked out from the II congress out of protest for what they termed as centralizing tendencies (Ibid, 216).

However, communists had to define themselves vis-à-vis the political situation in the newly formed country and decide whether the situation was revolutionary or not. Two factions emerged in 1920’s over this question. Faction of a prominent Serbian intellectual Sima Marković (right faction) believed that it was not, which implied the communist policy aiming for constitutional changes and solution of national problems in regional autonomies. This view was based on the idea that Yugoslavs were essentially one people; hence federalization based on tribal principles would have inevitably lead to inner conflicts, especially in mixed regions. Left faction of Novaković (Serb), Cesarec (Slovene) and Ciliga (Croat) argued contrary, but differed in their rationales. Novaković argued for federal solution, anticipating Balkan federation to emerge. Cesarec was closer to federal solution as a transitory period toward democratic centralism. Ciliga advocated coalition with Radić's Peasant party, removal of all Serbian officials, formation of Croatian army and a referendum as conditions to have real self-determination of people (Gligorijević 1992, 130 - 133; Pešić 1985, 158-159). These proposals were soundly defeated, but in 1924 Yugoslav communists adopted federal framework as an

---

170 For the whole series of articles demonstrating escalation of conflict from disagreements about the Marxist doctrine to accusating each other of nationalism and imperialism, see Pešić (1985).
Ciliga accused Marković of presenting the case as a choice between Serb and non-Serb hegemony in Yugoslavia. In that case, Ciliga went on: “...as revolutionaries and internationalists... we would have to opt for dissolution of Yugoslavia and then everyone can be a master of its own territory. Just like in Austria... We have, however, showed above that a third option was possible in Yugoslavia, and that is political and economic equality by the means of a federal state structure” (Pešić 1985, 150).

Since most communists from Serbia held different views than most of those from former Habsburg lands and both side naturally claimed ideological purity, both sides suspected each other of not being loyal to the ideology. Hence, if the “other side” deviated from ideology and was consistently refusing to abandon the deviation, the motivation had to be malevolent. Therefore, the accusation of “Greater Serbian imperialism” resurfaced (Irvine 1993, 70). This time, they were not employed by Austrian socialists, but by some Croatians. On the other hand Marković accused other of “Austro-Marxism” and its teaching about permanent character of nations, which were, according to Marković, a passing phenomenon (Pešić 1985, 72-73).

Ciliga and Marković were not alone in this friction over the real intentions of the other side. In the spring of 1924, Belgrade communists sharply responded to a publication of Zagreb communists in which Serbian people as such, and not its bourgeoisie, was oppressing Croats and other non-Serbs (Gligorijević 1992, 148).

Soon after, the undisputed leader of Croats at the time, Stjepan Radić, flirted with Moscow regarding his move to join the international peasant association based in Moscow (Gligorijević 1992, 149). Moscow developed a strategy justifying cooperation with nationalist movements in speeding up revolutions. Hence, it instructed Yugoslav communists that not all nationalist
movements were equal and that they had to differentiate between the nationalism of the oppressed and the main enemy, which was the Serbian bourgeoisie as the hegemonic social group. The executive of Comintern, upon discussing internal strife among Yugoslavs, concluded: “The legend about national unity of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes should be debunked as it masks Serbian bourgeoisie’s politics of national oppression. No communist should promote that legend (by, for example, talking about natural process of integration, supposedly implied by economic progress, and alike)” (Pešić 1985, 192). Marković’s group was suspicious toward Radić’s potential to split with the Croatian bourgeoisie and form a revolutionary peasant movement.

Moscow had an additional reason to desire destruction of South Slav’s country, besides ideologically based targeting of dominant, “oppressing”, nations. Namely, the kingdom under the rule of Serbian dynasty welcomed numerous Whites, refugees from the Russian civil war who were vehemently anti-communists. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, soon to be named Yugoslavia, practiced strong anti-communist policies. By essentially equating nation and class, Soviet communists were legitimizing decentralization and appropriation of non-communists slogans as a method of attracting nationalist Croatian masses.

Left faction readily initiated internal party reorganization. Following the understanding of the national question and territorial demarcations, that meant defining seven provinces as parts of future Balkan federation as: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Vojvodina, Macedonia. Another initiative like that came from Zagreb unions. These initiatives were rejected, but in the course of discussion Croatian communists clashed not only with the

---

171 More details on the connection between Soviet and anti-Yugoslav theory and practice of Yugoslav communists can be found in Tadić (1992).
ones from Montenegro, but also with the Serb communists from Croatia (Gligorijević 1992, 199-200). Obviously, a strong number of Serbian communists were not ready to immediately accept Moscow’s intrusion as a judgment that simply had to be implemented. Not even ten years prior, Serbian social-democrats likewise clashed with their Russian comrades in Stockholm. At the heart of this defiant group was Sima Marković.

By the end of the 1920’s, left faction was increasingly tied to Zagreb and the right to Belgrade. They were not quite homogenous, as right had some visible support in Zagreb (Gligorijević 1992, 213). Moscow criticized both left (for Croat nationalism) and right (for leanings toward social democracy) but by the end of 1920’s, it favored the left faction and put an enormous pressure on Sima Marković (Ibid, 220; Pešić 1985).

The Yugoslav crisis reached its climax with the murder of Stjepan Radić in the parliament in 1928, after a vicious quarrel with a Serbian MP. The inter-ethnic tensions were perceived as an opportunity to stage an armed uprising. Few months after that, Yugoslav party congress adopted a decision that the right to national self-determination required independence of Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia, as well as unification of Hungarians and Albanians with their home states (Gligorijević 1992, 255). Central Communist bureau in Zagreb invited “the working people in cities and villages” to rise so that “Croatian people [can] break shameful chains and

172 Right faction was crushed by the mid-1930’s following direct intervention of Comintern. Sima Marković was summoned to Moscow, where he perished in Stalin’s purges. After several years of Milan Gorkić at the helm of Yugoslav communists, Tito’s rise secured prevalence of Zagreb centered left faction. After mid-1930's, Serbian communists fully adopted the party line about the first duty of Serbian communists being fight against “Greater Serbian hegemony”.
win its freedom and an independent country in an open struggle against the Belgrade rulers” (Ibid, 243-244)

In the early 1930’s, aggressive Croat nationalist movement “Ustaša”, rooted in the teachings of Party of Rights, performed a series of terrorist actions, which drew communist support to their actions. This continued until 1935, when, fearing the rise of Germany, Yugoslav communists joined the anti-fascist “Popular Front” under instructions from Moscow. At the time of another switch in its Yugoslav policy, local party officials in Croatia were criticized for “…acting as if Croatia’s secession were an end, rather than simply a means…” (Irvine 1993, 77).

Enormous support among the Croats that Radić’s party had after his murder was challenging communists’ appeal to the masses. In order to fight that, they set up Croat National Revolutionary Movement in 1932, which failed and was replaced in 1937 by the Communist Party of Croatia under the auspices of Yugoslav communists.

The ethnic outbidding thus did not occur between nationalist, ethnic parties, but between communists and Croatian nationalists. In a letter to provincial committees for Croatia and Dalmatia in 1935, Yugoslav communist leadership was explaining that the Communist Party of Croatia is being established to help fight against the national-fascists slandering communists for being “Yugoslavs”, that is, “Greater-Serbs” (Jelić 1981, 61). Its proclaimed task was to fight for the national liberation of the Croat people, which did not imply the right to have an independent country, but soon it came under criticism for “getting to close” to the Croatian Peasant Party (Irvine 1993, 84).

Since Serbs were designated as a nation of oppressors, they got their party only in 1944 (Đilas 1991, 100). As Blagoje Parović, top Yugoslav communist, explained, communist party of Serbia was not established because “working masses in Serbia do not seek that”, which was
“understandable” since Serbs were not exploited as a nation. “Serbs are the ruling nation”. Moreover, he continued, “the existence of [Communist Party of Yugoslavia] under that name does not in any case imply recognition of some non-existent ‘Yugoslav’ nation. It simply means that our party operates on a territory of a country with that name” (Jelić 1981, 66). By the end of 1930’s it was crystal clear that all the enthusiasm about Yugoslavs as one people was gone. The communist party of Yugoslavia, if it wanted to stay relevant and amass enough support for the desired social revolution, had to appeal to ethnic nationalism of the “oppressed nations”. Serbian communists, if they wanted to keep the membership in the communist party, had to help the “oppressed nations” as well. Thus, the legitimacy of Yugoslav communists depended on their ethnic background - Serbian communists legitimized themselves by fighting against Serbian nationalists, while non-Serbian communists legitimized themselves by competing with their respective nation’s nationalists.

After Radić’s death and under Maček's leadership, the Croatian Peasant Party adopted stronger class appeal and some communist slogans, such as “Croatian rifle on a Croatian shoulder, Croatian pocket on Croatian pants”. (Gligorijević 1992, 264). At this time, in a town near Zagreb, Mr. Stjepan Tuđman was an innkeeper and an active member of the party. His 8-year old son, Franjo, will become Tito’s partisan, communist, Yugoslav army general, nationalist dissident, political prisoner and the undisputed Croatian leader elected in 1990. Some of his slogans in the 1990 elections were “Croatian rifle on a Croatian shoulder” and “Croatian wallet in a Croatian pocket”, former symbolizing political and latter symbolizing economic independence.

After skillfully playing Serbian opposition parties against one another (Marković 1993), Maček won a separate ethnic territorial autonomy for Croats encompassing virtually all their
ethnic territories, including a large number of ethnic Serbs. After autonomous “Banovina Croatia” was founded, Croatian Communists amplified class based criticism of Croatian Peasant Party and condemned its collaboration with Serbian elites. Communist students likewise denounced Peasant Party’s anti-communist policy as an instrument of “Greater-Serbian hegemonists and Croatian reactionaries” (Jelić 1981, 335).

So, just before the Axis powers attacked Yugoslavia, its communists were stretched between two imperatives. One was to exploit internal ethnic frictions and hijack non-Serbian nationalist ideologies from the leading parties, primarily in Croatia and Slovenia. The other was to follow Moscow’s instructions regarding their positioning toward both Axis powers and the Western democracies that were supporting Yugoslavia against the Axis powers.

10.8. World War Two and the Fundamental Bargain

After Yugoslavia collapsed in the short war against Axis powers, a Nazi puppet state was established by Croatian extremists, the Ustaša. It covered roughly the territories sought under the title of “Croatian state right”. Genocide against the ethnic Serbs created massive Serbian guerilla force struggling for survival in the summer and early fall of 1941. The problem was how to attract Croats (Đilas 1991, 13). After all, they finally achieved to have their own country. Attracting Croats into the communist guerilla movement was especially hard since Maček, the head of the Croatian Peasant Party, invited his numerous followers to be loyal to the new Ustaša government. Maček’s “Guard” (established when he won the autonomous unit for Croats in 1939), served as an efficient organization in the first period of chaos in creating state functions of
the newly created Independent State of Croatia, or NDH.173

Until the fall of Italy, Serbs counted for the vast majority of Partisan manpower, though the leadership was relatively more ethnically heterogeneous. After the fall of Italy, larger numbers of Croats and Bosnian Muslims were joining the movement and fought for the next two years. The war period was the time when this multi-ethnic army forged something that Ljubomir Tadić, Serbian dissident academic, labeled as “Partisan Yugoslavdom” (Tadić 1992, 17). Simply, partisan movement was constantly engaged in fighting and it was a requirement of survival to have a centralized command and blind obedience to superiors, if such movement was to survive. The trust among multi-ethnic partisans was tested in constant struggles against predominantly Serbian royalists (“četniks”) and predominantly Croatian ustaša. This firm hierarchy evolved in the main theater of war, mountain range of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Dobrica Ćosić recorded his shock with the authoritarian culture and hierarchical structure of this growing partisan army when it rolled into Serbia in 1944.

In order to appeal to Croatian masses, Yugoslav communists offered federation as a solution to the national question and the fight against “Greater Serbian hegemony”. In the time when Italy was on its knees, Soviet tanks rolled eastward and Western allies switched their support to Partisans instead of Serbian royalists, which had to be an attractive offer. Pictures bellow depict symbolical continuity between Croats’ national aspirations in the interwar period and the new Yugoslav arrangement communists claimed was going to fulfill them (see Appendix: pictures 10.1; 10.2; 10.3).

The decision to introduce federal political system demanded geographical delineation among federal units. This question existed at the latest since 1930’s, due to the region based

---

173 NDH stands for the “Nezavisna država Hrvatska”.
representation in the central communist party organs. For example, as soon as the separate Croatian Communist Party was founded in 1937, the question of its territorial reach imposed itself. The newly formed party demanded territories populated by Croats, including those in Krajina and western Bosnia predominantly populated by Serbs (Gligorijević 1992, 275).

The interwar functioning of Yugoslav communists self-imposed regional committees as parts of the overall organization. Yet, there was no clear principle adopted that was supposed to establish borders of those regions. In the words of one of top Communist leaders, Moše Pijade, the borders among Yugoslav republics emerged “naturally” (Čavoški 1992, 33). Following the distribution of regional committees, there is no clear ethnic foundation. For instance, there was a regional committee for Dalmatia where Croats were a majority. Vojvodina and Bosnia had their own committees with just relative Serbian majority but no absolute majority.

Pijade's remark that borders emerged “naturally” can be adopted in a sense that they were not strictly ideology-based. It is questionable if they were not influenced by concerns over national frictions. As communists did not consider Muslims to be a separate nation back then, their decision to create Bosnian federal unit had to be motivated by an understanding of the need to strike a balance between Serbs and Croats. Moreover, the explanation given in 1945 by Mile Peruničić, the secretary of the presidium of Yugoslavia, stated that different historical periods were referred to in deciding on regional borders. For example, borders of Bosnia were based on 1878 Berlin Congress, while borders of Slovenia were based on internal division of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Čavoški 1992, 35-38). All these inconsistencies point toward “national balancing” as the guiding criteria in drawing internal borders. They were supposed to satisfy everyone’s ethnic demands and remove all causes of concern and fear by striking an appropriate balance.
This was yet another example that legitimized zero-sum approach to the relations in the newly established federation. For example, Bosnian-Croatian border divided large and relatively compact Serb territory between these two republics. Similarly, Croatian populated territory in Herzegovina was separated from southern Croatia. Bosnia was established as a federal unit equal to other republics who did have an ethnic majority. Any other solution would have aggravated either Serbs or Croats. Communists established Montenegrin republic and nationality even though Montenegrins at that time were still by and large clearly self-identifying as Serbs. In addition, Serbia was further weakened by introduction of two autonomous provinces in its north and south, satisfying Hungarian and Albanian national minorities, respectively. 174 Even though Albanians in Serbia were proportionally less numerous than Albanians in Macedonia, the latter were not granted an autonomous region. 175 Serbia was simply too big and Macedonia was too small to be further divided. It is not to say that this ethnic gerrymandering was ill-intended, but rather that it was not rooted in ideology, or more precisely, ideology had to adapt to ethnic balancing if it was to be legitimate.

Failing to reduce Serbs’ relative numerical, geographic and thus political primacy, would have delegitimized communist leadership. Perhaps the main source of their legitimacy (besides expelling Axis powers’ forces) was in the critique of oppressive and exploitative nature of the previous royal, capitalist and Serb-dominated regime. 176 Hence, they promised “sovereignty” to non-Serbian nations. They recognized national identity of Macedonians, Montenegrins and, by

174 See article 111 of the 1963 Yugoslav constitution.

175 Albanians in Serbia numbered around 8% of population, while those in Macedonia numbered around 15% (Census, 1953).

176 See, for example, the preamble of the 1963 Yugoslav constitution.
the end of 1960’s, Bosnian Muslims. The new regime legitimized itself before the Serbs in two cardinal respects. First, it promised economic improvements as it criticized the capitalist economic exploitation before the war. Second promise, and by far more important to Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia, was Yugoslavia itself as one common state. As Josip Broz himself stated, internal borders were not “borders of separation, but borders of association” (Marković 2000, 239).

Hence, at the heart of the socialist Yugoslavia’s foundation was a compromise between two demands. The interwar marriage between communist ideology and Slovene and Croatian nationalism imposed not only the federal structure. On the other hand, after suffering genocide and enjoying preeminence as partisan fighters, Serbs sought protection not only within Yugoslavia’s framework as such, but also in enjoying the status of a “constitutive nation” throughout Yugoslavia, and especially in constitutions of Croatia and Bosnia. This balance is of utmost importance in understanding subsequent ethnic frictions over constitutional changes and maintenance of this equilibrium. For example, Wachtel and Bennett (2009, 15), mention interwar period of Serb domination as shaping federal structure as a security guarantee for non-Serbs, but omit the legacy of genocide against Serbs in shaping Yugoslav unity as a security guarantee for them.

Throughout the 1950’s, Yugoslav leader Josip Broz held the line of Yugoslav unity and the primacy of Yugoslav identity (Marković 2000). There were at least two cardinal motivations for this. One was defined by the academic Ljubomir Tadić as “Partisan Yugoslavdom”, the sense of solidarity, independence and pride earned on the battlefields of World War II. The other was the

177 See chapter III of the 1946 Yugoslav constitution, titled “The Fundamental Rights of Peoples and People’s Republics”.

conflict with the Soviets after 1948 that drew Yugoslavia closer to the West, fearing the invasion from the East.\textsuperscript{178} Hungarian revolt and Soviet intervention in 1956 spiked those fears and the need for internal cohesion topped all other concerns.

However, conflict with the Soviets imposed the necessity of ideological differentiation on Yugoslav leadership. This need was the major impetus for creation of “self-management” in economy, “withering away of the state” in constitutional evolution and “non-alignment” in foreign policy.\textsuperscript{179} Self-management in economy meant devolution of federal authority toward companies and republics after the first 5-year plan (1947-1952), which stimulated particular interests of republics’ elites (Zečević 1998, 9-10). Central Committee of Yugoslav communists warned against such tendencies in 1958, but was unable to find a way to check them (Ibid, 11). Even Josip Broz, by then the undisputed leader, complained at that time:

We were adopting a series of decisions, but when comrades would go back to their republics, they would follow the path of least resistance...often yielding to petty bourgeois and other influences, but they did not execute decisions [we were adopting]… Comrades in republics strike blows against federal leadership… describing Belgrade as... some Greater-Serbian center, even though we came here from all republics...” (Bjelajac 378-379)

The accumulated problems forced the highest party and state leadership to convene the

\textsuperscript{178} Petar Stambolić, leading Serbian communist, emphasized this in his 1962 speech (Zečević 1998, 100).

\textsuperscript{179} For the former two, see seminal work of Dejan Jović (2009).
Executive Committee of the Party’s Central Committee in 1962. Several participants warned how lower party ranks echoed significant concern about the prior incident when Slovenian delegation walked out from a meeting discussing economic planning (Zečević 1998). General Gošnjak angrily claimed that at that moment there was no Yugoslav government, but some delegate system where people come to represent their republics (Ibid, 228).

President Broz in a way contradicted his earlier criticisms of a dysfunctional organization. He reminded that central committee was not supposed to be an enforcer of “centralism” and that republics must fight against chauvinism, so “[federal] center” would not end up accused of patronizing republics (Zečević 1998, 254-259). Furthermore, he claimed that, contrary to some opinions, he thought there was not enough economic decentralization and that some “centralizing tendencies” were still present (Ibid, 259).

Stambolić from Serbia referred to secret police’s reports about chauvinist excesses in Yugoslavia in 1959-1961. He lamented that some communists shared the same ideas, albeit using different terminology (Zečević 1998, 101). Yugoslav secret police chief, Ranković, complained about party becoming a “coalition” of parties (Ibid, 107). Veselinov, Serb from Vojvodina, explained that republics’ leaderships give primacy to republics over Yugoslavia. Even to work in federal committees was exposing one to pressures and accusations of being a “centralist” (Ibid, 125-127). Veljko Vlahović complained: “[federal officials] fear visiting republics…” (Ibid, 132). Dragi Stamenković found suspicious that more decentralization was demanded in the relationship between republics and federation, but not within republics themselves (Ibid, 169). Reflecting on Bosnian Muslim Osman Karabegović’s complaint about outvoting, Radosavljević from Serbia sad that everyone was trying all the time not to have outvoting, but that sometimes that was inevitable. The problem was that often, when people were outvoted, they would have
felt offended, as if their “rights and democracy were abolished” (Ibid, 177). Svetislav Stefanović, close aid of Ranković, strongly complained about centrifugal tendencies and selfishness of republics (Ibid 181-182). Dugonjić explained how federal and republics’ leaders feel awkward when visiting “other” republics, as if they were imposing themselves. He addressed directly Kardelj about Yugoslavia’s development — toward confederation or not?¹⁸⁰ For Kardelj, a Slovene and the chief Yugoslav constitutional architect, “moving forward” depended both on Yugoslav unity and respect for “national policy and autonomy of republics”. Moreover, he expected from communists “to take care of their people”, otherwise they were going to be unable to “connect with it” and they were going to be “tied down” by reactionary nationalism.¹⁸¹ He also warned against “anti-republicanism” of a “false Yugoslavism” as a cover for “another nationalism” (Ibid, 195-200).

10.9. Nationalism Recurrence

By 1962, nationalism was fully on the agenda again, when Broz stated that he was against “localisms” and disregard for the common good (Ramet 2005, 208). On the other side, Kardelj, chief constitutionalist of the socialist Yugoslavia voiced his opposition to some new Yugoslav

¹⁸⁰ According to Dejan Jović’s (2009, 92) interview with Dušan Bilandžić, senior Croatian politician and a historian, Kardelj confided to Bilandžić in 1971:”We have tried every possibility so far to preserve Yugoslavia: first, it was a unitary state, then it became a federation, while now we are moving towards a confederation. If this proves to be yet another unsuccessful attempt, then it remains only to admit that the Comintern was right when arguing that Yugoslavia was an 'artificial creation', and that we, the Yugoslav Communists, have made a mistake.”

¹⁸¹ Italics are mine.
nation, accusing potential hegemonic and denationalizing forces (ibid, 216). He even stated that the Yugoslav nation was a utopia (Uzelac 2006, 170). Kardelj has been developing his views along the similar line since his early days. In 1932, he stated that Yugoslavia was important for Slovenes: “… as long as it secures Slovenian national interests” (Gligorijević 1992, 278). By the 1964, Tito will join Kardelj’s views and at the VIII Party Congress he will step against Yugoslav nation as an artificial nation (Čuvalo 1990, 22; Marković 2000). What is important is that these were not new inventions of Yugoslav communists, but echoes of the interwar period, when “tribal” nationalism won its place in the communist ideology at the expense of Yugoslav “ethnonationalism”, that is, the idea that Yugoslavs were one people.

Yugoslav leader Broz removed the second most powerful figure in Yugoslavia, Serb Aleksandar Ranković, in 1966. The false accusations were that secret police spied on the president under Ranković’s orders, but the real causes remain controversial. Broz’s authority was undisputed, but Ranković was perceived as a “centralist” and Broz finally decided in favor of decentralization not later than 1964. It seems plausible that Broz feared Ranković would have resisted further decentralization down the road. However it may be, the window of opportunity for further decentralization was open.

Already next year, in 1967, the rank and file of Croatian intellectuals and institutions signed the petition under the title — Declaration about the name and the position of standard Croatian language. Signatories claimed that there was a gradual but planned erosion of Croatian variant of the common language in the common dictionary, federal institutions and public services,
although they explicitly recognized Serbian and Croatian as having the same linguistic base.\textsuperscript{182} The practical life of the country and the pace of modernization was imposing unified and thus simpler approaches to the matters of common interest. However, this was not viewed as anything spontaneous. Croatian concerns mounted to such a pressure that the already mentioned Croatian Literary Society issued an open letter in 1969, airing grievances over alleged Serb plot to strip Croatia of its identity, impose Serbian language and subsequently Serbian cultural hegemony.\textsuperscript{183}

At the same time (starting in 1967), Croatian leadership began advocating military decentralization through introduction of republics’ armies, so called “territorial defense forces”, in addition to the federal army (Johnson 1977). The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia next year helped decentralizing tendencies, so the doctrine of “total defense” was adopted and “territorial defense” as quasi-armies of republics were founded. By the end of the 1970’s, as Johnson witnessed (Ibid, 47), Croats and Albanians largely did not perceived the federal army as a “joint armed force”.

The general push toward decentralization was visible within the party itself as well, since

\textsuperscript{182} Croatian linguist, Snježana Kordić (2010, 308-321) rejected complaints of Croatian linguists against “unitarism” of Serbian linguists and official linguistic policy in Yugoslavia. In fact, she concluded that Croatian linguists were artificially inflating linguistic differences.

\textsuperscript{183} A group of Serbian writers reacted, cynically accepting Croatian declaration in an \textit{argumentum ad absurdum}. They proposed full linguistic equality of all Yugoslav languages in virtually every segment of life, thus obviously showing how impractical life would have become. More pointedly, this included reminding Croatian writers about the right of Serbs in Croatia to have all linguistic rights Croatia demands for itself at the Yugoslav level. Yugoslav leadership condemned both sides.
for the first time, republics had held their party congresses before, rather than after, the federal party (9th) congress (Johnson 1983, 17). This had a profound impact, since republics’ parties were able to formulate their positions and delegate their members to represent those positions at the federal level. Before, primacy of federal congress meant that, once conclusions and policy priorities were adopted, republics’ party branches were supposed to execute them. As 1962 meeting transcripts show, even then policy implementation would “burn out” in the atmosphere of republics’ selfishness.\footnote{The importance of the order of elections would show far more forcefully in the first democratic elections, when republican elections preceded and essentially prevented the federal democratic elections.}

Very soon, the situation got out of hand and the “Masovni pokret” (literally, “Mass Movement”) rose over Croatia and Yugoslavia.\footnote{Also known as the “Croatian Spring” or “Maspok”.} At the same time (1969-1971), the new amendments to the federal constitution were even further relaxing ties between the federal units and the federation. The “Mass Movement” was a heterogeneous expression of a single concern - the perceived Serbian domination. Croatian communist leadership mostly aired grievances regarding economic situation for which they blamed “unitarism” and the “remnants of the old system” (Dabčević-Kučar 1970), which were euphemisms for “Greater Serbian” hegemony. The ideological defense of the Croatian communist leadership at the time was to position itself as moderates, between “nationalists-separatists” on one side and “unitarists” on the other side (Tripalo 1970). Students of Zagreb university demanded a separate seat at the UN (following Ukraine and Belarus example). Croatian cultural institutions led by “Matica hrvatska” (“Matrix Croatia”) alarmed the masses about threats to Croatian culture. Calculating ethnic participation...
in the army, police force, administration and the party evidenced Serb over-representation and hence, hegemony.\textsuperscript{186}

Serbs in Croatia did not publicly show much reaction to the massive Croatian public meetings. However, behind closed doors, they hotly debated the ongoing situation (Prosvjeta 1971).\textsuperscript{187} In a meeting held in Zagreb on October 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1971, a delegate from Dalmatia claimed Serbs have to set up their own curriculum in Croatia, since the existing one has been thoroughly “Croatianized” (Ibid, 4). Milan Zjalić condemned such an approach as “separatist and anti-socialist” (Ibid, 5). Writer Vojin Jelić underlined that Serbs gave everything for joint life of Serbs and Croats, under the leadership of the communist party, and that those accusing Serbs of threatening Croatia were nothing but clerofascists and adherents of the Party of Rights (Ibid, 11). Perhaps the most direct speech was given by Božo Mrkobrada (Ibid, 15-17). While he rejected any idea of unitarism and oppression of Croats, he claimed that Serbs were bitterly disappointed with the rising Croatian chauvinism, widespread intimidations and false accusations against

\textsuperscript{186} At the same time, in 1968, Kosovo was hit by large scale violent Albanian demonstrations demanding more autonomy. Yugoslav leadership intervened militarily, but subsequent reforms and amendments to the federal constitution largely granted the demands of Albanians. In 1969, Yugoslavia was additionally shaken by the “Road Scandal” or (in Slovenian) “Cestna afera”. After Yugoslavia borrowed foreign money for infrastructural investments, Slovenian leadership accused the federal government (at that time headed by a Slovene) of anti-Slovenian discrimination. The public way in which this was done was unprecedented and unleashed serious crisis in the relationship between Slovenia and the federation.

\textsuperscript{187} I would like to thank Mr. Čedomir Višnjić from the Serbian Cultural Society “Prosvjeta” in Croatia for his kind help in obtaining the transcripts.
Serbs. He even claimed that many Serbs, himself included, felt obliged to condemn Serbian chauvinism, even though they never fully understood what exactly were they condemning. He flatly concluded that Serbs enjoyed no guarantees of their rights and equality in Croatia and condemned downplaying incidents of singing Ustaša songs and displaying Ustaša insignias. Duško Štrbac (Ibid, 21) condemned the previous speaker and underlined that chauvinism was not the way to fight another chauvinism, regardless of different numbers of chauvinists among Serbs and Croats. Dragosavac (Ibid, 22) also condemned Mrkobrada and anyone advocating Serbian autonomy in Croatia or rejecting that there were chauvinists among Serbs as well. After expressing his deep faith in Croatian people and Croatian party, Dragosavac concluded that any demand for Serbian autonomy within Croatia would have been rightfully condemned. Knežević (Ibid, 23) also condemned Mrkobrada's positions. Trbojević (Ibid, 24) joined him in condemning Mrkobrada. Both agreed that the original name of the Serbian weekly magazine founded by partisans in 1944 should not be restored to “Serbian Word”. Rade Bulat (Ibid, 26) classified positions of previous speakers into two kinds: socialist and nationalist. For him, there was no doubt which position was the right one. He rejected the idea of Serbian autonomous region in Croatia as “self-isolation” of Serbs and a step against inter-ethnic “brotherhood an unity” (Ibid, 67).

In the discussion about amendments to the Croatian constitution, Kosović (Prosvjeta 1971, 38) reminded that national equality was at the foundation of Yugoslavia and that in Croatia that equality among Croats and Serbs in Croatia was explicitly adopted in 1944. He criticized the amendments to Croatian constitution (proposed by Croatian communists) as degrading the position of Serbs in Croatia contrary to the founding principles from 1944 and elevating the position of Croats as a dominant nation in Croatia. In regard to the protection of Serbs’ collective
rights in Croatia, he proposed adoption of the same mechanisms Croats supported at the federal level in protection of national equality. Lower chamber of parliament was to reflect the population structure, while the upper chamber was to reflect equality of national groups (Ibid, 47-48). Dragosavac suspected that any constitutional design can replace Croatian consistency in following the line of the communist party and that Serbs should have more trust in both their Croatian comrades and the Party (Ibid, 70). Rapajić and Dimitrijević suspected that the newest developments after 1967 were moving toward separation of Croatian standard language from the Serbo-Croatian/Croatian-Serbian language toward exclusively Croatian language. That is why Serbs had to reject the proposed vague naming of Serbian language as “the language of Serbs in Croatia” (Ibid, 52-53). Dimitrijević condemned the 1971 changes to the high-school curriculum which introduced exclusively “Croatian language” as the language of instruction in Croatia for all children and woeful lack of any official reaction: “…[Croatian linguists] are accusing Serbian people for segregation in schools. What do they expect from Serbian people in such a situation? Should it send its children to school to study Franciscan catholic literature in Bosnia, and drop studies of... [Serbian writers]? And the curricula are such. I have a copy here…” (Ibid, 56).

However, the most profound conflict (and, in some moments, fear) emerged over whether the proposal for introducing upper chamber (representing national groups) in the Croatian parliament should be sent to the Constitutional Commision of Croatia. The question was whether the opinion of an individual (Kosović) was going to be properly understood by Croatian authorities and the public. First, that it was just a personal opinion of an individual. Second, whether Serbs were going to be accused collectively for advocating territorial federalization of Croatia (they all agreed against the very idea of it). The presiding official was clearly frightened: “Be aware of what is coming after that. Before anything, there will be an attack on
those thoughts and then they will attach some insinuations to us... we should avoid any possibility to have “Prosvjeta” disabled for the next period in its cultural, social and political thought, in the interest of Serbian culture and Serbian people” (Prosvjeta 1971, 79). The solution was found in agreeing that the Executive Board was going to attach a special explanation for the Constitutional Commission of Croatia, emphasizing that the proposal for the establishment of the upper chamber of Croatian parliament was advocated by one individual and was not the position of “Prosvjeta”.188

Tito was forced to react after nationalist incidents threatened to spark more serious conflicts. He dismissed the Croatian leadership on the grounds of Croatian nationalism. However, he had to iron out the resulting “ethnic disbalance”, so he removed the leadership of Serbia on the grounds of “liberalism”. The ideology of “whithering away of the state” (Jović 2009) as imagined by the head constitutionalist, Slovene Edvard Kardelj, was employed in the 1974 constitution. It resulted in the rising power of federal units and provinces and helplessness of federation to have a coherent Yugoslav policy. Yugoslavia essentially became a confederation in all but name. Those few who resisted and criticized such design were persecuted and even thrown into jail (the case of Belgrade law professor, Mihajlo Đurić).

Such grave internal problems and the way Yugoslav leadership was solving them was observed by Yugoslav diasporas. By far, the most politically active diaspora was Croatian. During 1960’s and 1970’s, its groups performed a series of deadly terrorist attacks and in retaliation suffered massive number of assassinations (60-80) at the hands of the Yugoslav secret

188 “Prosvjeta”, the only Serbian cultural institution in Croatia, was soon after abolished by Croatian authorities, together with the “Matica hrvatska” (“Matrix Croatia”), the institution largely responsible for stoking fires of the “Mass movement”.

police (Schindler 2005). Following “Mass Movement”, in 1972, a group of 20 Croatian extremists infiltrated Yugoslavia, hoping to incite an uprising in Bosnia. Almost all of them were killed fighting the security forces, while Yugoslav troops suffered up to 20 dead. One of the most important intelectual forces among them was Bruno Bušić, himself killed in 1978. He is important because he was both a protégé and an influence on Franjo Tuđman. His 1978 pamphlet “Croatian Ustaša and Communists” laid down the ideological framework for the historical reconciliation between them Tuđman will try to implement in the 1990. His ideas were based on the 1930’s sympathies between the Croatian communists and the ustaša. Within the country, it was the Croatian Catholic church that took over the banner of Croatian nationalism (Perica 2002). A year after Josip Broz Tito died, the apparitions of the Virgin Mary were reported in western Herzegvina, a traditional hot bed of extreme Croatian nationalism. Pilgrimages to Marija Bistrica near Zagreb were attracting hundreds of thousands of Catholics and the overall revival of religious feelings was hard to distinguish from the extra-institutional revival of nationalism.

10.10. The Final Stage

This was the historical background of the ideological structure which polarized the axis of the Yugoslav society, Serbs and Croats. Such polarization imposed the incentives’ structure that played out differently for the political elites of those nations. Croatian communist elite was not able to abandon its fight for decentralization since the masses of Croatian people were fully indoctrinated that centralization was directly proportional to exploitation at the hands of Serbs. Demanding more decentralization was impossible because that would have identified them with the “Mass Movement”. Until the end of the 1980’s Croatian leaders were stuck in an equilibrium and that period was known as “Croatian Silence” (“Hrvatska šutnja”).
Croatian liberal, anti-communist elites were unable to imagine democratic transition toward more Yugoslavia not only because of the increased nationalism, but also because that would have meant the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was on the right track. Given the image of the Kingdom as “Greater Serbian” hegemony oppressing all non-Serbs, that was impossible. For example, Puhovski suspected in 1990 that Yugoslavia can transform into a liberal democracy because

…there is no precedent which would point toward the possibility of democratic action in Yugoslavia and especially of establishing it as a democracy. A possible consequence of this understanding of the situation, several times tested in the past decades, is the abandonment of democratic action in favor of preserving Yugoslavia as unquestionable political fact. It is indicative that reverse, that is, an attempt to act democratically at the price of abandoning Yugoslav option was until recently unthinkable, and since today it is not longer so, the meaning of Yugoslav political framework for a new action is imposing itself as a problem.

(Puhovski 1990, 69)

Serbian political elite in Serbia, on the other hand, was attempting all the ways possible not to resemble anything like “unitarism” (Jović 2009, 109). At the same time, it was trying to show that the new constitution of 1974 was not functional and especially not for Serbia.189 As I

189 Two Serbian leaders quietly raised the issues of Serbia’s relationship with provinces: Draža Marković and Ivan Stambolić, before Slobodan Milošević loudly raised this question, echoing public outcry of the mid 1980's.
previously described, Serbia was essentially federalized by elevation of its provinces to the de facto status of republics. Serbian communists in Bosnia and Croatia were especially prone to status quo. Demanding more centralization would have alienated them from their Croat and Bosnian Muslim neighbors. Demanding more decentralization would have strengthened their minority status in Bosnia and especially Croatia, distancing them from Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro.

Growing economic crisis and violence in Kosovo exposed all the incapability of the political system to effectively fight those problems. It had to be changed, but in which direction? Ethnic polarization was complete, political elites’ homogenization was following with Milošević’s ascendancy to fill the power vacuum in regard to Kosovo crisis. Milošević did not “cause the collapse” of Yugoslavia. he unveiled the ideological mechanism that was gradually dissolving Yugoslav people as an idea and then Yugoslavia as a state throughout prior decades.

The ideological structures developing until his ascendancy to power severely limited the acceptable constitutional evolution in the zero-sum fashion. For Serbs, further decentralization into confedaracy was impossible, since they would have been stripped of the sole guarantor of their safety - Yugoslavia as a common state. For Croats and Slovenes, recentralization was impossible because it was identified as “Greater-Serbian hegemony”, that is, the loss of economic, political and most importantly, cultural identity.

The transition to liberal democracy and capitalism essentially did not address the ultimate zero-sum game: centralization vs. decentralization. Democratic transition was the question of political content and did not say much about the form. The form was the essence. In fact, as I showed before, Slovenes and Croats perceived democratic federal elections as legitimizing, thus strengthening, Yugoslav political bodies.
The question of Yugoslavia’s survival was on the table. With it, the question of war and peace. However, they were separate questions. One does not necessarily follow from the other. I suspect that the key factor behind both was in the international structure that was rapidly changing with the end of the Cold War. The changes in the balance of power and international norms were crucial for the rational decision-making of Yugoslav leaders within the given structure of preferences within which they operated. As one of the leading Croatian communists ominously remarked during “Mass Movement”:

“The first serious crisis, international or internal, which would shake Yugoslavia internally or externally would recreate the 1941 and destroy Yugoslavia, but this time it would not only compromise the idea of brotherhood among peoples, it would also completely besmirch socialism. That is the perspective of this trend which - I think - still exists…” (Bakarić 1970)

It was nationalism in the first place that was steering the ideological evolution of Yugoslav communists’ constitutional designs. As Ramet observed (2006, 222) the liberals promoting decentralization in the federation were not ready to decentralize their communist parties in their own federal units. Along the same line of reasoning, it was not the structure of the political system that caused the inability of the state to deal with the problems, which in the next step (mid-1980’s) stirred up Serbian nationalism. It was the policy of leaders driven by perception of Serbs as aggressive expansionists that spiraled constitutional development into a centrifugal spin. In order to mobilize mass support, that image of ever-present Serbian danger has had been continuously presented to the Croatian people by its leading institutions. Once Serbs refused confederalization as the end of the Yugoslav state, the alarm sounded in the Western republics,
Slovenia and Croatia, and spilled over to Bosnia and Macedonia.

Observing the dialectics of Serbian-Croatian relations within the framework of Yugoslav communist ideology’s evolution, one can notice a striking parallel with some remarks Henry Kissinger made in his book on nuclear weapons and foreign policy (1969). According to him, the problem of mutually assured destruction in an all-out nuclear war was in defining *casus belli* (Ibid, 6). The problem is emphasized in cases of “imperceptible advances… subtly adjusted so that no one of its individual steps seems ‘worth’ an all-out war…” (Ibid.). Kissinger distinguishes legitimate and revolutionary international orders by whether the “basic arrangements are accepted by all the major powers” (Ibid, 44). In legitimate orders, quest for absolute security triggers a revolutionary situation. Some level of mutual trust combined with physical safeguards maintains a legitimate order (Ibid, 45). Status-quo powers, hence, must maintain trust and good will. Otherwise, they are likely to disturb the legitimacy of the order and lose vital values protected by the status-quo. Kissinger concludes that status-quo powers “…will ascribe existing tensions to misunderstanding, to be removed by patience and good will” (Ibid, 46). On the other hand:

The revolutionary power… can present every move as the expression of limited aims or as caused by a legitimate grievance. The status quo powers… cannot be sure that the balance of power is in fact threatened or that their opponent is not sincere until he has demonstrated it, and by the time he has done so it is usually too late. (Kissinger 1969, 46-47)

The problem, therefore, presented before the status quo powers, is to be able to meet a “spectrum” of challenges and not just the absolute one (Ibid, 14). It is astonishing how similar
were the problems Kissinger analyzed to the intra-Yugoslav developments. In order to appreciate his insights, I will attempt to translate, that is, find intra-Yugoslav equivalents to the legitimate order, nuclear war, revolutionary and status-quo powers and “individual steps” undertaken by revolutionary powers.

The legitimate domestic order in Yugoslav context was sought in at least 4 periods: “national unity” Yugoslavism (1918-1939), “agreement Yugoslavism” (1939-1941), “brotherhood and unity” (or Tito’s) Yugoslavism (1945-1974) and Kardelj’s Yugoslavism (1974-1990). In all these cases, the status-quo power was the dominant Serbian political elite. Its tragic experience of a small country decimated in wars against large empires conditioned its strategic culture toward appreciating unity, strength and size. The larger the state, the more united the state, the more chances for survival and progress it had. Internal discord was tantamount to an invitation to external predators to abolish sacrifices, struggles and achievements of previous generations.

In the first Yugoslavia, it adopted “integral Yugoslavism”, the ideology of Yugoslav as one people with three “tribes”, based on the romantic reading of Yugoslav ideology as it was developed by Croatian 19th century ethnic-entrepreneurs. By the time Yugoslavs united into one country in 1918, exclusive Croatian national identity took hold and rejected any notion of surrendering its identity to an all-Yugoslav nation. However, Croatian elites decided not to try their luck with Italian and Hungarian aspirations. They embraced Corfu Declaration promoting unitary South Slavic state of Yugoslavs. In this sense, Croats were a revolutionary actor in Yugoslav domestic politics because they did not agree with the basic arrangement - unitary state. As a revolutionary actor, they advance from the position of inferiority. The longer an actor is in

---

190 I am using Jović’s (2009) division of Yugoslav state history.
the order it considers illegitimate, the more it stands to lose. However, acting too soon exposes it to a defeat unless the balance of power has been reduced sufficiently.

“Nuclear war” equivalent in internal politics is different than in Kissinger’s (international) sense and it had multiple forms. The first was, obviously, civil war. Serbs would have been weakened in such a war and exposed to external predators. Croats as well. Second, Croats were to risk a defeat in which case Serbs were to redraw borders. That would cripple Croatia and strip it of most of its “historic state rigth” territories (Bosnia, Military Border, Dalmatia). I have already discussed at the very start of this dissertation how ancient Greeks considered civil war to be “the greatest kinesis”, the greatest disturbance, non-directional movement, or simply, modern notion of - chaos.

Individual steps of the revolutionary actor relate to constant pressures, only fluctuating in strength, toward decentralization, abandonment of “integral Yugoslavism” and creation of an autonomous, ethnic based, Croatian political territorial unit. In addition, complaints about economic exploitation, hegemony and discrimination were supplied to add credibility to the demands. This was to remain a constant of Yugoslav political life throughout all “four Yugoslavias”, 1918-1990.

As long as Serbian bourgeoisie parties were relatively successfully rejecting such individual steps of Croatian parties, the accusations of Greater-Serbian hegemony seemed credible. This was especially so in communist intra-party debates. Even there, as in the fierce mid-1920’s debates between Ante Ciliga and Sima Marković, the “individual steps” can be recognized. When Ciliga (Pešić 1985, 150) threatened with either federalization or the break up of Yugoslavia, Marković was unable to avoid being accused of “hegemonist” ambitions. Even then, Marković’s faction rejected such accusations. Only after Comintern intervened from Moscow
was resistance to federalization crushed.

The legitimacy of the political order in the third, “brotherhood and unity” Yugoslavia (1945-1970), laid in the federal structure and the primacy of the communist party. As I have showed, by the end of the 1950’s and most definitely in the 1960’s, the order came under attack from the Croatian and Slovene communists as “unitarian”, “greater-statist” and “centralist”. Complaints of economic deprivation, Serbian over-representation and cultural hegemony of Serbs were all examples of “individual steps”.

Granting further decentralization in order to protect the federal order, show good will and remove any reason for suspiicions against Serbian mal-intentions were largely driving Serbian communist elites to give up. They agreed to have not only federation further decentralized and almost turned into a confederation, but they also adopted elevation of Serbian provinces to de facto status of republics without even raising questions about the status of Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia. The idea was to eliminate all possible sources of complaints and suspicions, since Yugoslavia was worth preserving as the vital means of security. Resistance to devolution of powers would have retroactively justify all previous suspicions and legitimize escalation of internal conflict.

The fourth, Kardelj’s, Yugoslavia, hence, left no room for Serbs to give any more concessions. The violence in Kosovo against Serbs and ultimately demands for turning Yugoslavia into confederation were perceived as an equivalent to the launch of a nuclear attack. The moment when Serbs rejected proposals for confederation on both fronts, within the communist party and within the alternative, liberal and dissident, movements, was exactly the moment Kissinger describes as follows: “…revolutionary powers have never been brought to a halt until their opponents stopped pretending that the revolutionaries were really misunderstood.
legitimists” (Kissinger 1969, 79). However, by then, it was already late. The balance of power changed. How it changed, I will try to present in the next chapter devoted to the end of the Cold War and its influence on domestic struggles in Yugoslavia.
Chapter 11. Relevant Systemic Change at the End of the Cold War

11.1. Historical Introduction

Just as in the ancient times, the modern era has seen a consistent flow of proxy wars. Expanding powers seek to install puppet regimes abroad to ease expanding their spheres of influence. Declining powers support an opposing local regimes in order to halt their competitors’ enlargement — or at least to stall it. For example, French Republic’s enlargement in the early 19th century included installation of anti-monarchical “sister republics” (républiques sœurs). In Italy, the response came in the form of sanfedisti, zealously monarchical and religious peasants supported by Papal States and the English fleet in the Mediterranean. On the other side of the Adriatic Sea, French puppet “Illyrian province” was opposed by Slavic Dalmatian peasants instigated and supported by Habsburgs, and Montenegrin Serbs supported by Russians. To an extent, this dynamics resembles ancient Roman activities in the eastern Adriatic at the time of their enlargement and competition with the Macedonians and Greeks.

After Napoleon’s enlargement was crushed, the Holly Alliance was supposed to conserve the monarchical order in Europe (re)established by the Vienna Treaty of 1815. However, the nascent forces of Balkan nationalism began to interact with the great powers’ rivalry in the wider Mediterranean basin. The decline of the Ottoman Turkey invited competition between Russia and the Western powers (British, French and Habsburg). The 1774 Treaty of Küçük-Kaynarca, between the Ottomans and the Russians, included articles allowing the latter to interfere as “protectors” of Orthodox Christians. France and Austria were also imposing themselves as protectors of other Christians within the Ottoman Empire. This “duty” was cloaking Russian attempts to expand southwards throughout the 19th century, which was met by the opposition of
the Western powers, most notably in the Crimean War (1853-1856). Early on Balkan nationalist movements, primarily Serb and Greek, were caught within this web of interests. Subsequently joined by Bulgarian, Romanian and Albanian nationalist movements, this “overlap” of conflicts would be known as the “Eastern Question”.

The initial success of the First Serbian uprising in 1804 had much to do with Russian pressure on the Ottomans. However, it met its bitter end after Russia withdrew due to Napoleon’s invasion. Russian return in the 1820’s benefited, mostly, the Greeks. They profited from the Ottoman weakness and British fears of Russian enlargement, thus cementing Greek independence under British influence in 1832. Serbs used the opportunity, significantly expanded their autonomy and introduced their liberal constitution of 1835. Without external influences, these awakened nationalist movements would not have been capable of fighting the Ottomans. However, the Western powers’ interest in maintaining the Ottoman state as a buffer against the Russian enlargement worked against the Ottoman Christians in the Balkans. The more autonomy Bulgarians and Serbs were able to grab — the weaker the Ottomans were and Russians were to gain. This competition also led to the powers’ unstable agreements on the

191 Approximately at the same time, on the other side of the globe, the Americans were involved in their own proxy war against Mexico in Texas. Even though US government at the time displayed rhetorical neutrality (largely due to the toxic question of slavery in Texas), popular support was overwhelming. The US military did nothing to prevent funnelling of volunteers and arms in support of Americans settled in Texas. Their victory against the Mexican troops led by Antonio López de Santa Ana was secured, and the brief independence of Texas would end with the formal incorporation in the US.
spheres of influence which delayed their violent resolution until the First World War.\footnote{192}{“The League of the Three Emperors” of 1873, “The Three Emperors' Alliance” of 1881.}

As Balkan’s nascent states were becoming independent, they were not only limited by the powers’ interactions. They were also mutually competing over their national interests, both economic and nationalistic. Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks clashed over Macedonia, all employing locals as proxies. They used special units to infiltrate the contested areas still under the Ottoman sovereignty and protect the local priests and teachers who served as their respective propagandists among the population still lacking a clear national self-identification. At the same time, they sought ways to eliminate the competition.

The latest national movement to emerge was Albanian and it too was caught in the web of local and wider interests. The royal Serbian government in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century searched for allies among northern Albanian tribes. It was in a quest of a secure and accessible port in the Adriatic in order to escape Austria-Hungary’s iron choke. Serbian influence was countered by Italian and especially Austrian, whose protection was crucial in establishing an independent Albanian state in 1913. The legacies of those times are alive to this day, with the simmering tensions surrounding Albanians in their relations with the present day Montenegro, Greece and especially Macedonia and Serbia.

The internal ethno-nationalist conflicts plagued post-World War I Europe. The Irish, for example, fought the British in the Easter Rising of 1916, seizing the opportunity provided by World War I. They miscalculated British strength and lost. A major Irish uprising in 1919 was inspired by the revolutions in Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary. British, worn out by the war, yielded in 1923, though Ireland did not get full independence. This led to the bloody civil war among the Irish, where London enabled victory of the moderates who accepted Ireland
nominally remaining under British crown. Without understanding the international context, it is impossible to understand the timing of the insurgencies.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1929) was perhaps among the internally most divided newly established countries. Not only was it internally weak, it was surrounded by revisionist neighbors, aggrieved over the loss of territory (Bulgaria, Italy, Albania and Hungary). They provided shelter, training and material support to the Albanian, pro-Bulgarian Macedonians and Croatian nationalists aiming to destroy Yugoslavia. No doubt, similar tensions existed in other regions as well.

What is interesting for the interwar period is the communist approach to ethno-nationalist conflict. Lenin stated that, even though nationalism was nothing but a product of capitalist development, the nationalism of the “dependent nations” would be supported (Riddell 1991, 283). It was to be taken over by the communists and used to depose bourgeoisie. After Lenin died, Trotsky and Stalin split over a further course of action. Trotsky advocated (1969) a “permanent revolution”, aggressive continuation of revolutionary activities abroad with the support of the USSR. Stalin was less adventurous and prevailed in promoting “socialism in one state”. The strategy was to secure the revolution in the USSR first and then use it as a base for further global struggle.

This does not mean Stalin did not support revolutionary activities at all, to the contrary. Under Stalin’s and Bukharin’s influence, the Comintern adopted the differentiation among the countries fit for revolution and the ones where capitalism secured its positions (Gligorijević 1992). While warming up relations with fascist Italy, Comintern demanded revolutionary action in the “new small imperialist states”, its perceived threats were Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece (Ibid, 118). They were accused of being instruments of
oppression of small nations and the task of communists was to support the national-liberation struggle, including secession, of smaller nations within them. Perhaps the most important example of a civil war driven by international dynamics was the one in the 1930’s Spain. Ideologically divided, Spaniards enlisted support of numerous foreign volunteers, turning Spain into a real “international civil war”, so to speak.

The Cold War would unleash proxy wars to the fullest. As John Lewis Gaddis (2005) chronicles in his seminal work on that era, the struggle had two faces. Some countries had the potential to switch allegiances (“the Non-Aligned countries”) and were courted by both superpower blocks. Regimes in some other countries (South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam) were not that flexible, thus their only way to keep power was to be supported by an external sponsor (Ibid, 129). The end of World War II in Europe saw Italy and Greece plunged into a deep internal struggle. Italy had a strong armed communist movement that Western allies had to crush, fearing that the USSR would exploit such an opportunity. For decades afterwards, Italy would suffer from the controversial “Strategy of Tension”, a series of terrorist attacks exploited by Italian political factions to discredit each other (Cento Bull, 2007). In Greece, a full scale civil war between communists and non-communists ended only after the USSR and Yugoslavia stopped assisting the former. Coups, revolutions and civil wars, such as the notorious proxy war in Angola, were highly sensitive to the bipolar strategic and ideological competition.

The nascent literature on civil wars of this period reflected this inter-connectedness between the systemic and the domestic levels. For example, Kick’s (1980, 1983) “world system” approach found core (industrialized) countries as both penetrating the semi-periphery and periphery and providing stability for the regimes. Therefore, state capacity of those countries depended on the core countries support. Hence, only marrying world system theory and resource
mobilization we can investigate the incidents of internal mass violence.

Moreover, powers are inherently limited by the threat of nuclear mutually assured destruction, so they are structurally limited to play out their rivalry through proxies in the Third world (Kissinger 1969; Kick 1987). Dowty’s (1971) “foreign-linked factionalism” discussed the implications of an essentially “fifth column” domestic faction. Eley (1972, 253) reminded not to neglect systemic incentives when stating that: “Intervention is system-relevant behavior in the sense that its purpose cannot be understood except in reference to the system to which the situation prompting intervention is relevant”. 193

As Yugoslav internal conflicts were evolving, the Cold War was nearing its end. In order to understand the full set of options before domestic actors in Yugoslavia, I will try to chart the relevant changes in the international structure. What exactly was changing with the end of the Cold War? What were the new trends and interests that were to shape the restructuring of the regional order and, subsequently, internal stability of countries in transition? First, however, we need to answer — when did the long rivalry between the two ideologies and super-powers end?

It is not easy to pinpoint the exact date when the Cold War ended. However, most scholars agree that at some point in the period between Gorbachev’s speech in the UN where he announced unilateral Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe (Gaddis 2005, 377) and the fall of the Berlin Wall (Chollet and Goldgeier 2008, ix), the Cold War died out. 194 Soon, communist governments in Eastern Europe were to be replaced with the liberal democratic and, usually, nationalist movements following the wave of multiparty elections.

193 Another work worth mentioning, though it received mixed reviews, is Rosenau’s edition “International Aspects of Civil Strife” (1964).

194 This period, therefore, starts with 12/7/1988 and ends with 11/9/1989.
While the international structure until then was labeled as “bipolar”, the fade away of the Soviet might introduced the idea of “unipolarity” in the system. However, the political pullout of the Soviets opened up new challenges: military, social, economic and political. Not only that the democratizing countries (including the USSR) had to face the transition, but the victors had to build new order following their victory. How did they perceive their national interests in the new situation? What were their guiding principles? What were they afraid of? How did the emerging norms differ from the Cold War norms, as verbalized in numerous international treaties attempting to regulate international relations.

In the next pages, I will try to sketch the positions of the actors in the beginning of the post-Cold War period and chart their interests. In the conclusion, I will try to describe the norms resulting from both conflicted and complementing interests of the main actors. These norms were to set the stage for the ethno-nationalist movements in the years to come.

### 11.2. The “Relevant Systemic Change” Variable

My attempt to dissect the concept of a “relevant systemic change” resulted in relying on two aspects: changed balance of power and the “norm confusion”. As a matter of fact, the changes in balance of power often instigate the confusion regarding the new norms promoted to justify the change and/or preserve the newly established international situation. I have therefore offered a model depicting “relevant systemic change” in the following way:

Geopolitical Power Competition + Norm Confusion $\rightarrow$ Relevant Systemic Change

H₃: A geopolitical power competition affecting balance of power and disturbing dominant norms will cause confusion among domestic factions, thus becoming “relevant systemic change”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geopolitical Power Competition + Norm Confusion $\rightarrow$ Relevant Systemic Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₃: A geopolitical power competition affecting balance of power and disturbing dominant norms will cause confusion among domestic factions, thus becoming “relevant systemic change”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concepts of “normative contestation” (Acharya 2004) and “contested compliance” (Weiner 2004) capture the hardships of norm diffusion. The hardships can stem from domestic recipients’ strategic reasons (Schimmelfennig 2005) or “cultural mismatch” (Checkel 1998). In reverse, strategic reasons and cultural match can make international norms domestically salient. Besides these two, Cortell and Davis (2000) add two more paths to an international norm’s salience: political elite’s rhetoric and institutional adoption of international norms.195

I opted for the term “norm confusion” to capture the contestation between domestic actors over international norms and both their constitutive and regulative aspects. Consequentially, domestic actors disagree over the appropriate behavior proscribed by the changing international norms. Domestic factions then have a strong incentive to act in support of the norm interpretation they prefer. When domestic actors are ethnic factions involved in the ultimate zero-sum game, they can employ extreme measures to solicit external support, provided credible incentives.

Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994, 216), approaching the end of the Cold War from a constructivist angle, observed that: “…fundamental changes in international politics occur when beliefs and identities of domestic actors are altered thereby also altering the rules and norms that are constitutive of their political practices.” There are two implications of this approach that are of my interest. First, the domestic actors in question are usually the ones in powerful countries, dominating the international or regional system. Changes among the domestic actors within weak countries are usually disciplined by dominant powers, reinforcing the existing structures of both norms and interests. Second, reverse is also present — changes in the international norms affect the beliefs and identities of domestic actors. This is even more so valid in the case of

195 I thank Dr. Biermann for bringing my attention to these articles and for emphasizing the need for more nuanced conceptualization of “norm confusion”.
smaller countries.

In the rest of this chapter, I will try to show how the dramatic change in balance of power affected relevant interests and norms in Europe in the end of the Cold War. Often, these deliberations referred to similarity and relevance among Yugoslav and Soviet developments. Then, I will describe how the main actors in the Yugoslav drama ended up in the “norm confusion”. After I showed in previous chapters how their vital interests were opposed, in the end of this chapter I will show how their normative expectations were irreconcilable.

11.3. Geopolitical Power Competition

The crumbling of the Soviet might in the 1980’s did not inspire as much optimism regarding the end of communism and Soviet Union as we might imagine today. For instance, as late as 1988, the US Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy worried that Soviets were investing more in research than the US and that they might even spread their bases.\textsuperscript{196} However, deep Soviet problems were, of course, quite obvious. The speed of Soviet degradation and the ultimate collapse was, however, not easy to asses. Brzezinski (1989) was quite successful in assessing that simmering ethno-nationalist tensions were going to speed up the degradation of the system.

Gorbachev’s reforms within *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* opened up space for alternative voices. Economic constraints were the primary drivers of those reforms. In late 1980’s, the freedoms allowed by the reforms destabilized party monopoly in Poland and challenged Moscow. Gorbachev was aware that reactivating Brezhnev’s doctrine and intervening militarily

\textsuperscript{196} Among others, members included intellectual heavyweights such as Z. Brzezinski, S. Huntington and H. Kissinger.
in Poland was incompatible with the reforms. Without reforms, the Soviet Union was doomed
Koslowski and Kratochwil (1994, 234—238). Renouncing the intervention in the internal affairs
of East European countries dramatically reduced the capacity of those regimes to suppress
dissent.

The most visible and memorable event following confusion within the communist regimes
was the exodus of East Germans via Hungary, crowned with the fall of the Berlin Wall
(November 9th, 1989). Just a few weeks after, German chancellor Kohl proclaimed a *Ten Points*
plan on German unification. Roughly at the same time, Gorbachev and Bush met in Malta to
discuss the burning issues of the accelerating instability. Managing this instability and its several
sides was going to occupy leaderships in an uneasy web of interests, conflicts and cooperation.
Even though united by common fears, such as ethnic violence explosion and spillover,
socioeconomic unrests and nuclear arms’ safety in such context, leading actors were not going to
give up on their strategic interests. I have identified several fundamental concerns that structured
frenetic diplomatic activities compressed in a rather short amount of time. They were (not in the
order of importance):

1. German unification
2. European integrations
3. Soviet Union’s transformation
4. Nuclear weapons safety
5. Ethnic violence
6. The future of NATO

Managing these “frontlines” (often overlapping with each other) required fast paced crisis
management, coordination and calculation. For example, the fate of the nuclear weapons was
tightly connected with the evolution of the Soviet Union, whether toward some kind of a confederation, total dissolution or even an attempt by hardliners to reverse the decentralizing trends. Both were connected with the danger of ethnic frictions, especially in regard to Ruso-Ukraine relations. As I portray changes revolving around the end of the Cold War, these six points should be kept in mind as highly inter-related processes framing the interests of leaders at that time.

11.3.1. German Unification and Europe

The mass exodus of East Germans via Hungary and the powerful images of Berlin Wall’s destruction forced German chancellor Kohl to come up with the Ten Point plan to unite two German states. However, before that, he had to reassure the French under Mitterrand about German’s loyalty. In the end of November 1989, Mitterrand convened a meeting in Paris, including Kohl and Thatcher (Johansson 2009, 18). His interest was to forge a common position before the Bush-Gorbachev meeting in Malta. Thatcher was interested in the inviolability of borders, meaning no German unification. Kohl emphasized the right of Germans to self-determination, but did not want to discuss the borders issue. Belgian premier Martens recalled how French were demanding full German commitment to European integrations and Kohl was quick to remove their doubts. However, French further insisted on preservation of both NATO and Warsaw Pact. This French position will later fully reveal as Mitterrand’s obsession about balance of power as the only way to contain German domination. At that time there was yet (or still) no talk about change of borders.

Margaret Thatcher was firmly against German reunification and she found an ally in Gorbachev (Savranskaya and Blanton 2013). Since Bush offered Germany “partnership in leadership” in May 1989, the UK government was worried about its position as number one US
ally in Europe. Reunification of Germany only exacerbated those fears. However, UK’s vital interest in keeping good relations with the US prevailed and Thatcher had to accept that Germany was going to be reunited. On the European front, she was following the recipe of Premier Macmillan from 1962, according to which the membership in the EC has been a condition for UK to maintain influence both in Europe and the US (Richardson 1993, 166). In the security realm, UK was trying to utilize WEU as a bridge between EC\(^\text{197}\) and NATO, and not as a substitute for NATO, as French were inclined to do (Ibid, 159).

French scholar Frédéric Bozo (Maddux and Labrosse 2010) holds that France only initially reacted negatively to German reunification; but that Mitterrand by January 1990 realized it was inevitable. He then went on to negotiate the terms of reunification and not whether it was going to happen or not. By March 1991, Mitterrand was to propose deepening of European integrations to the level of “European confederation”, as a means of anchoring Germany and steering its newly acquired power (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994, 246). The political integration was supposed to help prevent German domination, but integration of financial institutions was desired as well. Creation of a single European currency was perhaps the primary goal of the French (Maddux and Labrosse 2010, 4).

Not only was the power of German nationalism driving reunification, but also the sheer size of the new German state was promising to be a boost for German power in the region, as well as globally. Granted, East Germany would be more of a burden in the short term. German leaders were quite aware how this reintegration was perceived by others, with the exception of Americans. Europeans (Western and Eastern), as well as Soviets, had to be reassured and their fears and suspicions had to be removed. The fundamental change of the order that helped keep

\(^{197}\) European Community, after 1993 renamed as the European Union.
Europe peaceful posed at least three core questions: how was this change going to affect European integrations, what will happen with NATO and whether Soviet Union will be able to survive.

Primarily, the instruments to achieve this were economic help for the Soviets and commitment to deeper economic and political integration of the European Community. Regarding East Europeans, West Germany aimed at helping their economic development through promoting their exports (Anderson and Goodman 1993, 38). In security terms, Germans had to finance the Soviet withdrawal from East Germany over a period of 5 years. NATO, WEU\textsuperscript{198} and CSCE\textsuperscript{199} were considered complementary. The future of WEU was to be between the French (neglecting NATO) and American (neglecting WEU) positions (Ibid, 43).

The immediate reaction of Americans to Kohl’s unification plan, following the Malta summit with the Soviets, was contained in “Four Points” document. They boiled down to: upholding the right to self-determination, underlining the German commitment to NATO and EC with an emphasis on the “…legal role and responsibilities of the Allied powers…” (translated as keeping US troops in Germany), respect for the gradual, step-by-step process and lastly, dealing with the question of borders according to Helsinki final act (Rice and Zelikow 2002, 133). Obviously, Bush and Baker were focusing both on preservation of both NATO and stability. They saw German unification as perhaps the most important symbol of the end of the Cold War.

It is obvious that French and the Americans prioritized different institutional mechanisms for checking German power surge. According to Hutchings, the former insisted on European integrations, while the latter pushed NATO to the forefront (Maddux and Labrosse 2010, 13).

\textsuperscript{198} The Western European Union

\textsuperscript{199} The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
This US-French rivalry was a constant before, during, and after this period. One element of Mitterrand’s strategy to influence future German capacity was the survival of Soviet Union, in one way or another, as a counterweight in the East. Kohl feared such a coalition and believed France was trying to “play the Russian card” (Ibid, 13-14). Mitterrand’s visit to East Germany in December 1989 was perceived in the same light by East Germany’s leaders. By the end of 1991, Mitterrand will only reinforce his views, as will be seen in the section about the uncertainties regarding directions of Soviet Union’s transformation.

It is important to have in mind that German unification created some economic consequences that were rapidly putting pressure on United Kingdom and France. Since West Germany was spending great sums of money throughout 1990 and 1991 to help East Germany’s incorporation and stabilization in the common state, this increased pressure on German prices. In order to fight the inflationary pressure, German central bank increased interest rates in the end of 1991. This directly undermined intentions of many other central banks in Europe to fight recession by cutting the interest rates in their countries.

The Bundesbank president, Helmut Schlesinger, tried to calm his counterparts in other countries by reminding them that they were "still autonomous," and could make their own decisions on interest rates. In effect, though, that is not true. The mark is too strong a force to resist, and other central bankers had to follow Germany's lead. Some did so while complaining that Germany was using its new power too roughly. (Kinzer 1991)

The German economic might and its political implications were supposed to be constructively integrated within the larger European integration process. Baum (1996) rightfully
noted that this was a case of “high politics”, devising a grand bargain that was supposed to reduce fears of political domination and find equilibrium. The price that Germany paid in early December 1991 in Maastricht was giving up on the German Mark — the creation of a common European currency by the end of 1990’s (Thumann 1997, 580). This was supposed to enable French and others to have influence over future supply of money that was so vitally important in steering German economic might.

On the other hand, Germany insisted on strengthening EU’s political institutions, clearly preferring to project its newly acquired power under European, rather than German flag. In this sense, Germans coupled progress of European Monetary Union (EMU) and progress of common European political institutions (Schmidt 1993, 24). This was something that French were trying to avoid. The optimal solution for Mitterrand was to gain influence on German economy, without too deep reciprocity in the political sphere. Germans were ready to compromise on this, which caused a great deal of domestic resentment and pressure on Kohl’s leadership (Ibid, 81). In return, it seems that Germans were able to get the French agreement on policy toward Yugoslavia (Baun 1996, 621). UK followed France and bargained to preserve relative independence in key elements of sovereignty, such as monetary policy (Ibid.).

---

200 It is important to keep in mind that the height of diplomatic activity regarding the Yugoslav crisis occurred in tandem with the Maastricht process in the last months of 1991. Yugoslavia thus became one of the chips on the table in these high politics’ negotiations. This episode will be discussed in more details later. Here, it is only important to establish, with a reasonable certainty, the main goals and bargains which were at the same time setting the framework for the resolution of the Yugoslav problem.
The settling of the further German role within the European integrations process was largely focusing on economic and political spheres. However, security affairs were largely stretched between the two strategic poles. One was Mitterrand’s obsession with historical analogies and the resulting imperative of preserving a solid power in the East commanded from Moscow. Another was Washington’s imperative of preserving NATO’s relevance in the area and preventing both chaotic disintegration of Soviet space and a reversal of decentralizing trends (under either Russian nationalists or communist hardliners). In the next section I will discuss the strategies of Soviet Union’s transformation and the reasoning of the main actors. After that, I will discuss the relevant imperatives of NATO’s post-Cold War role.

11.3.2. Soviet Union’s Peaceful Transformation

Soviet Union can hardly be considered a single actor in this transitional period, although Gorbachev seemed both the central leader and a symbol of the “Center”. Rising nationalism in Baltic States and Caucasus had already claimed lives in the 1989-1991, but the main problem was to be the competition between the rising leader of Russia, Boris Yeltsin and Gorbachev. Gorbachev never supported the idea of the breakup of Soviet Union, while Yeltsin was eager to get rid of the Soviet burden.

In January of 1990, Gorbachev stepped against Lithuanian secession and intervened in Azerbaijan to stop anti-Armenian and anti-Russian outbursts. The tension between the need to maintain Center’s authority and the economic and political costs of intervening led to the unilateral Soviet reductions of forces in Eastern Europe in April 1990 (“The Direction of Change…” 1990). In mid-March, Baker visited Moscow and met with Baltic States’ leaders. Two months later, Latvia declared independence, again with Gorbachev’s rejection.

In July 1990, in an attempt to both accept grievances of the republics and slow down their
secessions with the ultimate goal to stop them, Gorbachev initiated talks about the new state structure. The new form was supposed to be a loose federation under the name “Union of Sovereign States”. By November, the draft proposal circulated among the leaderships. At that time, in the fall of 1990, CIA estimated that Yugoslavia will collapse. However, as the intelligence analyst Marten Van Leuven recorded:” “The administration did not want to hear about federal states coming apart. The U.S. government was trying to keep Gorbachev in power in a federal state” (Kennedy 2004).

By January of 1991, Baltic States, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova already signaled rejection of Gorbachev’s initiative for transformation (and preservation) of common state. That month, Soviet special forces intervened in Baltic republics, further aggravating Moscow’s relationship with them. By mid-March, a referendum on Gorbachev’s initiative yielded optimistic results in the remaining nine republics, leading to the Novo-Ogaryovo “Nine plus One Agreement”. Georgia, however, declared independence in April.

The Baltic question was a chronic sore point in the Soviet-American relations, since US never recognized Baltic States as part of the USSR. This point resurfaced in the course of Soviet collapse. For example, in the summer of 1991, Bush reiterated that: “We are for the independence of the Baltic States, for example, in the Soviet Union. The way in which they were incorporated into the Soviet Union has never been recognized by the [U.S.]… And the Soviet Union knows that we have a longstanding view that the Baltics should be free” (Bush 1991a).

In the same speech, two important parallels also appeared that were interwoven with the ongoing Soviet crisis. First, Bush was asked about the violent events in Yugoslavia, but he quickly made the parallel with Soviet Union’s troubles. It is inescapable impression that the two processes were viewed within the same normative framework of what constitutes the appropriate
behavior. Second, Bush repeatedly invited Soviet and Yugoslav actors to settle their accounts peacefully and through dialogue. The same two imperatives were reiterated in the London Economic Summit Political Declaration, “Strengthening the International Order” (Bush 1991b) again applied to both Soviet Union (point 12) and Yugoslavia (point 13). However, Yugoslavia was at that time already experiencing serious militarized confrontations. The Declaration invited Yugoslavs to respect Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter for the New Europe, as if already implying that the secessionist republics (Slovenia and Croatia) were independent and enjoying protection from external intervention under the Helsinki Final Act’s provisions. Soviets were, on the other hand invited to “create a new union, based on consent not coercion” (Ibid.).

The next day, in a G-7 meeting in London, Gorbachev explicitly warned against extremes, both total disintegration and absolute unity (NSA 1991). He pointed to Yugoslavia and warned against repeating the same in Soviet Union, while moving to show how referendum in republics showed support for his new Union. Delors201 and Kohl were skeptical about the way Ukraine was going, while Mitterrand forcefully invited other leaders to trust Gorbachev and support his efforts, invoking his crucial role in enabling unification of Germany.

It seems Bush was sharing Mitterrand’s design for the USSR, if not motives, when he warned Ukrainians on August 1st 1991 that:”... freedom is not the same as independence. Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred. We will support those who want to build democracy” (“After the Summit…” 1991). The message was perceived as an attempt to discourage Ukrainians from full independence, thus earning a label “Chicken Kiev” speech. However, Bush was actually trying

---

201 European Commission president
to support Ukraine into entering a new Union treaty. Its signing Gorbachev scheduled for August 20th.

Gorbachev’s reform was perceived by Soviet hardliners as a critical step toward Soviet Union’s demise and they attempted coup in mid-August 1991. Yeltsin seized the moment and helped defeat of the putschists. The coup itself, however, triggered more concern in the republics about centripetal potential within the Center and severely damaged the prospects of the new Union. Together with the mixed signals regarding Ukraine’s position toward the proposed Union, Gorbachev was losing the momentum to get the republics’ leaderships on board for the reform. Anyway, Bush’s administration, though not without dissenting voices, will continue to officially support Gorbachev’s reforms, while at the same time it was maintaining contacts with republics (Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 33-35).

By the end of August 1991, the republics continued proclaiming their independence. In the words of George Bush in a press-conference: “...this [was] moving very, very fast” (Bush 1991c). Bush continued, emphasizing the need for order together with the American respect for people’s aspirations for freedom and independence. He added that the “big picture” view was needed, since the events in the USSR had “effects on Yugoslavia”. Bush underlined that he was not going to contribute to “some kind of anarchy”. The confusing and contradicting news coming from the republics pressured Bush to balance between his administration’s support for self-determination of peoples and the need to maintain basic order. For example, Ukraine’s population voted 80% in favor of the new union, only to follow up with the declaration of independence. Bush simply admitted he was not able to know what did that mean for the new union. He noted how republics’ economies and infrastructures were connected with the Center and that, if they were to decide to evolve in a union, there had to be some form of an agreement
adopted.

The September 1991 National Intelligence Estimate reviewed basic American concern about the immediate future of the Soviet Union (CIA 1991a). Three scenarios were discussed (Ibid, 190-191): confederation, loose association and disintegration, while Ukraine was considered the key republic to influence the developments. Disintegration was considered the worst option, since it would have cut economic ties (Ukraine depended on energy and raw materials from Russia, while Russia depended on Ukraine’s food production) and, even worse, inflame ethnic Russians and “Russified Ukrainians” against total independence (Ibid, 203). Kravchuk was considered the best candidate for Ukraine’s president, since he wanted to weaken ties with Moscow, but not break them. A confederation was evaluated as the best scenario for the Western interests, since it would have provided a stable environment for negotiations about nuclear arms and ethnic relations (Ibid, 205).

It should be kept in mind that the other extreme, that is, centralization of power and reversal of the loosening trends, presented a fundamental concern for the American administration at least until the August putsch was defeated. The April 1991 CIA report (CIA 1991b, 114—116) estimated that return of authoritarian central rule for which “the preparations for dictatorial rule have already begun” (Ibid, 114) and an attempt of putsch would have pushed republics toward more nationalism and resistance.

In early September, Bush reiterated the official position about Baltic States’ independence, inviting Soviet leadership to accept it (Bush 1991d). Moreover, he said that full recognition of independence required removal of Soviet troops first, which was already happening and which he found encouraging. Further on, Bush pointed out economic and structural connections required an agreement between the Center and the republics, especially in regard to energy and
raw materials. Bush recognized the inter-ethnic problems between Azeris and Armenians and in Moldova, but did not see “much of a role” for the US. Again, the theme of Yugoslavia seemed intertwined with that of the USSR. Bush did not share views with those Europeans suggesting recognition of Slovenia and Croatia “if the fighting continues” (Ibid.). United States recognized the independence of Baltic States the same day.

Two weeks later, German chancellor Kohl invited Soviet Union to adopt a treaty restructuring the relations within the union (Bush 1991e). Even though he supported “federal framework”, clearly it was going to be a much looser union, since Kohl invited “as many Republics as possible” to sign.202 Without a new treaty that was supposed to set up “sound and stable framework”, the West was not able to help much.

October and November saw increased pressure from Cheney, US Defense Secretary, and his circle toward the breakup of the Soviet Union (Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 35). In the same time, Bush was coming to terms with that, but still cared very much about peaceful dissolution, avoiding Ruso- Ukrainian friction and possible violence (Ibid.).

The breakup of the USSR went directly against Mitterrand’s strategic imperative of preserving Soviet Union in some form, as he said to Gorbachev on November 2, 1991 (Savranskaya 2011). The visitor warned his host:

A certain mentality has formed that creates a centrifugal tendency. It is encouraged from the outside. France’s position is not to succumb to opportunistic circumstances. I am using absolutely cold reasoning: it is in France’s interest to have an integral force in Eastern Europe. If there is a collapse, we will go back to what you had before Peter the Great. It would be a historic catastrophe and would

202 My italics
contradict France’s interests. Centuries of history teach us that France needs an ally to maintain a balance in Europe. Any collapse of integrity in the East would bring instability. That is why we do not want to encourage separatist ambitions. Furthermore, we are great friends of today’s Germany. But it would be very dangerous if there would be a soft underbelly in the North or East of Germany. Because the Germans will always have a tendency and a temptation to penetrate these areas. (Savranskaya 2011, 150—151)

On December 1st, Ukraine held both presidential elections and a referendum on independence that was already declared in August. The referendum showed an overwhelming support for independence, while Kuchma was elected president. Yeltsin hurried to congratulate, while Gorbachev both congratulated and invited Kuchma to support creation of the new union. Gorbachev hopes were shattered with the information that Russia, Belarus and Ukraine signed a treaty — the “Belavezha Accords” — effectively ending the existence of the USSR. Gorbachev condemned the move as dangerous and illegal. Yeltsin was able to finally emerge as the undisputed Russian leader, not having to share authority with the Soviet “Center”.

As part of the agreement, a new organization was to be formed, “The Commonwealth of Independent States”. Just a week prior to the signing of the new treaty, James Baker visited Moscow where Gorbachev finally had to accept the dissolution of the Soviet Union by the New Year. It seems highly unlikely that Russia, Ukraine and Belarus would have signed an agreement like that without prior understanding about the fundamental rules, such as inviolability of borders, the rights of ethnic and national groups (especially Russians in Ukraine) and the future of the nuclear weapons.
One of the Baker mission’s primary goals was to help forge an agreement to remove nuclear weapons. This problem has always been present in the American policy discussion about Soviet collapse. As Haran (1995) shows, drawing from Baker (1995), securing removal of nuclear weapons from other republics to Russia was a goal of primary importance. American recognition of independence and financial help depended on an agreement regarding nuclear weapons. Domestically, ratification of the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty and the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991 (Nunn-Lugar Act) went hand in hand in establishing a coherent future American policy in this matter.

11.3.3. Managing Ethnic Frictions

While the fate of nuclear weapons was in the domain of political elites’ decisions, inter-ethnic relations were a more unstable policy domain. It simply involved millions of impoverished, concerned citizens, uncertain about their rights in the changing political and security landscape.

The specific position of Baltic States, which were never recognized by the West as a legal part of the Soviet Union, seemed like a primary theater of inter-ethnic clashes. Russian migrations into Baltic region during Soviet Union drastically changed the ethnic balance structure. As the economic situation was deteriorating, Western observers located the gravest danger in the frictions of Russians and non-Russians which and possible Soviet intervention to quell such disorder (CIA 1989a, 47). In the time of Perestroika, the more interventions from the Center meant less reforms and a general risk of return to Brezhnev’s doctrine.

As Scowcroft (National Security Advisor) summed up in 1989, it was not necessarily in the interest of the US to have Soviet Union disintegrate. It was so because of the risks of the ethnic civil wars and spillover effects (such as mass refugee flows to the West), as well as loss of
control over nuclear weapons, as I mentioned above (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994, 221-222).

The worry about possible nationalist flares was present throughout the crisis. As I mentioned before, not only decentralizing trends (accelerated after the August coup attempt), but also threats to recentralization (until August coup), could have escalated to a full civil war (CIA 1991b, 116). Not only that the August coup influenced non-Russian ethnic groups, but at the same time, the Russian nationalist movement in Crimea emerged and threatened stability following adoption of independence by Ukraine (Jackson 1994), though, granted, majority Russian-speakers did not contest independence.

The situation in Moldova, in 1991, was deteriorating as local Soviet troops supported pro-Russian region of Transnistria severing ties with the Moldovan government over closer relationship with Romania. Kramer (2008, 9) assessed Russian troops intervention as a pressure on Moldova to preserve closer ties with Moscow than Bucharest and Europe. Jackson (1994), on the other hand, found Yeltsin unable to control policy in Moldova because of Gen. Lebed who was in charge of troops there and had backing in Russian parliament to defy Moldova’s attempts to unify with Romania. Jackson thus reasonably concluded that Moscow’s policy toward post-Soviet space during Yeltsin’s time was stretched between the need to maintain good relations with the West (demanding more economic aid and investments) while at the same time trying to preserve its influence by interfering in internal ethnic conflicts, from Caucasus to Moldova.

Mirroring such Russian imperatives, Americans were forced to carefully cooperate with both Moscows (Gorbachev’s and Yeltsin’s) as well as other republics, attempting to find a middle ground between the imperatives of preventing recentralization and total disintegration. Rash reactions to provocative statements would have been dangerous. One such highly explosive statement was Yeltsin’s threat in the end of August 1991 (following the failed coup and
Ukraine’s declaration of independence), that Russia might take back Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. At the same time, Gorbachev was reminding his Western interlocutors about Yugoslavian scenario and how it must be prevented in Russia at any cost.

An example of cautious American handling of the delicate and multi-faceted approach can be recognized in the late October 1991 meeting at the top US-Soviet level in Madrid. After reiterating support to the Center and reforms, even and especially at the time of the coup, Baker softly complained:

Last week we received alarming signals about the content of Yeltsin’s upcoming speech, including… a statement that Russia will protect Russian minorities wherever they might be, etc. We appealed… and asked: what is happening, why is such a speech being made on the eve of a peace conference on the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict? This would undermine the Soviet Union’s efforts. We expressed the hope that it would not happen. We were surprised that on the question of minorities there was no mention of the Helsinki process. It appears that the republics will be concerned, and you will have to regulate this process.

(Savranskaya 2011, 146)

Yeltsin’s periodical radical rhetoric was making nervous not only Ukrainians and other republics, but Americans as well. Baker’s reminder about Helsinki process most likely was aiming not only at the right of peoples to self-determination, but also at the inviolability of borders. More and more, borders of republics were increasingly equated with international borders. This will prove of crucial importance for Yugoslav policy of the Europeans and Americans. In November 1991, National Intelligence Estimate repeated and confirmed previous
estimates concerning high risk of inter-ethnic conflicts whether triggered by disintegration or “regression”, which meant recentralization (CIA 1991c).

In the early December 1991 meeting, just days before “Belavezha Accords” and the end of the USSR, Gorbachev warned Bush again about not supporting independence of Soviet republics, because, as Chernyaev remembered in his memoirs:

“…independence means separation” and separation is “Yugoslavia” squared, “Yugoslavia” x10! Bush was very careful, twice assuring [Gorbachev] that he will not do anything that would put “Michael” and “the Center” in an awkward position. Once he even said [he would not do] “something that would impede the process of the Union’s reunification.” (Savranskaya 2011, 174)

At that meeting, the question of Yeltsin’s ambitions toward Crimea and Donbas resurfaced again. However, parallel to this meeting, Yeltsin and Kuchma were forging “Belavezha Accords”. Yeltsin, in fact, informed Bush in late November 1991 that he was going to recognize Ukraine’s independence if the December 1st referendum yields more than 70% Ukrainians in favor of it. Bush welcomed such a change, since it meant that Yeltsin abandoned threats to Ukraine’s territorial integrity. But this also meant that Ukraine and Russia were going to sideline “the Center” in forging new union, which posed problems of different kind, but seemed to remove the threat of Ruso-Ukrainian friction (Plokhy 2014, Ch. 15). Throughout the 1990’s however, Yeltsin will suffer pressures from the opposition regarding Russian areas in Ukraine (Jackson 1994). The crisis in Ruso-Ukrainian relations will return in the spring of 1992, due to Russia’s economic policy and dire effects it had on Ukraine. It proved impossible to divorce political, economic and ethnic frictions. After the 1993 referendum which solidified Yeltsin’s
power, Russia resumed advocating Russian minority rights in the post-Soviet space, thus unnerving newly independent states, especially in the Baltics and Ukraine.

11.3.4. NATO’s Relevance

The Soviet Union emerged as a colossal military might in the end of World War II. At the beginning, not many people in the West thought that the East-West confrontation was inevitable (Gaddis 2005). However, the communist agitation and infiltration in Europe, especially Mediterranean area, prompted a unified Western response. The decades of psychologically draining Cold War rivalry identified NATO with the Soviet threat. Hence, the crumbling of the communism, in the minds of many, was the same as the crumbling of justification for NATO’s existence. A US analysis of European political attitudes from September 1989 was already clear about that (CIA 1989b).

The history of NATO skepticism in the West, however, had deeper roots, primarily in the French foreign policy. Ever since French-American frictions of the 1950’s and de Gaulle’s withdrawal from NATO’s Military Command Structure in the mid-1960’s, France struggled for more maneuvering room. In the 1980’s, Mitterrand was largely following this goal by exploiting German division and imposing French leadership on the continent. In the same time, he worked to have France exploit the USSR as counterweight in both European and world theaters (Soutou 1996, 320). 203

German public protested strongly against new American nuclear missiles on its soil, pressuring Kohl toward more neutral foreign policy. In mid-1980’s, French initiative for deeper bilateral relations with Germany was aiming to strengthen European independence between the

---

203 Page numbers for Soutou’s book are according to the Serbian edition.
With Gorbachev’s reforms initiated in 1985, French goal was to use the momentum and, by distancing Europe from NATO, push Gorbachev to relax control over Eastern Europe. Arms talks between the US and the USSR in the 1986 led to the agreement to remove intermediate nuclear missiles from Europe. Germany, under massive public pressure, removed the existing American missiles. However, Kohl had to compensate for that by turning to the French and proposing formation of a joint French-German brigade. The response came with a condition: joint brigade should go together with the joint monetary and economic council (Ibid, 325-328). However, Kohl caused a lot of resentment in the UK and the US when he refused to make a deal on short range missiles in 1989 and thus showed new German self-confidence (Whitney 1991).

On the other front, as Gorbachev was pulling out of Eastern Europe, he was facing grave problems with food shortages and lack of hard currency, for which he had to turn to the West. Even under those circumstances, the USSR had some leverage, mainly due to its impressive military posture and energy supplies supplying the West Europe uninterrupted. Gorbachev was firmly against NATO enlargement, so much so that he agreed on German reunification only after he was guaranteed by Kohl and US ambassador to Moscow Matlock that East Germany was not going to be used to station non-German NATO troops. However, in years after, this episode will prove to be much more controversial (Kramer 2009; Matlock 2014; Pifer 2014). As Vladislav Zubok (2003, 239) summed it up: “Germany became part of NATO, while the USSR did not get any firm commitments about future structure of European security and Moscow’s role in it.”

The essence boils down to the fact that NATO membership for East European countries was not even discussed in 1990 — only the fate of East Germany. However, that in itself is
evidence that Soviet leaders did not even contemplate the possibility of NATO expanding to include countries that were, at that time, still members of the Warsaw Pact. The position of Eastern European countries was not specified in the 1990 because no one expected the disintegration of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. Once that happened, as US ambassador Matlock (2014) said, the circumstances changed dramatically compared to the 1990 deal. And each side was left to interpret the deal as it saw appropriate. Hence, it is clear that, as the collapse of the Soviet Union was becoming more and more obvious toward the end of the 1991, the US planners had to conceptualize a strategy that would take into account both Russian and French reservations about NATO’s role.

In their December 1990 meeting, Kohl and Mitterrand promoted WEU’s autonomy which caused concern in Washington, but in October 1991 both leaders again came out with similar position (Nye and Keohane 1993, 119). The French were torn between their capabilities and their ambitions. Unlike British and Germans, French were not welcoming US military domination. Frictions with Germans came over the role of the WEU, where French had larger autonomy than in NATO, while Germans preferred NATO structure (Hoffmann 1993, 119). To balance against these pressures (economic from Germany and security from the US), France saw its chance in building the EMU (Baun 1996, 623).205

As Biermann (2007, 37) described, the US and the UK “…mentored NATO, the Russians CSCE, the French an autonomous European capacity through WEU, and the Germans mediated in between.” Moreover, “[s]ince no central authority was available to prescribe positions in the new emerging system, unilateralism prevailed… The new security “architecture” in Europe was not designed, but emerged bottom-up” (Ibid, 54).

205 The European Monetary Union
In the mid-1991, this inner NATO tension was visible in the joint press conference of Bush and Kohl (Bush 1991f). While the former was very resolute (“we don’t want to pull back into some sphere of isolation”), the latter was more sensitive: “…in spite of the fact that the situation has obviously changed and that indisputably the danger has decreased, I still say and I still think that NATO makes sense, albeit in an adjusted form. It will have to develop. But I still think that NATO should remain” (Ibid.). Responding to a question about the French initiatives regarding European separate security structures, Bush’s answer captures the atmosphere of suspicions in the early 1990’s:

So, let's talk about it. I think this whole concept of another arrangement for European security is not put forward in an attempt to drive NATO out of business. Now, if I'm wrong I'd be concerned about it. But I don't think I'm wrong. So, I'm going to wait until I talk to the President of France about that. In other words, we're not worried about it and we don't think there's any cabal against the United States and NATO, or people trying to send us a message that we're no longer required for Europe's security. (Bush 1991a)

In fact, in the November 2nd 1991 meeting, Mitterrand and Gorbachev largely agreed that American ambitions to turn NATO into a political and not keep it as a military alliance, “would be very bad” (Savranskaya 2011, 153). Despite French reservations, the US-German understanding was forged toward the end of the 1991. In October, Baker and Genscher furthered the idea of institutionalizing communication between NATO and Central and East

206 My italics.

207 German minister of foreign affairs
European states. After NATO’s future has been confirmed in the Rome and Brussels meetings in the end of 1991208, Baker-Genscher initiative took shape in the founding of North Atlantic Cooperation Council.209 The trans-Atlantic suspicions flared again with the Franco-German initiative in the summer of 1992 (“The Petersburg Tasks”) aimed at strengthening joint Franco-German military capability. Bush administration again reacted strongly against weakening of NATO, but got reassurances from Kohl that Europeans were just strengthening European component within NATO, not out of it (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 435).

CSCE was supposed to get a more prominent role in stabilizing Eastern Europe. Gorbachev hoped that CSCE was going to fill in the security vacuum in Eastern Europe (Wallander and Prokop 1993, 95) and NATO’s July 1990 London Declaration also emphasized the increased role CSCE was supposed to play in stabilizing the colossal political, economic and security transition.

However, dramatic decrease in the capacity of Soviet Union to sustain its control over Soviet republics evolved into a wave of secessions. Initiated in the Baltic states in the 1990, by the end of 1991 all Soviet republics declared independence. This disintegrative process was coupled with the initial violent suppression of secessionism and ethnic conflicts, ranging from attacks on Russian and other minorities to full wars in Caucasus and later Moldova (Jackson 1994). These tensions enabled hardliners to pressure both Soviet and later Russian leaderships into interventionist and neo-imperial posturing that threatened the independence of the new states (Hill and Jewett 1994; Mearsheimer 1994).

Donaldson and Nogee (2002, 125-127) observed how Russian foreign policy thinking was


209 In fact, already London declaration invited Warsaw Pact members to establish regular diplomatic ties with NATO (APP 07/06/ 1990).
divided along three lines already by 1992. “Liberals” (Kozyrev\textsuperscript{210} and Gaidar\textsuperscript{211}) prioritized good relations with the West, transition to western type political system and abandoning of a special role for Russia. “Pragmatic nationalists” (Stankevich and Migranian\textsuperscript{212}, Kokoshin\textsuperscript{213}) advocated declaring all post-post-Soviet space as Russia’s zone of special interests, including the right to defend Russians in the near abroad, though not questioning the new borders. Lastly, “the fundamentalists”, such as the extreme ethno-nationalist Zhirinovskii and communist Ziuganov, were openly anti-Western in their expansionist views, desiring recreation of Russian might. By the spring of 1993, Yeltsin’s administration adopted a foreign policy strategy closest to the views of “pragmatic nationalists” (Ibid, 129).

Despite the publicly celebrated friendly relations between Clinton and Yeltsin, it is rather reasonable to conclude that lack of trust was all pervasive. Gorbachev was tolerated and carefully supported in his liberal, and most importantly, decentralizing reforms. He was suspicious, though, for his intention to revitalize the Soviet Union’s ideology and not fundamentally abandon it. Yeltsin’s decision to abolish the USSR was executed very quickly, thus sparking ethnic frictions which sucked in subsequent Russian interventions. Those interventions further justified Eastern Europeans’ fears and mounted pressure on Clinton administration to speed up enlargement efforts.

In the fall of 1993 NATO put forward a “Partnership for Peace” initiative. It included most of former communist countries with the aim of building trust through cooperation with NATO.

\textsuperscript{210} Foreign minister under Yeltsin

\textsuperscript{211} Economy and finance minister and acting premier under Yeltsin.

\textsuperscript{212} Yeltsin’s advisors

\textsuperscript{213} Deputy defense minister under Yeltsin
Clearly, that was already a step in the direction of enlargement. Nye and Keohane (1993, 118) summed up three main US objectives as: (1) European defense must be led by NATO, (2) European integration must remain open and (3) continued global liberalization.

Even though it was the Clinton’s administration that made the push toward enlargement to the Eastern Europe (Goldgeier 1999), influential policymaking circles in the Bush administration were already promoting similar ideas by 1992. By the end of George H.W. Bush’s presidency, two documents of strategic character were created by two “schools of thought” within the administration. The first one leaked to New York Times in 1992 and gained notoriety for its realpolitik approach to restructuring the world order. Especially controversial was the fact that this Cheney-Wolfowitz plan aimed at preventing the rise of any challenger to US supremacy on any continent, including Europe (DoD 1992; Chollet and Goldgeier 2008). Naturally, this could not have possibly meant any reduction in the role of NATO. Bush himself was very explicit about it, as I have shown before. What is intriguing, then, is how the authors imagined steering European and (post)Soviet developments in the US interest.

Gen. Wesley Clark recorded (2014, 39-41) how Paul Wolfowitz told him that the war on Iraq exposed Soviets’ lack of resolve to confront America. The moment was right for strategic offensive, especially in the Middle East, before another power emerges. Clark explained later neoconservative aggressive policy under George W. Bush as the result of ideas conceived during the presidency of Bush senior. However, Frank Harvey (2012) evidenced that, as much as neoconservatives were aggressive in their unilateral interventionism, Clinton’s administration as well was dominated by persons sharing similar foreign policy style, if not the same justifications. Put together, it seems both Clinton’s “human rights interventionism” and Bush Jr.’s “democracy promotion” were just ideological articulations of a deeper (structural) drive for maximizing
power. This approach would support the theories of “offensive realists” such as Mearsheimer (2001).

The other plan, more sophisticated and attentive to the changed global environment and novel challenges, was created by Eagleburger in a form of a memo written for Warren Zimmerman, the new State Secretary in Clinton’s first administration (Eagleburger 1993). Even though Eagleburger paid more attention to economy, ethnic instability, “Third World” and environment, his goal in strategic sense is not much different from Cheney-Wolfowitz plan. When it comes to Europe and post-communist countries, the goals were: to maintain Germany within the “web of multilateral institutions”; let Europeans “stumble a little in search of their own security identity” while knowing when to “act more decisively in pursuit of our own vision of trans-Atlantic security” and “recognize that the real test today of NATO’s continued relevance and the future of European security architecture is in the Balkans…” Building on the expected developments in the Balkans, Eagleburger proposed momentum to be captured in mid-1993, with the goals of building a new security partnership with Europe, “containing and integrating the East” and “retaining Germany” (Ibid, 7).

It seems quite reasonable to conclude that NATO promotion and enlargement as a continuing pillar of US foreign policy in the Eurasian region during Clinton’s presidency was a continuation of strategic goals set forth by George H.W. Bush’s top foreign policy advisers.

I thank Dr. Svetlana Savranskaya from the National Security Archive at the George Washington University for her kind help in retrieving this file.

Eagleburger was warning against further complications in the relationship with Europeans as they were becoming more autonomous and united in the following period. He especially feared their economic protectionism (Nye and Keohane 1993, 114).
The plausibility of this continuity has been recognized by Goldgeier (1999) in his highly praised study of NATO enlargement. Goldgeier described how strengthening North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was one of primary goals for Warren Christopher, as stated in the spring of 1993. The new State Secretary was: “…essentially recycling ideas the Bush administration had been developing in 1991-1992” (Ibid, 22). The Bosnian war was an opportunity for former Cold War foes to cooperate within NACC in joint planning, training and actions.216 As Christopher underlined:

There can be no better way to establish a new and secure Europe than to have soldiers from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary and the other new democracies work with NATO to address their most pressing security problems… [and] ensure that all European peace-keeping operations are conducted in accordance with UN and CSCE… principles” (Goldgeier 1999, 22)

Throughout the 1993, senior US foreign policy officials, such as Anthony Lake, emphasized the need for NATO to “assume a broader role”, if it did not want to “lose public support” as a “vital bond of transatlantic and European security” (Goldgeier 1999, 38). Goldgeier concluded that Christopher and others were right:

…if NATO could not solve Bosnia, it could not justify enlarging to solve other Bosnias. And U.S. leadership in 1995 to bring peace to a conflict that had raged

---

216 NACC would soon branch into Partnership for Peace (1994) and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (1997).
for four years made the Europeans more willing to accede to U.S. demands on NATO policies regarding the... enlargement. The United States would have been unlikely to convince anyone that NATO needed to enlarge in the absence of a solution to the war in Bosnia. (Goldgeier 1999, 173)

NATO slowly imposed itself as a dominant security organization, while CSCE had a symbolic role that will fade away with the strengthening of “Partnership for Peace” (Weitz 1993, 350). NATO enlargement toward the end of the 1990’s crowned persistent struggle for preservation and strengthening of NATO as a vital instrument of US foreign policy. Biermann (2007, 37-38) summarized how rivalry between security organizations subsided: “Just as the Soviet threat had pulled Americans and Europeans together in NATO, so the external challenge of the Balkan wars forced the security institutions to close ranks”.

This, of course, was met with resentment in Moscow. In late 1993, Primakov, Russia’s foreign intelligence chief, warned against NATO enlargement just before December elections. He threatened Central and East European countries with the Russian “wall” if they were to move toward NATO membership (Donaldson and Nogee 2002, 243). Soon after, the Russian ultra-nationalist Zhirinovskii scored a major success in the December 1993 elections. Several initiatives were undertaken to deal with Russian resentment and help Yeltsin keep the course of cooperation in the face of occasional outbursts of anti-Western sentiments in parliament.217

Goldgeier (1999, 170-171) listed three rationales guiding supporters of NATO enlargement. Influential RAND analyst Ronald Asmus (his parents were born in Germany) and Richard Holbrooke viewed NATO enlargement as a way to anchor Germany within the West. A

---

217 For example, this includes 1994 Partnership for Peace and 1997 NATO-Russia Charter. After Putin assumed office, in 2002, NATO-Russia Council was formed.
strong influence on the latter was Volker Rühe, German minister of defense. President Clinton, his national security adviser Anthony Lake and Strobe Talbott valued NATO enlargement as a way to consolidate “Europe’s East” and prevent future Bosnias. Lastly, the Cold War scholars-practitioners Brzezinski and Kissinger, together with powerful senators Hank Brown and Jesse Helms, promoted enlargement as a way to prevent Russia’s imperial comeback.

By and large, there seems to be an agreement that the Bosnian war fully assured Europeans about the need to rely on NATO for European safety (Goldgeier 1999, 4). For example, by the end of 1994, the French foreign policy was increasingly coming to terms with NATO’s primacy, which was confirmed in the defense white paper. Granted, not even then did the French abandon their quest for a special European position, but they largely accepted NATO framework (MacLeod 1997, 252). Berenskoetter and Giegerich (2010) concluded that the crisis in Bosnia defeated EU’s civilian crisis management approach. For Clinton, the Yugoslav civil war was

---

218 Clinton’s National Security Strategy (published in the spring of 1994), was titled “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement”.

219 Brzezinski’s intellectual influence on Clinton’s administration was fully recognized by Goldgeier (1999, 48). Brzezinski (2000, 41) summed up US’s strategic preferences as, (1) “ideally”, politically united Europe firmly committed to NATO and willing to fully contribute financially to NATO’s upgrades and out of area operations, while complying to American geopolitical preferences regarding Russia and the Middle East. However, (2) “good” enough would have been a Europe as an economic rival enlarging European interdependence without enough “real political-military independence”, while tolerating US deployment on the “European periphery of Eurasia”.
very much associated with confirming NATO’s increased relevance. One of four goals associated with the war in Yugoslavia was “to confirm NATO’s central role in post-post-Cold War Europe” (Clinton 1994, 21). Also, the vocabulary is employing words such as “leadership”, “leading role” and “led the way”, emphasizing in addition the expectation from self and others to accept NATO’s predominant role in solving this and any other crisis.

11.3.5. Resulting Norms

The international processes I discussed above were driven both by elites’ interests and legitimate grievances of populations in communist countries. That interaction produced significant normative repercussions I will try to summarize in this section. The articulation of grievances and their penetration into the public space of communist countries was, indeed, easier after Gorbachev initiated his reforms. However, the trend started earlier and itself was a product of diplomatic wrestling in the 1970’s that culminated in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. This document was the result of Soviet insistence on legitimating their territorial gains in Eastern Europe through formal recognition of status quo and American insistence on recognition of fundamental human rights in communist countries.

The essence of the diplomatic deal was, essentially, in finding a compromise between two kinds of norms. The “sovereignty” and “territorial integrity” norms were put forward by the Soviets to protect communist regimes from interfering into their domestic affairs. The “human rights” and “self-determination” norms were put forward by the Americans to strengthen dissident groups within the rigid communist systems. As Henry Kissinger remarked:

Basket III was destined to play a major role in the disintegration of the Soviet satellite orbit… [it] obliged all signatories to practice and foster certain
enumerated basic human right. Its Western drafters hoped that the provisions would create an international standard that would inhibit Soviet repression of dissidents and revolutionaries… Both Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia and Lech Walesa in Poland [were] using these provisions, both domestically and internationally, to undermine not only Soviet domination but the communist regimes in their own countries… (Kissinger 1994, 759)

The slow erosion of communist legitimacy in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s was only accelerated with “Glasnost” and “Perestroika”. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, which caught everyone by surprise, the immediate guidance was needed, both to steer the emotionally charged masses and to enable coordination among leaderships.

As evidence shows, the impetus for the first stabilization efforts following the collapse of the Wall came from a Soviet foreign policy circle around Gorbachev, but without his knowledge (Savranskaya and Blanton 2009). Namely, one of Gorbachev’s advisors, Falin, recommended to Kohl that the option of a confederation between East and West Germany is seriously considered. The logic was that confederation was the way to preempt total collapse of East German system, which could have had very negative repercussions on stability of other communist countries.

Kohl then devised his “Ten Points” speech and delivered it to the Bundestag on November 28th 1991 (Kohl 2015). The speech started by showing respect for Gorbachev and “common European house” commitment from the joint German-Soviet declaration from June 1991. In point six, Kohl confirmed “absolute respect for the integrity and security of every state”, as if further reassuring Soviets, but then continued: “Every state has the right to choose freely its own political and social system. I should like to mention absolute respect for the principles and norms of international law, especially respect for the right of national self-determination.” The right to
self—determination and the “realization of human rights” went hand in hand to secure free elections in East Germany and then, what Kohl announced as the ultimate goal — reunification.

The right to self-determination and human rights in general were further promoted in the “Declaration on Central and Eastern Europe” in Strasbourg summit of the European Community in December 1989 and in the 1990 “Charter of Paris for a New Europe” of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The former highlighted: “Everywhere a powerful aspiration toward freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, prosperity, social justice and peace is being expressed. The people are clearly showing their will to take their own destiny in hand and to choose the path of their development” (European Council 2015). The latter, while further celebrating human rights in all domains, also said: “We reaffirm the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States” (CSCE 1990, 5).220

These stipulations should not be dismissed as the elites’ discourse, to the contrary. The feeling of the right to choose has been massively exercised by East Germans when they were “voting by their feet” and fleeing to the West via Hungary. That plight was one of major causes behind the fall of the Berlin Wall. Another example can be found in mass protests in Leipzig in October and a gigantic rally in Berlin in November 1989. Even before the East Germans, up to a two million people in Baltic States joined hands in a historic “Chain of Freedom” performance in August 1989. Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians literally joined hands, forming a human chain connecting their three republics, protesting the Soviet occupation following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. These were powerful symbolic expressions of the popular will and the victory

220 My italics
of the human rights and the self-determination norms in the hearts of the peoples.

No matter how strong and justified the feeling of the right to self-determination was, it was still operating under the framework of respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries. This will prove crucial in the case of Yugoslavia. As Chernyaev noted in his diary on July 6th 1991 (Savranskaya 2011, 80):” [Gorbachev] and Kohl had a big discussion on Yugoslavia. They did not come to an agreement. Kohl was frowning, because M.S. pushed: non-interference in internal affairs, trouble if the CSCE becomes a tool for intervention, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders… overall our standard set with a view to the Baltics!”

On the other hand, German Bundestag has fully embraced the self-determination as a norm against an oppressive regime. The epic examples of Polish, Baltic, East German and other anti-communist movements practically sanctified the self-determination as an expression of freedom, democracy and human rights. The arguments of sovereignty and territorial integrity seemed nothing more than a fig-leaf for oppression and hegemony. As Biermann remarked (2004, 43), during 1991, the frustration in Bundestag over violence in Yugoslavia: “…merged with the renaissance of the principle of self-determination in Germany, which due to German unification and the liberation of Poland and others from Soviet domination played a major role in the debate…”

Even though the self-determination was such a powerful norm used to measure appropriateness of behavior in international and domestic politics, the absolute application of that norm was not possible. It was hitting the solid hard wall of another norm, Uti possidetis — the inviolability of existing borders. As I have shown in one of the previous sections dedicated to the problem of ethnic frictions, it was an imperative to prevent any questioning of the existing

221 For the same conclusion, see Woodward (1995b, 136) and Crowford (1996, 503-505).
borders.

The application of the self-determination principle in case of the countries of Warsaw Pact was not questioned by the Soviets. Even the Baltic States were recognized as being entitled to reclaim their sovereignty and resume their independent life after initial resentment and stalling on Gorbachev’s part. However, Gorbachev hoped that Soviet republics were to accept a new treaty that would have reformed Soviet Union into a Union of Independent States. The Soviet constitution formally allowed for secession of its constituent republics. However, it was never an intention to really leave it to the republics to freely decide within the totalitarian rule of the communist party.

Ironically, the status of Soviet republics as sovereign states and their right to secession under Soviet constitution fit perfectly with the principles of self-determination and the inviolability of borders protected by the Helsinki Final Act. Only now, they worked against Moscow and, despite Gorbachev’s protest, Russian, Ukrainian and Belarus’ leaders called upon their right to self-determination when they ended the existence of the USSR and created the Commonwealth of Independent States:

We, the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation (RSFSR), and Ukraine, as founding states of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, having signed the 1922 Union Treaty… state that the Union of SSR as a subject of international law and geopolitical reality ends its existence… Striving to build democratic, rule-of-law states, Intending to develop relations on the basis of mutual recognition and respect for state sovereignty, the inherent right to self-determination, the principles of equality and non-intervention into internal affairs, rejecting the use of force… Confirming our adherence to the goals and principles of the United
Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and other documents of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Committing ourselves to observe the universally-recognized international norms of the rights of man and peoples, We agree to the following... (Shushkevich 2013, 329)

It should be fairly reasonable to conclude that the struggle to weaken the Soviet Union and then to manage its collapse created demand for appropriate norms that were supposed to guide the processes. In the two decades prior to the collapse, the norms of self-determination and human rights were wrestling with the norms of sovereignty and inviolability of borders. As Soviet hegemony started crumbling toward the end of the 1990’s, the self-determination norm diffused simultaneously, both encouraging and feeding on the successes of the anti-communist movements behind the Iron Curtain.

However, the collapse of the Soviet Union posed yet another threat, the threat of chaos and anarchy. Hence, it was in the interest of the West to support such transformation of the Soviet Union that would have enabled peaceful evolution. That evolution was not supposed to be a “regression”, as CIA labeled the feared recentralization attempt by the hardliners, nor a total disintegration, since Bush administration feared dangerous ethno-nationalist frictions. The presence of nuclear weapons in four Soviet republics only multiplied fears and uncertainties. Adding Mitterrand’s obsession with an “integrated political force” in the East, balancing the reunited Germans, it is obvious why the West supported peaceful evolution of the USSR toward a more loose state union. The emphasis was on both “peaceful” and “loose state union”.

Such prescription of an appropriate direction was meaningful until the August 1991 coup, attempted by the Soviet hardliners, aiming to prevent the signing of the new Union treaty. After the coup was foiled, the republics (including Russia), hurried to get rid of the Gorbachev and the
“Center”, despite the results of the spring 1991 referendum. In the months following August 1991, the West’s continued support to a new Union based on Gorbachev’s ideas would have actually turned it into Gorbachev’s enforcer and against the prevailing desires in republics. So, we can observe how the right to self-determination was held up high throughout this period, tempered only by the prospects of transforming Soviet Union into a looser federation until the August 1991. After August, the advocates of reforming Soviet Union were discredited by the push of republics toward independence.

Self-determination won, but its exploitation by ethnic minorities remained a problem. Both insistence on inviolability of borders and the offer of Commonwealth of Independent States served the purpose of tranquilizing agitated minorities. A norm from the Soviet constitution prohibiting “autonomous republics” to secede, either from their “constitutive republic” or the USSR, was adopted as if it was self-explanatory. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to get Yeltsin and Russian elite on board to do anything.

Most success was scored where it was the most important — the four republics with nuclear weapons and numerically powerful minorities. Less success was achieved in the Caucasus, including Chechnya and Moldova. However, in no case was the ethnic secession recognized by any of the powerful Republics.\footnote{In 2008, Russia recognized two Georgian secessionist provinces, reciprocating Western recognition of Kosovo’s independence from Serbia.} Parallel to the dissolution of Soviet Union, Yugoslav drama was unfolding. The norms emerging as appropriate rules for managing risks of Soviet collapse could not have been completely set aside in the case of a severe domestic crisis elsewhere. It is only natural that the norms set to stabilize a region populated by hundreds of millions of inhabitants sitting on fantastic resources (and nuclear weapons) were going to be
extended to another similar case, but miniature in comparison.

Not only norms, but the strategic interests as well were intertwined in both cases. Perhaps these strategic interests were not only (or not at all) material — such as the ones usually recognized by realists and Marxists: grab for resources, markets and geographically important locations. There could have been a strategic interest in upholding the norms of appropriate behavior because the consequences of not doing so were deemed unacceptable, not only inappropriate. The mix of motivations should not be more important than the impact of parallels that did exist between the two countries.

In the fall of 1990, the National Intelligence Estimate predicting Yugoslavia’s collapse was released. The foreign-service analyst Martin Van Heuven remembered how: “[t]he administration did not want to hear about federal states coming apart. The U.S. government was trying to keep Gorbachev in power in a federal state” (Kennedy 2004, 116). Few months later, US ambassador to Vatican, Thomas P. Melady received virtually the same message from the State Department: “Yugoslavia’s unity had to be supported, otherwise it would fall apart and become a model for the disintegration of the Soviet Union” (Melady 1994, 150). The link between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was also clear to the Austrian vice-chancellor, Erhard Busek, in August 1991, when he proclaimed that: “…the collapse of communism in the USSR modifies the situation in Yugoslavia [in that] there is no more reason not to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia” (Woodward 1995b, 178). CIA director at the time, Robert Gates, assessed Bush’s reasoning in a similar way:” Nearly everyone in the

223 I met ambassador Melady in 2006 in Washington, D.C. I was his intern at the Institute of World Politics and we would often touch upon these topics. Ambassador passed away in 2014. I am grateful I had the opportunity to enjoy his friendship and mentorship.
administration believed that the break-up of former communist states risked violence and instability if not carried out in an orderly, peaceful way and through a political-legal process that would limit... blood feuds... This would be Bush’s policy on both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia” (Larres 2004, 188-189). In September 1991, Margaret Thatcher forcefully linked Soviet Union and Yugoslav cases:

Now that the Cold War has ended, we should be allowing greater national self-determination. Earlier, I mentioned the case of the Soviet Union and its component nationalities. But let me also draw attention to Yugoslavia — an artificial state put together with little regard for the wishes of many of its people and subsequently held together by dictatorship and now by violence. (Thatcher 1991)

Even general Wesley Clark, recalling his controversial 1992 exchange with Paul Wolfowitz, confirmed: “Throughout my military career, the Soviets had been the factor — our major concern and potential adversary. Everything we did was measured against the Soviets” (Clark 2014, 40).

As it can be seen, the stakes of international actors in the shifting global balance of power were huge, as they always are in such processes. In this case, the strategic interest of the winning side (and the other side as well!) was to define and impose norms that were supposed to help reduction of instability as much as possible. This does not mean that in all other cases of power-shift the strategic interest is in the norm promotion. It may very well be purely material, or a mix of both. What is important is that the smaller countries cannot go unaffected by such disturbances. If countries are extremely internally divided, it is especially so. And if they are
relevant to powers in transition — symbolically, ideationally, normatively and/or materially, economically or geopolitically — the chances for internal combustion are extremely high.

In the next section, I will try to show some evidence describing norm confusion within Yugoslavia. Then, in the following chapter, I will present three cases in which internal and external norms and interests collided to produce different results: from deadly rioting to short—term violent skirmish to full scale civil war.

11.4. Norm Confusion in Yugoslavia

11.4.1. Yugoslav Stasis

Thucydides concluded that *stasis* can be detected when: “…people exchanged the conventional value of words in relation to the facts, according to their own perception of what was justified” (Price 2001, 39). The conventions about the meanings of those words and their application in regulating communal life end up broken along the factional divides. Price (Ibid, 47) commented: “The practice of ‘exchanging the value of words’ is not the same as lying or deliberate and willful deception, for in *stasis* people mean what they say: they sincerely praise reckless daring as ‘courage true to the party’”.

224 International relations students can quickly recognize how relevant this passage is for those subscribing to constructivist research agenda.
believed in the appropriateness of their positions, even when they were clearly illegal, since the communal trust was damaged so badly. Deep seated, visceral, distrust legitimized even illegal acts, since laws hurting vital needs could not have been viewed as anything but weapons at the hands of the enemy. The divide broke to such depths, that the judgment of one’s actions as “reckless daring” or “courage true to the party” depended on the position of judges. The one judging from the standpoint of the interest of the whole community may have approved of a particular action. Another, judging from a factional standpoint may have condemned the very same action. Federal premier Marković (2003) observed in an interview: “When you listened to Milošević, he was right. When you listened to Kučan, he was right. Everyone had his own right, his own truth. You can conclude that something was going on, but not why.” We should not forget external actors (governmental or international organizations) had their own norms, shaped by regional and global developments.

As I discussed in chapter 9, the polarization of ethnic groups within Yugoslavia was clear by the 1990 and it revolved around the questions of reform of the constitution, self-determination and validity of internal borders. Slovenes and Croats wanted more decentralization, that is, a confederal arrangement. Macedonians were leaning toward that solution, but did not abandon hope of some sort of balancing within Yugoslavia. Serbia and Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia were against further decentralization. Serbs out of Serbia for some time did not voice their support to more centralization. They were stuck between fearing further decentralization that was simultaneously making them a threatened minority and open support to centralization that would have antagonize their Croat and Bosnian Muslim neighbors, thus justifying stronger demands for decentralization. Albanians were locked in a tight opposition to the reduction of Kosovo’s autonomy to pre-1974 level, which was Milosevic’s main source of legitimacy after years of
serious frictions in Kosovo.

However, clashing political currents do not necessarily have to spill over the legal boundaries supposed to channel them and enable peaceful flow of political turbulences. Thus, the boundaries came under pressure, due to the high stakes involved in setting the stage for furthering of particular ethnic interests. It was in the interests of “confederalists” to claim the right to declare sovereignty and it was in the interest of “federalists” to deny them that right.

Dejan Jovic (2009) is right when he labels Serbian leadership as “reformers” and Slovene and Croatian leaderships as “defenders” (Ibid, Ch.5). However, I think that this captures the situation until the 1990. Until then, Serbian leadership was bent on reversing the decentralization that went too far and pushed political system into a gridlock. After Slovenia and Croatia came out with their proposal to transform Yugoslavia into a confederation, the tables turned. At that time, the constitutional framework stopped being the scoreboard charting successive centrifugal changes of the internal balance of power. It turned into a weapon of factions in the ultimate zero-sum game.

The internal diplomacy of Yugoslavia’s stasis metastasized in several stages. Initially, as I discussed in chapter nine, the republics ended up blocked on the question of recentralization vs. further decentralization. In 1990, the debate moved to the question of self-determination (including secession) and the political entity entitled to it: the people or the territorial political units. This debate gradually grinded itself into the fine (gun)powder falling on the hottest contentious question — the character of internal borders. As the debates were escalating in political fora and media, they were translated by political activists on the ground into a wide repertoire of social contention: everyday verbal aggression, public demonstrations, damages to symbols and properties, night watches, brawls, bombings and finally erection of barricades,
checkpoints and frontlines. Geographically, frictions increased in length and depth from Slovenia to Croatia and then to Bosnia. Slovenia was at the forefront of the legal contestation until the short mass violence in the summer of 1991, after which it gradually disappeared from the horizon. In the same time, violence in Croatia was on the rise, fully to erupt in the fall of 1991 and then by 1992 it subsided. Bosnia took the torch over in its own constitutional crisis which sparked the outbreak of war in the spring of 1992.

Because of these overlapping and interconnected processes, I opted in this section to depict the key aspects of bargaining over the questions of self-determination (including secession) and borders. This will provide better context for the last chapter which will focus on the decisions to dive in (or abstain from) the armed struggle over sovereignty. These questions of bargaining over sovereignty demand a nuanced legal mind to disentangle sophisticated provisions of domestic and international laws regulating such problems. The problem is further complicated for political scientists since constitutional order and international law are legal matters mixing political and legal factors attracting some normative considerations.

The last time Yugoslav elites were able to agree on a constitutional matter was in November 1988. Next year, republics’ were amending their constitutions in accord to the changes of the federal constitution. Serbia amended its constitution in the end of March, and Slovenia in September. However, Slovenian amendments caused uproar in Yugoslavia, since they were directly contravening federal constitution. Federal parliament invited Slovenia to change the amendments, but to no avail. The court did find that other republics also had to make some changes, but none of them were breaching the federal constitution that seriously (Buzadžić 1994, 23; Hayden 2003, Ch.2). The constitutional court of Yugoslavia found that sovereignty of Yugoslavia was essentially suspended in Slovenia and that Slovenian delegates to federal bodies
were forbidden to act against the directives from their republic, which was also unconstitutional.\footnote{Full text of the decision can be found in Buzadžić 1994, 67-89.}

Since Yugoslavia had no constitutional means to enforce the decision of its own constitutional court (it was left to federal units to execute “opinions” of the court), the untenable situation was created. On the one hand, federal government led by Ante Marković was protesting against Slovenian amendments, on the other, Slovenia did not change its position. Instead, it put forward a proposal for confederation and stick to it by the fall of 1990 (Radan 2002, 1699).

Ratko Marković, chief constitutionalist of Milošević, resentfully protested against Slovenian proposal as a „perfidity“ implying secession for republics: “...to have a confederation, it is necessary to constitute independent states prior, which then enter into a confederal pact, because confederation does not have a constitution. That means secession first” (Vučelić 1990). He then rejected the idea that Yugoslav constitution granted the right to secession. He invoked the example of Lietuva and Soviet suppresion of its unilateral declaration of independence. Judge of the Yugoslav constitutional court, Buzadžić (1994, 6), further invoked the relevant international legal documents giving primacy to state soveriegnty and inviolability of borders over the right to self-determination that included secession. July 1990 also saw Slovenian Declaration of Independence, which invoked the “right of Slovenian people to self-determination… in accordance to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights” (Buzadžić 1994, 241).\footnote{On the other side of Yugoslavia, in early July 1990, Albanian delegates proclaimed Kosovo a republic. Kosovo parliament was then disbanded by Serbia, supported by the federal presidency. Serbia won back its jurisdiction over Kosovo in the late 1988 and early 1989.}
Following its victory in the spring elections in Croatia, new government replaced communist symbols with national Croatian symbols, reminiscent of the genocidal Croatian WWII state. It also attempted to impose those symbols in Serbian areas, which was resisted. Instead, following adoption of the proposal to amend Croatian constitution, Serbs in several municipalities formed the association of municipalities of Northern Dalmatia and Lika. In a grand meeting, Serbian Democratic Party in Croatia declared “sovereignty” and “autonomy” of Serbs in Croatia, protesting proposals to annul Serbs’ status of a “constitutive nation”.

The next move was to establish the “Serbian Autonomous Region”. Such moves and countermoves were clearly revolving around territorial control. On August 19th 1990, Serbs in Croatia held a referendum on autonomy in the areas where they were majority. Croatian parliament adopted resolution about protection of constitutional order and rights of national minorities, while Croatian constitutional court annulled the decision to form association of (Serb) municipalities.

In September 1990, the new Serbian constitution introduced article 135, stating that:

The rights and duties vested under the present Constitution in the Republic of Serbia, which is part of the Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia, which according to the federal constitution are to be exercised in the Federation, shall be enforced in accordance with the federal constitution. If acts of the agencies of the Federation or acts of the agencies of another republic, in contravention of the rights and duties it has under the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, violate the equality of the Republic of Serbia or in any other way
threaten its interests, without providing for compensation, the republic agencies shall issue acts to protect the interests of the Republic of Serbia. (Constitution of Serbia 1990, article 135)

This solution was supposed to give a free hand to the Serbian leadership to deal with any contingency resulting from the virtually complete disruption of the constitutional system. Prominent Belgrade lawyer and human rights’ activist, Srđa Popović (2010), was the most vocal critic of this article as he saw in it the evidence of secession from Yugoslavia. Following Serbia’s constitution, Slovenia came forward with the draft constitution that was supposed to elevate previous decisions to the status of the highest legal document in Slovenia. All this was going on, I will remind, while Yugoslavia was still recognized as a single country, though with problems. Of course, such huge disturbances were not left unregistered. CIA reported the following summary in October 1990:

Yugoslavia will cease to function as a federal state within one year, and will probably dissolve within two. Economic reform will not stave off the breakup. Serbia will block Slovene and Croat attempts to form an all-Yugoslav confederation. There will be a protracted armed uprising by Albanians in Kosovo. A full-scale, inter-republic war is unlikely, but serious inter-communal conflict will accompany the breakup and will continue afterward. The violence will be intractable and bitter. There is little the United States and its European allies can do to preserve Yugoslav unity. Yugoslavs will see such efforts as contradictory to advocacy of democracy and self-determination. (CIA 1990)

This is the report that the Bush administration did not want to hear about, since it predicted
the collapse of a federation at the time when Gorbachev was trying to handle the Soviet affairs. It is, on the other hand, evidence that the US policymakers were fully aware that the large scale violence is brewing in Europe’s neighborhood. As I have shown in one of the previous sections, Bush administration was leaning toward Soviet evolution into a looser state union. In Yugoslavia, proponents of such idea were largely Slovenes and Croats. Self-determination was championed both by the US and Germany, especially the latter, given that right at that time Germany was about to complete its unification. Only France and UK kept their suspicions and reservations, but not for long. Hence, the tide was strongly in favor of confederal evolution within Yugoslavia.

That, however, was completely unacceptable to Serbs, especially the ones in Bosnia and Croatia, traumatized by the fresh memories of World War II genocide. Memories were even more refreshed by the new Croatian government’s promotion of not only symbols of genocide, but also elderly members of the WWII extermination units ("Nationalism Turns Sour…" 1993). In the fall of 1990, Croatian leadership was moving toward the new constitution. Serbian leader in the self-proclaimed autonomous region of Krajina in Croatia left no room for doubt. Milan Babić was sharp: “The right to self-determination, including the right to secession. Let’s cut the long story short! If Croatian people use that right, the same right will be used by the Serbian people here [in Krajina] (Grubač 1990).” Clearly, Serbs did not consider themselves legally inferior to Croats, since they enjoyed the status of the “constitutive nation”, since the founding of socialist Yugoslavia.

December 1990 saw seemingly synchronized move by Croatia and Slovenia. On the 23rd, Slovenia had its referendum on independence, while Croatia introduced new constitution, 227 The title of the article was telling: “We will not be naive”.

---

227 The title of the article was telling: “We will not be naive”.
celebrating historical right of Croatian people (Hayden 2003, 88). Serbs were deprived of their constitutive status. To add insult to injury, the Croatian reformed communists, who won majority of Serbian votes, voted in favor of the new constitution. This radicalized Serbs overnight. Serbian Democratic Party, who enjoyed strongholds only around Knin, now spread throughout Serb populated areas in Croatia.\footnote{Serbian Democratic Party in Serbian: “Srpska demokratska stranka” (SDS).} Acting, in their view, preemptively, Serbs declared “Serbian Autonomous Region Krajina” on December 21st 1990. One of the low-ranked members of SDS recorded in his diary:

[We]… were not anymore a people equal to Croats, but a national minority, which we could not accept... We were aware that we had to organize and fight, to make such moves that would create Serbian wholeness and state; because neither did Croats have had their state recognized by the League of Nations and United Nations, just like us in Krajina. (Glavaš 2005, 30)

Italics above are, of course, mine. It is quite interesting how, even the low-ranking political activist was sensitive to the international moment when it came to legitimacy of actors and their demands. The crux of the problem, however, was precisely in the question of sovereignty. Even shared sovereignty implies some set of coherent rules over a certain territory. In this case, there could have been no middle ground.

In defense of his republic’s constitution, Stipe Mesić, one of the high-ranking members of Croatian ruling party, said:”The Croatian constitution did not deny Yugoslavia, but expressly denied the existing model of Yugoslavia… The right to self-determination, however, could not be compromised in any way… Serbia… initiated a ‘modern federation’; a Unitary state based on
the principle ‘one man one vote’” (Mesić 2003, 12).229

Clearly, the model of Yugoslavia Croatian leadership could not have even discussed was the one based on “one man one vote” principle. The exact same principle they defended within Croatia, which enabled them to change the constitution Serbs’ were raising as their protection from outvoting. This was the unraveling of the grand bargain of 1943-1946, which I described in chapter ten. According to the bargain, Croatia was established as a federal state to satisfy Croats, but it was a member of federal Yugoslavia, which was to assure Serbs of their safety. Of course, I am not downplaying the genuine feelings of South Slavic brotherhood and patriotism developed in the war. But the equilibrium of the grand bargain was precisely set out in founding acts, not only of Yugoslavia, but Croatia as well. Now, that was all on the verge of a cliff.

In Slovenia, on the other hand, New Year’s festivities were also a time to celebrate the full sovereignty that was proclaimed by its leadership. For example, Slovenian premier Peterle simply concluded that, according to the Yugoslav constitution, even secession was a legal and constitutional fact (Stojić 1990). Slovenian president Kučan went a step further, maintaining that domestic law was not applicable anymore to the relations between republics, but only international law: “That means, from now on, we rely on the rules of international law and on the international political documents” (Flegar 1991).

On April 11, leaders of republics agreed to have referendums in republics about the future of Yugoslavia, whether it will become a confederation or a “modern federation”. What was not agreed, however, was what will happen with borders of republics if confederal proposal wins.

May 1991 was a replay of a sort of events from December 1990. Upon hearing that Croatian government scheduled referendum on independence for May 19th, Krajina Serbs

229 My italics.
scheduled in April their own referendum, to be held on May 12th. After counting the votes, Serbs declared their decision to remain part of Yugoslavia. However, they also declared that they will be respecting laws of Serbia in Krajina, thus announcing a merger with Serbia. This was very negatively received by Serbian leadership. Radan (2002, 179) is uncertain on why Serbian leaders rejected this, but thinks that otherwise Serbia would have legitimized Croatian and Slovenian unilateral secessions. Following Croatian referendum, Milošević spoke in Serbian parliament:

...each Yugoslav people in its totality, not partially within republics, has the right to self-determination, which includes the right to express its opinion... the right to self-determination cannot, hence, be reserved solely for the people comprising a majority in a nationally-mixed republic. If it would be so, then we would have, behind the veil of civic democracy, a breach of interests of those Yugoslav peoples who are a minority on the part of a territory of Yugoslavia within borders of certain republics... borders between republics were never state [borders]... they were drawn in the past, arbitrarily and without objective criteria, disregarding the ethnic composition of the population, as well as the effects of genocide suffered by Serbian people, including [disregard for] the norms of international law. (Milošević 1991)

Maintaining this course, he was able both to continue advocating survival of Yugoslavia for those peoples, not republics, who wished to remain in the common state, as well as to question borders’ superiority versus the right to self-determination.

In early June, Bosnian and Macedonian presidents proposed the “Platform about Future
“Platform about Future Yugoslav Community”, essentially a confederal proposal, which implied sovereignty of republics without changing existing borders. On June 21, federal premier supported this platform. On June 25 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. Croatia invoked its historic continuity, uninterrupted by centuries of foreign rule, within which it preserved its identity (Mesić 2003, 78). It also stipulated that even under socialist Yugoslav constitution, Croatia had the right to self-determination, including dissociation, that is — secession. Federal government condemned declarations of independence as illegal and appealed to constitutional court. The court annulled the legal documents adopted by Slovenia and Croatia. As if in a table tennis match, Croatian authorities issued another document, rejecting Yugoslav constitutional court's jurisdiction (Buzadžić 1994, 241-274). Federal premier Ante Marković ordered Yugoslav police to assume full control over border posts, if necessary, with the assistance of the federal army (Ibid, 233-234).

As long as the conflict was confined to speeches, declarations and legislative activities, violence was not preordained. However, replacing one tangible symbol of sovereignty with another symbol of sovereignty results in a contestation over physical space. Regardless of how commonsensical and technical this line of reasoning may sound, this is the moment when political conflict transforms into violence. Inserting physical objects into the same physical space inevitably leads to physical friction.

Slovenian authorities pulled down Yugoslav flags from border posts and Yugoslav police was trying to put them back. The same was happening in Croatia with the Croatian

---

230 “Platform about Future Yugoslav Community”, in Serbian: “Platforma o budućoj jugoslovenskoj zajednici“.

231 Yugoslav army was called into help and the widespread organized clashes erupted. Yugoslav
checkerboards replacing Yugoslav red stars, which led to the August 1990 Serb barricades. Another example illustrating incendiary potential of imposing tangible symbols’ of sovereignty can be found in a video recorded on March 31st 1991 near Plitvice lakes in Croatia (Knežević 2007). At 4:11 time of the video, we can see an elderly Serb angrily complaining: “…they [Serbs] put… [the flag] down there, down there, at the border… they [Croats] tore it, then they put the checkerboard [Croatian flag], we tore the checkerboard [flag]!”

July 1991 was the time when European Community got involved more actively, initiating a three months “moratorium” on secessionists’ declarations of independence. On August 20, the day of Moscow coup attempt, the stasis among top leaders within Yugoslavia was reaching its climax. Mesić (2003, 242) copied transcripts from the session (italics are mine):

Tudman: The people of Croatia voted for sovereignty and autonomy, but army was blocked in the barracks and attacked outside of them. The clashes lasted about two weeks, when the agreement was reached. This episode was named afterwards the “Ten day War”. Yugoslav presidency pulled the army out of Slovenia. Transition to violence will be discussed more in the next chapter, though.

232 That was the first violent incident ending in two deaths (one Serb and one Croat).

233 My italics. The man is using the word “border” in March 1991, simply recognizing the fact that barricades were already on the roads for several months, all the while political bargaining was developing in parallel. Examples like this strongly support bargaining theory of war against credible commitment theory. Croatian police was dispatched to the area to establish Croatian government’s control and was ambushed by local Serb population. The video is particularly informative regarding the confusion and disorganization among the local population.

234 I am citing only parts of their speeches, the ones illuminating the crux of the problem.
including the possibility and the right to enter or create alliances with other sovereign republics. From the point of view of Croatia, that closes the circle of what we can discuss. By accepting the three-month moratorium — and a good portion of the term has passed already — we wanted to discuss this issue: an alliance of sovereign states or disassociation. But instead of negotiations, the aggression on Croatia is escalating.

Branko Kostić: It would be good if we could keep the temperature down. Today it is important that we confirm the readiness of all to start from the right of people to self-determination, including secession, in all future talks.

Mesić: I’m afraid that some of us may be mixing apples and oranges. It is a constitutional right of the people to self-determine; I haven’t seen the same right given to national minorities. How, for example, can we get the opinion of Serbs in Croatia, of Croats in Serbia or Montenegro, of Muslims, Albanians or Hungarians in Serbia? Those people, those ethnic communities and national minorities do not live in a vacuum, but in a specific state, a republic.

Branko Kostić: Stipe is confusing the issue of nations and nationalities; Serbs in Croatia are a nation, a Yugoslavian nation.

Tupurkovski: If you want a referendum by Serbs in those areas, well, then,

235 He is careful not to use the word „secession“.

236 Member of the Yugoslav presidency from Montenegro.
Branko, what would be the position of Serbs in Zagreb, in other cities?

Branko Kostić: It is absurd to put the problem like that.

Tupurkovski: What do you mean, absurd? How can Serbs in Zagreb secede, and there are as many of them in Zagreb as there are in Knin Krajina — and more.

Branko Kostić: If we were to accept certain principles, I would even support the exchange of population. The current Yugoslavia is a common interest of all the nations.

Mesić: Isn’t forced relocation genocide?

Jović: We are past the stage of mutual convincing… Slovenia and Croatia must accept the preparation of an amendment to the Constitution regarding the right of nations to secession. And then we’ll face the filigree problems of new borders.

Mesić: You mean cutting Croatia piece by piece?

Milošević: How can it be possible to resolve the crisis peacefully and democratically, and at the same time to deny the operation of Yugoslavian institutions? How can the government function without the Parliament? I did not understand what Vasil (Tupurkovski) launched: low-profile integration. The road to peace is the integrity and legitimacy of Yugoslavia, and, derived from it, the interest of the republics. We cannot start from the legality and the integrity of the republics, because that would annihilate Yugoslavia.
Jović: Political agreement can be achieved, but there is no legality without the Parliament. By accepting the three-month moratorium, we must also re-instate the constitutional institutions of Yugoslavia.

Tuđman: How can representatives of Serbia call upon the Yugoslavian Constitution from 1974, and they have violated it completely, particularly regarding autonomous regions? You can’t have one criterion for yourselves, and another for the others.

Tupurkovski: The system is not functioning, and Slobo wants the system reconstructed as it was. Reality is different; let us take it into account and go for some joint form of association.

Milošević: I support the minimal functioning of the system.237

Tupurkovski: Let us reach political agreement, and then — legality.

Following this meeting, the document was adopted, but the agreement was not made. The document adopted on August 20, 1991 stated that the parties agreed on the next points (my italics):

A respect for every nation’s right to self-determination, including the right to secession and association. Any changes in external or internal borders by unilateral acts and the use of force are unacceptable. Should this take place, it must be done exclusively following the right of nations to self-determination, in a democratic procedure and in a legal manner.

A respect for the democratic will of every Yugoslav nation and republic in

---

237 He thinks about the federal state.
realizing its status, according to specific and actual interests.

Equality, and a non-imposing will from the outside, and *non-use of force*.

Legality, and ensuring the sanctioning and insurance of implementation of political agreements.” (Mesić 2003, 250)

Obviously, the document did not contain anything that any side was not able to interpret as it saw fit. The first point seems largely to have been in favor of Serbian point of view. It was protecting every nation’s right to self-determination and external borders of Yugoslavia. In that case, Serbs had no reason to raise the issue of internal borders. However, Croats have already expressed their position, according to which Serbs in Croatia were not a nation, but a national minority. Furthermore, in the second point, it was stated that not only nations, but republics’ “will” must be respected. The document was adopted, but the agreement was not achieved. After the three-month moratorium from July expired, in early October, Croatia and Slovenia “activated” their declarations of independence. The fighting was already flaring around Croatia since early July, but in September the full assault on Yugoslav army barracks will begin. Since a full out war started in about this period, I will focus on this episode in the next chapter.

As the fighting in Croatia was escalating, the situation in Bosnia was deteriorating as well. A number of people were joining different sides in Croatia (Serbs, Croats or the federal army) and returning to their homes in Bosnia. Refugees from Croatia also were crossing into Bosnia. On October 15 1991, Bosnian parliament adopted “Declaration on sovereignty” despite Serbian delegates’ protests. Karadžić infamously stated that pursuit of such policy might end up in an all—out war and annihilation of Bosnian Muslims. He rejected the voting because it was based on outvoting of one constitutive people (Serbs), which contravened both Yugoslavia’s and Bosnia’s constitutions.
11.4.2. Bosnian Stasis

About that time (September-October 1991), Serbs in Bosnia mirrored the path of their brethren in Krajina and founded several “Serbian autonomous regions” in Bosnia, based on prior “associations of municipalities”. Just like Serbs in Croatia, they hurried to give form to their claims to self-determination and sovereign equality with others. Initially, these autonomous regions existed only formally, without disrupting the seemingly normal functioning of all institutions of the republic and the federation. Failing to change mind of Bosnian Muslims andCroats, Serbs withdrew from parliament and established “The Assembly of the Serbian People in Bosnia-Herzegovina” in late October. In November 1991, Bosnian Croats formed their own “Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia”, but kept cooperating with Bosnian Muslims in Bosnian institutions, at least in the short run. They shared one vital interest — not ending up as a minority in a rump Yugoslavia where Serbs would have been a majority.

Bosnian Muslims perceived the whole territory of Bosnia as their own state. Hence, they had no other option but to work through Bosnian institutions and in the name of both multi-ethnic and unitary Bosnian state. Otherwise, they would have delegitimized their own platform. Their position in this regard paralleled the position of Serbs within Yugoslavia. Both were trying to attract others to work through state institutions as a way to legitimize the larger framework within which they sought safety at the minimal cost of avoiding war and ending up as a minority. Bosnian Muslims feared being a minority in a rump Yugoslavia, while Serbs feared being a minority in independent Bosnia and Croatia.\textsuperscript{238}

\textsuperscript{238} Granted, Bosnian Muslim leadership by that time did already start organizing a parallel underground network of activists preparing for the worst case scenario. I will discuss this more
These formal associations were part of the larger chain of bargaining and had dual purpose. One was to coordinate activities of one’s own ethnic group in securing a territory and the other was to threaten the other side not to proceed with its plans. However, it seemed that there could have been no equilibrium. By not pursuing Bosnia’s independence, Bosnian Croats and Muslims would have ended up as a minority after Slovenia’s and Croatia’s independence. By not reacting against Bosnian independence, Bosnian Serbs would have ended up as a minority.

On November 9-10, Serbs organized a referendum with a clear result — they wanted to stay in Yugoslavia. The constitutional court of Bosnia rejected this decision. The height of the gridlock came with the session of the Bosnian parliament on January 24-25 1992. Set up in the end of August 1991 by the European Community, the commission chaired by the French constitutional lawyer Robert Badinter became involved. On January 9, 1992 “Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina” declared independence. Two days later, Badinter’s Commission conditioned recognition of Bosnia’s independence with a referendum (Türk 1993).

The transcripts from the Bosnian parliament’s session held on January 24-25 1992 read like an ancient Greek tragedy (Hećimović 2012). Bosnian president Izetbegović cited Badinter commission’s condition regarding the independence referendum. He offered his vision of Bosnia as a state of citizens, equality and mutual trust. The essence was that his approach built on the premise of a unitary state. Serb MP, Aleka Buha, warned against “outvoting”. Croatian MPs bitterly complained about the sufferings of Croats in Croatia and the spillover of Croatian war in Bosnia which harmed Croats, but Serb Dodik (member of Ante Marković's party) responded that Croats were not the only ones suffering. Obviously, the context of this session was very emotionally charged.

in the next chapter.
At one point, Bosnian Muslim MP Muhamed Čengić and Radovan Karadžić seemed to have reached a prior agreement satisfactory to both sides. This is perhaps one of the most controversial episodes in the destruction of Yugoslavia and Bosnia. They practically agreed on steps toward the referendum, which included regionalization of Bosnia along ethnic lines.

Čengić: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to inform you and propose something. BiH government was instructed and reached a Decision to execute a new regionalization of BiH. I think that [political parties] should make their proposals [about it]… There will be no referendum before we get a complete elaborate of regionalization. I think that solution would satisfy all citizens of BiH, because it is futile for us to claim that all Serbs do want to live in one state, or Muslims or anyone, but we have to start talking to each other. We must come closer, and that is the only way, and even if BiH will be sovereign and independent or if it will be part of I don’t know which association, we must decide how do we wish to live within BiH… Therefore, this proposal of mine I offered to Mr. Karadžić who agreed with it — I think it would be acceptable. I would like you to voice your opinions.

Karadžić: We do not demand [for Bosnia] to stay in Yugoslavia, we demand that Bosnia transforms so that Serbs keep strong ties to Yugoslavia, that Croats have no ties to Yugoslavia, that they keep strong ties to Croatia, and that Muslims keep ties to Yugoslavia and Croatia as much as they want... but what we offer can't be more honest for each people to keep distance toward others decide for iself and govern itself and preserve its
sovereignty, so do not fool yourselves that Serbs and Croats in BiH will accept losing that sovereignty.²³⁹

The most impressive and controversial aspect of these speeches was that both sides seemed to have made their final concessions. Serbs gave up on staying in Yugoslavia and Bosnian Muslims gave up on unitary Bosnia. The next steps were supposed to be regionalization and only then, after Serbs were to secure their entity, referendum on independence was to follow. However, Izetbegović intervened rejecting the idea of postponing the referendum for later than March 7. He then demanded proposal for holding referendum to be put on the daily schedule. It seems that this hurry seemed suspicious to Serb delegates, as if this proposal would have jeopardized the schedule of steps (regionalization first, independence referendum second).

Vojislav Maksimović demanded clarification about Bosnian Muslims’ position — was referendum to follow regionalization or its date was fixed, like Izetbegović declared. He rejected Izetbegović’s proposal. Furthermore, Maksimović invoked the constitutional mechanism of “protection of the vital national interest”. The same one Serbs invoked on October 15 1991, when they were outvoted, after which they left the parliament.

The debate then erupted about the nature of the SDA proposal, revealing stasis in all its viciousness. Since the “vital national interest” was supposed to protect from any decision that was perceived as harmful by an ethnic group, the question seems to have been — what was a decision? Was putting the proposal for referendum into the daily schedule a decision in itself? For if it was not, invoking “protection of the vital national interest” was not possible at that moment. Or was the proposal to discuss organizing the referendum a routine action, in which case the presiding was supposed to put it on the daily schedule automatically?

²³⁹ My italics
Maksimović: The club of Serb deputies can’t accept putting on the daily schedule and then deciding about holding a referendum that would include Serbian people in BiH… the opinion about holding the referendum in BiH should first offer the Council for the Questions of National Equality\textsuperscript{240}… pursuant to the amendment 70 of article 10 of the Constitution of BiH and articles 52, 53 and 54 of the Rules of Procedure…

Naim Kadić (SDA) intervened: “...we do not seek adoption of a decision here... but we are deciding (sic!) that people should decide...” Ajanović (SDA) stepped in to clarify: “...we are not adopting any decision, we are just appealing to the people... if presiding refuses, we will, according to the Rules of Procedure, due to the presiding's obstruction, similar to the way we did it on October 15 last year, mandate the vice-president of the Parliament...” Their party colleague, Mustafa Sedlarević, perhaps unwittingly, revealed the whole absurdity of the debate:

The decision (sic!) to put the question on the daily schedule does not mean that the decision to hold the referendum or executing referendum must be adopted. It is also a decision to send the proposal to the Council [for the Questions of National Equality], hence there will be a debate on whether it will be sent to the Council or the proposal will be rejected or it will be adopted to hold the referendum.

The complexity of this episode is hard to illustrate and I may not have grasped it fully.

\textsuperscript{240}“Savjet za pitanje nacionalne ravnopravnosti”
However, this question broke down the dialogue. It revealed the undercurrents of the logic of stasis — the utmost disconnectedness of interlocutors. The completely separate notions of legitimate order of things justified attributing vicious intentions behind the “immoral” demands from the other side. Reasonable people who commanded respect within their party and ethnic group were unable to agree on the meaning of words such as “proposal” and “decision”. Those were, of course, just the effects of the deeper cause, fundamental distrust.

For Maksimović, putting the referendum proposal up for debate was a decision in itself, regardless of whether the proposal will be later on adopted or rejected in the parliament procedure. Since his party perceived putting the proposal on the daily schedule as a threat to the “vital national interest”, he protested. However, Sedlarević perceived adoption of Serb delegate’s resort to the “protection of vital national interest” as yet another decision in itself. The parliament was in a complete gridlock.

Since it was past midnight, president of the parliament, Serb Momčilo Krajišnik, adjourned the session. However, Bosnian Muslim and Croat delegates continued it on their own, without Serbs present. Not only did they put the referendum proposal on the daily schedule, but they voted in favor of it that very same night. The referendum was scheduled for February 29th and March 1st. As Hayden (2003, 117-119) observed, this could have hardly been a legitimate decision. Mid-March will see a replay of this debate, but under very different circumstances. The barricades will be on the streets, charting future frontlines. The next chapter will discuss the logic of strategies.
Chapter 12. Cases and Conclusions

The underlining claim I make earlier in this work is that civil war onset in a deeply divided society depends on the reduced capacity of central government, itself largely depending on the international context. Furthermore, I subscribed to the bargaining theory of war, itself a version of the rational choice theory of war. It stipulates that war is one form of bargaining and not the end of it. Granted, even war may be the result of actors’ choices perceived as “optimal”. Fearon (1995) famously asked what was so rational about bloodshed. Kalyvas and Kenny (2010) added: “…if there is an opportunity to achieve redress peacefully, this option may be preferable…” to violence.

In this chapter, show how a rational choice approach applied in the given normative and material structures can help to explain actors’ seemingly sub-optimal choices. The role of unobservables is particularly important in filling the gaps in process-tracing.241 As Tsebelis (1990, 17) sharply noticed: “[i]f, with adequate information, an actor's choices appear to be suboptimal, it is because the observer's perspective is incomplete. The observer focuses attention on only one game, but the actor is included in a whole network of games”.

Based on the seemingly sub-optimal actions, I picked three cases from the collapse of Yugoslavia to analyze: Slovenia, Croatia-Bosnia (as one episode with three cases) and Serbia (Kosovo). In the first case, the puzzle is in the fact that Slovenia opted for unilateral secession, even though it had an option to secede legally. In the second case, there is a cluster of seemingly sub-optimal actions: Croatia’s secession went against the official position of international community against it. Furthermore, Croatia aimed to control Serb-populated areas protected by

241 I discuss the importance of “unobservables” in section 8.1.
the federal army which was superior in arms. Bosnian Muslim choices were even more controversial, since they were strategically quite weaker relative to the federal army and emerging Serb armed groups. Lastly, Kosovo Albanians stuck to their passive resistance while war raged in Croatia and Bosnia, thus missing an opportunity to violently challenge Serbia’s control. Moreover, Serbia was under international sanctions from May 1992, suffering tremendous economic hardships. Yet, Albanians did not rise up in arms, nor did they partake in Serbian elections to challenge Milošević’s government. These cases present the body of evidence that, on comparison with the established normative and material structures, should isolate the driving factors that would make sense out of these seemingly sub-optimal decisions.

12.1. Summary of External Actors’ Preferences

This section will break down actors into two core groups: international and domestic. The international actors most relevant for the time period of the collapse of Yugoslavia (1990-1991) were the Soviet Union (including Russia within it as an emerging independent actor), Germany, France, UK, and the United States. Relations among them structured the international setting, resulting in the intended or unintended incentives and limitations that were affecting domestic actors. The dominant domestic actors in that period were federal government, federal army, Slovenia, Croatia, Krajina Serbs, Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, Serbia and Albanians. Their interactions will be analyzed in the following sections.

The emerging interests in the framework of Soviet Union’s collapse and the end of communism were largely shared among the five major international players, but not completely. All powers agreed that communism must be finished once and for all, except where it would lead
to an instability threatening the safety of nuclear weapons. For that purpose, the inviolability of borders — presented publicly as a dedication to the international legal principle of *Uti Possidetis* — was elevated to a sacrosanct status. The borders in question were those of independent states, but also those of Soviet republics, excluding sub-republic units, so as not to provoke Russia. Last, but not least, the principle of self-determination was crowned as the victor of the ideological battle between liberal democracy and communism. The long upheld norm of illegal character of unilateral secession under international law was not as strong as before.

When it comes to the Soviet Union, Gorbachev was struggling hard until the end of 1991 to transform it into a “union of states”. In the process, he secured strong support within constituent republics, expressed in referendums. However, the Soviet hard-liners’ failed coup in August 1991 pushed republics’ leaders, including Russia’s, toward independence. Once acquiring its independence, Russia sought to sit on two chairs. One was to build good relations with the West — the source of investments and financial aid. The other was to preserve and enhance its influence in the post-Soviet space through a combination of economic incentives, economic threats and military interventions. Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin’s governments could not have even conceived NATO’s enlargement into the Warsaw Pact countries, let alone post-Soviet space.

On the other hand, it was in the US interest to have the Soviet Union survive as a looser federation or a confederation to avoid ethnic frictions, Russian irredentism and recentralization. In the summer of 1991, not later, the US increased its contacts with the republics. It was trying to manage the dissolution of the USSR which happened in December 1991. Furthermore, the US had a vital interest in preserving NATO’s relevance, making sure that its European partners did not distance themselves from NATO structures. Very soon, however, US foreign policy circles
understood that making NATO relevant in the new era coincided with the pressures from Central European countries to be admitted to NATO.

None of these processes seemed favorably to the French government under Mitterrand. He preferred to preserve the Cold War intra-European division of labor according to which Germans were supposed to provide economic fuel for the European engine, while French sat in the driver’s seat. That meant France’s prevalent influence on political and security matters. Distancing itself from NATO during Cold War, France continued its old tradition of strategic understanding with Moscow in balancing European order, which meant keeping check on Germany.

In the process of German unification France, under Mitterrand, hoped to preserve an integrated counter-weight in Eastern Europe against the threat of an enlarged Germany. That is why they were strongly opposed to Soviet Union’s weakening. In an attempt to check German economic might, painfully felt in the 1991 due to rising German interest rates, the French sought, and got, deeper integration of European economic policy, institutionalized in the Maastricht Treaty. Furthermore, with the end of the Cold War, the French felt more entitled to deepen their autonomous security system in partnership with Germany and neglect NATO. Not until Chirac’s presidency in 1995 would this policy change in favor of NATO; but Paris was still in search a special role for France.

Germany, on the other hand, was going through two deeply impressive processes in a very short period of time. One was the logistic of unification which required immense economic and political efforts. The other was the “fear management” — assuring Europeans that Germany was uniting within European integrations project, not against it. The Maastricht Treaty and German concessions regarding European monetary policy were supposed to solidify that effort. However,
the strongest contradiction within German efforts to preserve European stability was the fact that its new role and position of strength resulted from the victory of the self-determination principle. That principle was legitimizing not only German unification, but also German newly expanded freedom to be more assertive. Roots of German self-confidence go back to the 1980’s crisis over distribution of missiles on German soil. After unification and the Soviet collapse, German leadership felt both empowered and unjustly feared.

Initially, the UK government, under Thatcher, was firmly against German unification; but relatively quickly London aligned with the US in support. In the tough negotiations over the Maastricht Treaty, the UK negotiated to preserve its monetary sovereignty and other elements of its autonomy. Throughout the 1990’s it remained firmly allied with the US, though it did take part in some European efforts, especially related to common European security.

The interests driving these powers, the norms they promoted to legitimize their actions, as well as the norms that emerged over decades of Cold War’s ideological struggle (primarily self-determination), set the international stage within which Yugoslavia was crumbling. The domestic actors in the Yugoslav drama operated under incentives and constraints emanating from this changing international structure. The end results of their actions varied from no violence to rioting, short flare of militarized violence and full scale prolonged civil war. They acted rationally in pursuit of their goals.

12.2. Clash in Slovenia

The puzzle of Slovenia’s violent secession lies in the fact that the Serbian leadership did not oppose Slovenia’s independence. Milošević and especially Jović were very explicit about it, even though they repeatedly argued in favor of Yugoslavia's survival as the optimal equilibrium
for all Yugoslavs. Serbia openly supported Slovenian independence, provided that it was achieved through constitutional procedure, as Jović declared on May 15th, 1990 (Jović 1995, 145; Woodward 2006, 374). In his testimony in Milošević’s trial, Jović suspected that German expansionist politics was behind Slovenia’s unilateral secessionism. Germany, according to him, was aiming at Adriatic coast and fractionalization of Central Europe (Jović 2003, 29365). Germany, however, was not driven by such geopolitical aspirations, nor it could have been, given European and American sensitivities about proper German behavior.

Slovenes refused the legal means to achieve secession. Since the fall of 1990 Slovenians anticipated a violent response to their unilateral secession and began purchasing weapons (Woodward 1995, 147). Even though Woodward holds that the Slovenes’ secession was very much encouraged by the Austrian, German and Vatican diplomatic efforts, still, the question remains: why not achieving independence peacefully?

Even if we assume that Slovenian secessionist forces were militarily stronger than the Yugoslav army within Slovenia (thus “putting to a side” the Yugoslav army’s air power and armored units), still, it is unclear why risking any violence. Serbia was in support of Slovenian independence for its own interests: weakening a secessionist block for Croatia while at the same time reinvigorating the legitimacy of Yugoslav federal constitution. To assume that Slovenes felt morally obliged toward other nations to fight for the total dissolution of Yugoslavia is highly implausible. With the onset of war in Croatia and especially Bosnia, Slovenia’s government was selling weapons at incredibly high price, as well as charging for transit and training (Šurc and Zgaga 2013). That does not fit well with the hypothesis that Slovenia felt obliged to Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia, moreover because Bosnia was still indecisive. Not only did the Serbian leadership favor the legal and peaceful Slovenian secession, but it was very clear that unilateral
secession was going to be met with violent response of the federal state (Jović 1995, 271). Federal army shared that position, as perhaps the last strong Yugoslav institution.

12.2.1. To Dissolve Within

The core international actors were sending mixed signals. They were repeatedly connecting Yugoslavia as a troubling example for Soviet Union. In the same time, they did not question the right to self-determination and especially their opposition to using force. This included use of force against unilateral secession. For example, in his testimony at the Hague, the president of Slovenia recalled how he was persuading Europeans that Yugoslavia was finished and how they should intervene to secure its peaceful break-up (Kučan 2003, 20903). At the same time, he was answered that “Yugoslavia cannot be broken up because this would be a very bad model for the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union is a much more complex case than Yugoslavia” (Ibid.). In December 1990, another Slovenian leader, Janez Drnovšek, explained that his foreign interlocutors were worried about Yugoslav disintegration as a precedent for Soviet Union, which would have threatened European and global security (Jeličić and Štajner 1990). However, at the same time, he concluded that foreigners “…clearly recognize the right of peoples to self-determination, including secession. So, in practice, two approaches are in conflict - pragmatic and the other one. I expect that they will continue supporting Yugoslavia as a state union, but they will not confront individual republics and peoples if they chose independence” (Ibid.).

Ever since July 1990, Europeans perceived Yugoslavia as moving toward a confederal status (Biermann 2004, 47). However, Milošević’s move toward recentralization was not

---

242 My italics
welcomed. In fact, Americans perceived it is a potential threat to peace (Ibid.). The CIA report from fall 1990 fit the bleak prospects, though it was dismissed by the US administration. Torn between fear of recentralization and fear of disintegration that would have questioned internal borders, the US and German foreign policy establishment sought a middle ground.

For Genscher in particular, to throw open the question of the intra-Yugoslav borders (as suggested at one point in the early summer of 1991 by the Dutch presidency of the EC) was to open a Pandora's Box for the whole of Europe. The aim was to help the parties to the conflict to find a peaceful solution, possibly including a new association between the Yugoslav republics. The policy of non-recognition aimed at keeping open such an option. Gradually it lost its purpose once it became clear that Serbia was not really interested in negotiating a new constitutional order on the basis of equality with the other republics. (Libal 2004, 79-80)

On the other hand there were governments struggling with their own secessionist movements, such as Spain, France and the UK who had sympathies for stronger central government (Biermann 2004, 41). In the case of France, as I showed, the interest was also strategic, so as not to set off an example that would have stimulated break-up of the USSR. However, not all were as diplomatic even back then. For example, one of leading Austrian government ministers, Erhard Busek, left no doubt about his support to an independent Slovenia:

You in Slovenia, just like friends in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Baltic States and Romania, taught us that there is not only material side of life, but that a
man needs spirit, faith and hope. A lot of things went wrong at the start of this century, because we were unable to find a way how these small states, small peoples, with different histories, but great common culture, could live together. I hope that we will be able in the end of this century to learn how, with all diversity, which is what is beautiful; we can create Europe together in freedom and peace. Because of all this, I, as a democrat, Austrian and European, from my heart, wish much success to DEMOS, Slovenia and Europe.243 (RTB 1990)

Clearly, Yugoslavia was not mentioned. Not all in Western Europe were very supportive of it. On the other hand, in December 1990, the Italian premier had a different message: “In Europe there is no place for new states. There is also no place for an independent Slovenia… Please realize that your place is in Yugoslavia. In this framework we will work together with you” (Biermann 2004, 41).

The sum of these interests was, therefore, highly susceptible to the developments in the USSR. The weaker the USSR got, the fewer reasons there were to neglect the soaring self-determination norm in case of Yugoslavia. In such context, Slovenes were developing their policy toward independence. That is why they were not able to say outright that what they wanted was secession. Instead, they constantly used euphemisms such as “disassociation” (Jović 2003, 29366).244 For example, Slovenian politician Emil Milan Pintar, in an interview from

243 DEMOS was Slovenian anti-communist coalition that won majority of seats in the spring of 1990 Slovenian multiparty elections.

244 Secession — “otcepljenje”, disassociation — “osamostaljenje”.
February 1991, said: “It cannot be said that Slovenia is on a path to secession. It would be closer to the truth to say that it is disassociating itself” (Nikolić 1991).

A mechanism that would have enabled independence without secession was supposed to transform Yugoslavia into a confederacy. That was explicitly put forward by the Slovenian leadership after the December 1990 independence referendum. The choice left to others in Yugoslavia was to either agree to a confederation or reject it, thus prompting Slovenes toward full secession.

Slovenes felt increasingly pressured to act like this due to the developments elsewhere in Yugoslavia. Summer of 1990 saw the first flare ups of Serb-Croat conflict in Croatia, with an increasing spiral of inter-connected centrifugal moves. As the new Croatian government was adopting new legal acts distancing its republic from Yugoslav constitutional framework, Krajina Serbs were reciprocating by distancing from the Croatian government. In August 1990, the first barricades were erected. At the same time, Kosovo was again disquieted, due to Kosovo Albanian delegates' declaration of Kosovo becoming the seventh republic.

In May 1990, after first elections in Slovenia and Croatia brought nationalists to power, the federal army started taking over territorial defense depots in those republics. Territorial defense was a Yugoslav concept similar to national guards in the US. In 1980’s Croatia, for example, its territorial defense forces were increasingly understood as Croatia's army (Špegelj 2001, 89). The decision to have territorial defense depots all over Yugoslavia placed under the federal army's control was taken as a precaution. It was perhaps one of the first tangible signals of the militarization of these political disputes. It was adopted under the new president of Yugoslavia's collective presidency, Serb Borisav Jović. It was executed, formally, upon orders of the federal military command in a swift manner that left Slovenian and Croatian leaders surprised (Jović
1995, 146-154). Janez Drnovšek, Jović's predecessor at the helm of Yugoslav presidency, recognized that in this period it was clear to Slovenes that independence was the only way forward (Drnovšek 1996, 194).

Until the Slovenian referendum in December 1990, Slovenia's leadership put forward proposals for confederation as a way to achieve independence. The international context was discouraging secession. After the referendum, in their internal discussions, Slovenian leaders were clear that independence had to be put in practice without a confederal cloak, but not until September 1991 would they formally announce that the confederal option was dead (Rupel 2013, 335-336).

The problem after the referendum was how to proceed without legitimizing federal institutions. Lojze Peterle, Slovenian premier, was asked about Slovenia’s attitude toward adopting a formal procedure of secession. The form became the essence. Peterle explained: “If we come to the federal institutions, we risk outvoting. We can propose our ideas to the federal parliament and receive an answer: ‘No, that cannot work!’ [laughter]245 That way we cannot achieve our interests” (Stojić 1990). Peterle announced that within 6 months Slovenia was going to declare its independence. Slovenian president, Milan Kučan, likewise insisted that “federal institutions cannot be partners or arbiters, but institutional frameworks within which [agreements between republics] will be made” (Flegar 1991). He added that according to Slovenia’s viewpoint, only peoples and republics were political subjects in the federation and therefore, the only ones who can engage in negotiations about the future (Ibid.).246 In the Hague tribunal, he recalled:

245 As in the original text

246 My italics
Already at the meeting in January, in January 1991, after the meetings when it turned out that no agreement could be achieved about the reorganization of Yugoslavia, [Slovenian] Assembly… in February 1991 adopted a declaration on an agreed upon disassociation with a proposal, which contained a proposal how to ensure Slovene self-determination where it was also stated that *it doesn't want it any other way than through an agreement with other republics*. This declaration had been then sent to all the Assemblies of other republics and provinces. The only answer and positive answer we received was from the Assembly of Croatia. (Kučan 2003, 20192)

12.2.2. The Arguments of Violence

However, thinking about contingency plans in case of escalation could not have been avoided. The first talks started in November of 1990, but on January 20, 1991, Croatian and Slovenian defense and interior ministers signed a treaty promising mutual help in defense matters (Špegelj 2001, 120). Croatia was especially motivated because on January 10th it was put under great pressure from the Yugoslav presidency to reduce its swelled reserve of police and surrender 20,000 rifles.

Only four days after the Croat-Slovene pact was signed, Croats were shocked to learn that Slovenian and Serbian presidents reached an understanding. The nature of this understanding was in mutual recognition of the right to self-determination which included peoples and not only republics. Milošević said: “...the right to self-determination which cannot be limited by *anything*

---

247 My italics
must be the starting point in solving the crisis...“, while Kučan returned that: “Slovenia respects the interest of the Serbian people to live in one state and the future Yugoslav agreement should respect that interest” (Delo 1991: Ramet 2008, 35).248

Such a move infuriated the Croatian leadership and they did not give it much importance due to the fact that Kučan also said that the rights of one people should not infringe upon the same rights of other peoples. Later on, Kučan claimed that that meant no changing of borders, but Croats did not find that sufficient at the time (Silber and Little 1996, 95; Karabeg 2008b). Slovenes were clearly aware that they have an advantage over Croatia “…because of Croats in Bosnia and Serbs in Croatia… To solve their problems, they have to, before we do, start negotiating with Serbia” (Kučan in Flegar 1991).

On the other side, Croats felt strategically tied to Slovenians. Throughout the winter and spring of 1991, Croats urged Slovenians not to rush to follow their lead. As a Croatian minister at that time, Boljkovac (2009, 223), recorded: “Since it was clear that the only Slovenian goal was to get out of Yugoslavia as fast as possible, we asked them, because we were in a much worse position, to postpone that or at least slow down, so we would not be left alone, considering that [Bosnia] and Macedonia did not dare to do anything.” Even earlier, in the fall of 1990, Croatians feared Slovenia’s fast pace, as influential Croatian academic Dušan Bilandžić told Kučan, urging him to wait for the coagulation of the “anti-Milošević“ coalition“ (Silber and Little 1996, 125-126). Clearly, even though the Croatian and Slovene leaderships wanted the same end result, they were not sharing the same problems, nor did they trust each other fully.

248 My italics. Also, from february until the summer clashes, Serbia was also officially supporting the option of weak federation, the one that would have kept only four basic state functions (Jović 1995, 335).
Rupel later confessed how German and Austrian leaders viewed Slovenia and Croatia as “Siamese twins”, alike in many things. “We did not oppose that view because we knew we were never going to reach the critical mass needed for an independent departure by ourselves”, since “[w]ith Croatia, however, we represented almost half of the country” (Silber and Little 1996, 140).

While Slovene-Croat friction over the same path they were taking took place, Western countries were increasingly worried about any use of violence in the Soviet Union, as well as in Yugoslavia. It was so especially if violence was threatening the self-determination of republics and the gradual transformation of Soviet Union into a looser federation.

Perhaps one of the first actions taken by a Western country to threaten Yugoslavia over its democratic transition and human rights came in October 1990. The US Congress adopted a regulation that was supposed to cut financial aid if all republics did not hold free and fair elections. Further, they also mandated respect for human rights and compliance with the Helsinki Accords (Obey 2015). What has remained highly controversial was this insistence on democratic elections in republics, but not at the federal level. In 6 months, May 1991, this regulation was going to be activated if there was no progress achieved by Yugoslavia.

In April 1991, Slovenia’s minister of foreign affairs Rupel listed Yugoslavia’s international standing as one of the main reasons for Slovenia’s secession. In frustration, he focused on the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe being admitted into European organizations, while Yugoslavia was put on hold (Lukić and Lynch 1996, 18). In January 1991, following the threats made by the Yugoslav army and the federal presidency against illegal arming in Croatia, US ambassador Zimmermann publicly warned against use of force to keep Yugoslavia together (Woodward 1995b, 157). As federal defense minister Kadijević wrote (1993, 87-88),
Zimmermann strongly protested against use of force in disarming Croatia’s inflated reserve police force, emphasizing the need to negotiate instead use violence (Zimmermann 1999, 95-100). Furthermore, according to Kadijević, the ambassador invoked Baltic States’ negotiations with Gorbachev as the role model. However, that was exactly the time when Moscow violently intervened in Baltic States, so it is not quite clear if Kadijević understood the context well. Nevertheless, it seems that the connection between Soviet and Yugoslav dynamics was made, as it often has been.

This position, rejection of use of force in keeping Yugoslavia together only intensified over the spring. The whole approach to the rejection of the use of force was controversial from the start, since no country in the world was rejecting that sovereign prerogative. However, a logical problem existed as well, which boiled down to the question — if there is a violent clash, which one of the sides should be held responsible as the one that “used force”? Clearly, there would have been no violence if one side refrained from it, yielding to the demands of the other side. If republics were taking over more and more federal powers, at some point those actions were going to physically conflict with the functioning of the federal officials implementing federal regulations. Who was going to be held responsible and accused of “using force”? What was the reference point?

For example, on March 1 1991, Croatian police intervened in Pakrac, after the local Serb majority voted to join the self-proclaimed Serb autonomy — Krajina. The Yugoslav army intervened to stop bloodshed and put itself between the belligerent sides. Who was to blame for the use of violence? The federal presidency came under pressure to deal with a fundamental security dilemma. One of the most important moments in Yugoslavia’s disintegration was the well-known mid-March 1991 federal presidency vote. The presidency of Yugoslavia deliberated
on whether to permit the federal army to intervene and disarm paramilitary formations, since the January decision was not respected, primarily by the Croatian authorities. The federal army needed 5 out of 8 members to vote in favor of declaring a state of emergency and authorizing the army to act (Silber and Little 1996, 104; Jović 1995). However, the Bosnian representative, himself a Serb, refused to join the four members of the “Serbian block” (Serbia, Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro). Slovenian member of the presidency, in explaining his vote, said that the proposed measures (state of emergency) “…also lead to civil war. If they are supposed to prevent civil war in one form, they will still lead to another form of civil war…” (Jović 1995, 299). Macedonian member of the presidency thought along similar lines — both decisions were risking civil war (Ibid.).

The logic of such deliberations placed the responsibility for war squarely on the side of the federal presidency. Armed preparations of Slovenia and Croatia for secession were, from that point of view, simply precautionary measures aimed at securing the most fundamental human right — self-determination. The leaders lived and operated in completely separated perceptions of reality. Serbian representative Jović warned that the arming some people was forcing others to take up arms as well. Slovenian representative Drnovšek replied that no disarmament, no threats, no use of force were necessary and that nobody in Yugoslavia or in “the world” was going to have understanding for that, including Drnovšek himself. Jović replied in frustration: “We told you hundred times you could achieve all that in a legal way, but you are opting for fait accompli” (Jović 1995, 301).

The simmering in the army and the attempts of the “Serbian block“ to authorize its action against the growing threat of unilateral secession by disarming secessionist forces led to deliberations about a coup. Just before the mid-March presidency session, federal defense
minister Kadijević visited Moscow, but did not receive support from the Soviet army leadership (marshal Yazov) to execute a coup in Yugoslavia (Jović 1995, 296). Kadijević himself stated later that both internal and external contexts were highly discouraging coup and left only one option — reducing defense plans to those peoples and territories that wished to remain in Yugoslavia. Jović was angry that the coup failed, since he resigned together with other members of the “Serbian block” in the aftermath of the faithful session in mid-March precisely for the purpose to give an excuse to the army to take over the country. It is astonishing how the Yugoslav army leadership firmly stuck to the rules and regulations, repeatedly demanding political directives, even as it was facing the growing armed threat in its own backyard on the inevitable collision course. One cannot but wonder how Thucydides would have explained this episode.

Another violent clash occurred in Plitvice, Croatia, on March 31st. This time, two persons were killed: one Serb, one Croat. Slovenia’s diplomatic activity accelerated, though it was already touring foreign capitals, including NATO in Brussels, presenting its case for independence. May 1991 visit to Moscow and meeting with Yeltsin boosted Slovenia’s self-confidence. Yeltsin “…anticipated an imminent breakdown of the Soviet Union, information that removed from Slovenian screen the often used argument that a demise of Yugoslavia could provoke a chaotic disintegration of the Soviet Union” (Rupel 2013, 335). In fact, it was influential deputy state secretary Lawrence Eagleburger who was reminding Slovenians that “some form” for Yugoslavia had to be found, that Slovenia’s secession could have been a negative example and a trigger for larger problems in Soviet Union (Rupel 1992, 67).

The Slovenian minister of foreign affairs laid down, in his May 1991 address to his government, the basic premises for Slovenia’s international position (Rupel 1992, 118-119). In
his view, the external support Yugoslavia was receiving was based on the following *interests*: it was easier to do business with one country; fear of trigger effect in USSR, Czechoslovakia and Italy (sic!); worry about [foreign] investments in federal projects and in the end, fear for the stability of communication lines passing through Slovenia. On the other hand, there were *conditions* attached to support of Yugoslavia. They were: democracy, free market economy, human rights and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Rupel concluded that interests and conditions were contradictory, but that the latter were subjected to the former. Hence, the support to Yugoslav unity was “unconditional” (Ibid, 119). However, as Rupel was concluding, there was room for Slovenian action (Ibid, 120-121). First action was to accentuate Yugoslavia’s underperformance regarding conditions. Further, to stronger equate similarities among non-Serbs in Yugoslavia and Baltic States, as well as Basques, Catalans, Scots (sic!). He then went on listing all the countries that were either supporting Slovenia or likely to support it. Number one spot was reserved for Austrians, followed by Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. They were held able to “easily” sway Germany in general. The Linz talks about that with the German minister of foreign affairs were “easy”. The list of supporters then included Scandinavian and Benelux countries; the latter were supposed to take over European Community’s leadership in July. Some Soviet republics, especially Russia and Belarus were also supportive, as well as Baltic States, whose support was deemed “symbolic”. France and Spain were clearly not in favor of Slovenia’s independence. UK’s government officials objected the rehabilitations of Nazi-collaborators by the new governments, both in Slovenia and Croatia, but there were also some “useful conversations”. The Italian position was seen as highly dependent on the American position, which was mixed. On the one hand, it supported federal Yugoslavia, but on the other, activation
of the Nickles-Bentley amendment could bring that to question. Good signals were coming from US ambassador Zimmermann, strongly opposed to military action and Senator Dole.

Twelve years after these events, Milošević and Kučan met again. Former as the accused, latter as the witness, they had the following exchange:

Milošević: So tell me, as you did have the possibility of stepping down from Yugoslavia in the way Slovakia did, for example, and you opted for violence and you played the decisive role, and of course Germany, Austria, the politicians that you discussed this issue with, why then did you opt for war when you could have stepped down peacefully? Why did you attack the JNA in Slovenia?

Kučan: The decision concerning the customs and the fate of the customs was a decision adopted by the Slovene Assembly on the 25th of June. And as far as other countries and politicians from other countries, I cannot involve them concerning the Slovene decision. The decision was taken by us. We weren't influenced by anybody else. The risk we took upon ourselves. (Kučan 2003, 20915)

In the days before the Slovenian declaration of independence, the question of its unilateral character took central stage in communications with De Michelis of Italy, US Secretary of State

---

249 The amendment was tied to the US law adopted in October 1990, conditioning further aid to Yugoslavia upon holding elections in republics and respecting human rights. In June, just prior Slovenia’s declaration of independence, Senator Dole’s amendment severed Croatia and Slovenia from the effects of this amendment. It applied only to the rest of the country.
Baker and European Community’s Jacques Poos. Rupel did his best to persuade them that Slovenian intention was not simply a unilateral secession. The real positions among Western countries were divided, as Rupel’s foreign policy document showed. At the same time, the official support to Yugoslav unity and objection to unilateral secessions was controversial, since at the same time it resolutely rejected any military intervention to preserve unity and suppress unilateral secessions. In May 1991, Borisav Jović reiterated Serbia’s position from the seat of the chairmen of the Yugoslav presidency — Slovenia was welcome to secede, but only legally. Otherwise, use of force was going to be inevitable (Jović 1995, 334). Baker was clear in his message, when he said to the federal premier Marković: “If you force the United States to choose between unity and democracy, we will always choose democracy” (Zimmerman 1999, 137). As I hope I sufficiently evidenced in the previous chapter, the seriousness of the situation in USSR demanded balanced Western position. The optimal path was “negotiations, negotiations” and a consensual move toward looser union of states. To domestic actors, this view seemed incoherent and confused at best and hypocritical and conspiratorial at worst (Woodward 1995b, 161). The mixed signals were thus coming from all directions (official and unofficial) to all Yugoslav actors.

12.2.3. The Break: June 1991

250 “Negotiations, negotiations” was the bottom line message Baker had for Slovenes in June 1991 (Rupel 1992, 134). Even more, Baker warned Slovenians that: “If Slovenia walks away, you will change the balance of forces in favor of Milosevic” (Zimmerman 1999, 136).
On June 25th, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. Slovenia seized border posts. Federal premier ordered customs police to take them back, put the Yugoslav flag on poles again and ask federal army for assistance. The army left the barracks and moved to seize border posts, but it used only a fraction of its potential (1900 soldiers out of about 20,000), according to Kadijević (1993, 92). It was met with the resistance that appalled senior army officers. In several days, 63 persons were killed, army barracks were besieged and road blocks paralyzed the communications. The bargaining theory of war is supported by the testimony of one of Slovenian leaders, Igor Bavčar: “Regardless of how strange that might sounds, but during [the fighting] we were contacting with the [Yugoslav] Army every hour… We usually communicated by exchanging ultimatums [and] talking on the phone about ongoing operations…” (Silber and Little 1996, 131).

Kadijević proposed evacuation to the federal leadership, since the army leadership was not able to imagine itself as an occupying force among the people despising them. There was a serious ideological breakdown happening among the military elite indoctrinated for decades to worship both Yugoslavia and socialism. In addition, however, such a move would have been an opportunity for the Western intervention and guerilla war against the army (Ibid, 93-96). He also admitted working behind the back of Slovene and Croat members of the presidency, because “they were anti-Yugoslav” (Ibid, 94). Jović (1995, 360) also agreed that USSR was incapable to help against military intervention from the West.

Slovenes were shocked by two things Croatia did at this dangerous period. First, Croatia did nothing to help Slovenia, even though agreements about that were made twice, most recently in May (Ramet 2008, 35; Špegelj 2001, 179-180). The second one was the Croatian vote against federal army’s evacuation from Slovenia, after Ante Marković ordered cessation of army actions
and federal presidency voted on army's proposal to evacuate. As Croatian member of the presidency, at that time its chairmen, Stipe Mesić had said:

Yes. I said: “If the army was going to evacuate from Croatia too, I will vote in favor of that decision, but if it is evacuating only from Slovenia, than that proves the war is continuing, that is, that the real war is only coming.” It is clear that we in Croatia did not wholeheartedly accept the decisions about Slovenia practically exiting Yugoslavia, because that meant we were going to have big hardships in achieving our goals. (Karabeg 2008c)

The international reaction to the “Ten-Day War” in Slovenia was only strengthened in its rejection of use of force in halting independence. Even the UK, which was officially reserved toward the prospect of further dissolution of Yugoslavia, felt “obliged significantly to qualify an early statement supporting the 'integrity of Yugoslavia' by adding that this should not include the use of force” (Woodward 1995b, 165). U.S. deputy secretary of state Eagleburger said that the United States supported “sovereign republics” and the idea of a Yugoslav confederation (Ibid.). The visit of the German foreign minister to Slovenia during the war (though he immediately returned to Austria, not reaching his hosts), meant a major boost to Slovenia’s self-confidence and prospects. Italy officially sided with Slovenia and Croatia and the US Senate’s foreign relations committee chairmen pressured George Bush to recognize republics’ independence (Silber and Little 1996, 137-138).

In July, European Community stepped in officially, offering its mediation. It brokered a three month “moratorium” on independence declarations. In essence, this meant delayed recognition, but was not very obvious at that time, since Slovenes were, for example, obliged to
respect federal rules regarding custom controls. Jović did not fail to mention to one of the EC representatives, Hans van den Broek, that Slovenia could have left peacefully and that there was a support for that, but it did not take upon the offer, just like few months earlier (Jović 1995, 353). After the fighting in Slovenia subsided and the peace conference was set up in August, Slovenia largely removed itself from the center stage of Yugoslav drama. The focus moved to the activities of international diplomacy around lord Carrington and Badinter's constitutional commission. The war theater moved to Croatia and started spilling over into Bosnia.

The fighting in Slovenia should not be viewed as civil war. First, even though I do not subscribe to the quantitative and temporal definitions of civil war, one cannot neglect that the fighting lasted about ten days and the number of dead was about 60. Second, the scope of the fighting did not include all available conventional weapons. As I outlined in the first part of this dissertation, tanks can be used to quell demonstrations, as it did happen in Belgrade and in Kosovo. However, use of artillery indicates resort to the most powerful conventional weapon. In combination with tanks and infantry they are powerful indicators of the highest effort to control the land. By all accounts, especially the one by federal defense minister, the Yugoslav government and its military hand did not use even a fraction of their might. The central government in essence yielded to the demand of secessionists. The shape and form of the yield was, however, important. It is one of the indicators of the decision-making that led actors to such a result, which I will focus on in the next section.

In conclusion regarding the definition, I side with Bateson’s (2010, 5-6) critique of interchangeable use of concepts such as “rebellion” (“insurgency”, “war onset”) and “civil war”. Rebellion does not necessarily involve extended fighting. Kalyvas and Balcells (2010, 427) support this view. A state can yield to the demands of rebels, as Yugoslavia did, and thus avoid
war. The prolonged character of “war” is then, perhaps, best captured via indicator of artillery use, since it indicates gravity of threat against which it is used. Any threat requiring use of artillery is most likely serious and resilient enough to justify “war” label.

12.2.4. The Logic of Violence

Based on the discussion above, I will try in conclusion to assess why violence was the optimal solution, the way leaders perceived it, in case of Slovenia's bid for independence. I have weaved in several citations throughout this chapter which were raising the question of Slovenes’ decision to unilaterally secede. Unilateral secession seemed sub-optimal, given Serbia’s support to Slovenia’s secession, on condition of peaceful and legal procedure.

Addressing Kučan in the Hague tribunal Milošević asserted that the law on secession “wasn't passed because there was no consensus. You did not allow it to be adopted, in fact, and to step down peacefully as a result” (Kučan 2003, 20917-20918). Kučan was trying to prove that Slovenes feared being outvoted in the process of adopting the law on secession: “The law on secession as was proposed would have been adopted in the federal chamber, not in the chamber of republics and provinces where consensus was needed. It was the federal chamber where the majority vote prevailed” (Ibid.). Milošević returned: “Why wasn't the law adopted, then, if we had the majority in the Assembly, and those four other republics, and were able in the federal chamber to adopt it by a majority a vote?” (Ibid.).

Indeed, the law on secession was supposed to be adopted in the federal chamber (lower chamber), not the chamber of republics and provinces (upper chamber), as Milošević claimed

251 “To step down”, that is, to become independent.
The federal chamber operated on the basis of simple majority, as Kučan claimed (Ibid.). However, since republics were equally represented (each had 30 delegates and provinces had 20), Serbs could not have possibly achieved quorum, let alone majority. Even if all Serb delegates would vote together, they would have still failed to pass the quorum (Marković 2005a, 35048). Kučan was wrong, there was no threat Slovenes could have been outvoted in the federal chamber. Even more so, since in cases when delegates from one republic would deem a draft law damaging to their national rights, special majority was required (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the Yugoslav constitution, in articles 398-403, was very precise. The constitution could not have been changed without consensus — an agreement among all republics and provinces. Changing Yugoslav borders, internal and external, were regulated in article 5. It stipulated that the country’s borders could not be changed without consent of all federal units. Borders of the republics could not have been changed without approval of the republics affected by the change. Hence, multiple protection clauses prevented any sort of outvoting on essential issues, while equal number of delegates cushioned Serbs’ relative demographic majority. As I have pointed out before, even proportional representation in federal parliament would have yielded only about 36% of Serbian delegates.

Such constitutional design was, after all, one of the main reasons of almost permanent gridlock of political process. Another argument questioning Slovenian leadership’s calculation is that Serbian leaders went public on numerous occasions about their willingness to support Slovenia’s independence. That was a costly signal, since any backtracking and trickery would have justified Slovenian return to unilateral action. Furthermore, they always had an option to leave federal parliament upon not getting what they were promised. One may suspect that the
Serbian leadership wanted to prolong negotiations about the law on secession just for the purpose of buying time to prepare military for taking over Slovenia. This, however, is highly unlikely, since any military buildup could not have been concealed and Slovenes could have reacted the same way they did in late June 1991.

Lastly, as records show, the Slovenes were fully aware that Serbia had credible interest in avoiding conflict because they were most concerned with the situation in Croatia. Severing Slovenia from Croatia in a peaceful and legal manner would have boosted Serbian position in several respects. First, obviously, it would have saved human, material and political resources. Second, the Serbian leadership would have been able to confirm itself as pragmatic, reasonable and peaceful. Subjecting the matter to the federal parliament would have strengthened the federal institutions’ legitimacy, including the legitimacy of the Yugoslav constitution. What, then, was really forcing Slovenian leaders to reject this option and pick riskier one?

I will resort to a counterfactual exercise to soften this question and offer a plausible answer. Since this question involves an “unobservable” (the reasoning within the closed circle of individuals in charge of Slovenia), this should be the way to flush out the most rational explanation of the seemingly sub-optimal choice. Counterfactuals should satisfy at least two requirements: plausibility and scope (Mueller 2014). Plausibility is satisfied if the alternative considered was actually considered by actor in question. One cannot just pick any theoretically possible alternative action, but only “plausible” one. The scope of the counterfactual exercise should be as narrower as possible. It should not involve broad and lengthy processes. As the scope of the alternative universe is increasing, the possibilities increase exponentially and the effect of counterfactual reasoning is decreasing.
Considering an actor’s rational choice in a given context within a narrow time span responds to this demand. That is why it is much more useful to ponder on what would have happened if Slovenes accepted Serbian proposal, than what would have happened if Yugoslav civic nationalism won against ethnic nationalisms in the course of 20th century. Fearon (1991, 194) adds that “… in small-N research, the common condition of too many variables and too few cases makes counterfactual thought experiments a necessary means for serious justification of causal claims”. Jackson (2011, 208) explains further that counterfactuals in the neopositivist research agenda are “logically equivalent to comparative cases”.

If Slovenia had accepted Serbia’s offer, the strategic environment would have been changed in the following manner. Slovenia, the most liberal and western-oriented republic would have joined Serbia, the regime accused of centralist and hegemonic aspirations, as well as of suppression of human rights of Albanians. Serbia and Slovenia would have been at the forefront as champions of peaceful negotiations and the right to self-determination, including secession. Other peoples and republics would have been invited to join. Montenegro was already following Serbia’s lead. Macedonian reluctance would have been removed since the right to self-determination (including secession) did not extend to national minorities. Hence, Macedonians could have counted on federal army in suppressing Albanian secessionism.

The only ones left would have been Bosnia’s Muslims and Croatians. Both republics involved significant presence of “constitutive nations” which were enjoying the right to self-determination. Now, the right was supposed to include a choice to stay in Yugoslavia. Essentially it would have meant seceding from a republic in which other constitutive people(s) exercised their self-determination to secede from Yugoslavia. Since Bosnian Muslims were heavily depending on balancing between Serbia and Croatia, Croatia would have been the key actor. Had
Slovenians joined the Serbs, ultimately the decision on adopting such a law and adjusting the constitution accordingly would have rested on Croats. As I have emphasized citing Croatian sources, it was of utmost, vital importance for Croats not to be severed from Slovenians in their unilateral moves on the path toward independence.

When the Yugoslav army’s withdrawal from Slovenia was proposed, only Croatian representative in the presidency voted against it. As both Rupel and Špegelj confirmed, the alliance was not based on fraternal feelings, the way Serbian nationalism connected Serbia and Montenegro. Joint secessionist action of northern republics swayed Bosnian Muslims and Macedonians, since internal balancing then became impossible. Federal Yugoslavia within which Serbs numbered about 36% of population was a comfortable environment for Bosnian Muslims and Macedonians to balance. Izetbegović was explicit about it.

Presented by the dilemma, to support the law on secession or not, Croats would have ended up in lose-lose situation. Voting in favor would have crippled them, as they would have lost Krajina (though expectedly, Bosnian Croats could have opted for joining Croatia). Voting against the law would have meant becoming a protector of constitutional order, against the wishes of the Yugoslav majority. Croats would have ended up both as prisoners and as prison guards within Yugoslavia.

Reducing the issue further and dropping the challenge to republics’ borders that such law on secession would have posed, the situation does not improve for Croatia. Yugoslav constitution was explicit in article 5 that Yugoslav borders could not have been changed without consent of all republics. The same article protected federal units’ borders, as it required their consent for any change. If Slovenia was to propose an amendment to change Yugoslav borders in a way that would leave Slovenia independent, Serbia would have voted in favor, but Croatia
would not have supported that. Simply, by acting together, Slovenia and Croatia were able to claim that Yugoslavia was falling apart, rather than that they were seceding.

Stepping out of Yugoslavia, the international situation was such that it would not have welcomed such change in Yugoslav internal dynamics. If Slovenia opted to secede legally, Croatia would have had to oppose that. Given that all the negotiations would have been returned to the legal Yugoslav framework, legitimacy of federal institutions would have been reinvigorated. That would have been a strong move toward strengthening the state against the principle of self-determination. That was the principle that enabled German reunification, liberation of Eastern Europe and softening of Soviet Union. Since it has been, I believe, demonstrated that the trends in Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were indeed perceived as reflecting on each other, the optimal course for the international actors was neither secession, nor reinvigoration of federal institutions, but the middle path — loose union of states, weak confederation. That was exactly what was impossible to get from Serbs in federal institutions. The constitutional provisions enabling one federal unit to block constitutional reform served Serbs as a protection from converting Yugoslavia into full confederation or union of states. That is why the pressure into accepting confederal arrangement had to move out of institutions.

What cannot be known, but can be detected, is that the stakes of both Croats and the international actors were high enough to either threaten or encourage, or both, Slovenia’s extra-institutional move toward independence. The most likely mechanism could have been the implicit or explicit assurance that Croatia was going to be supported in blocking Slovenia’s institutional path toward independence. Steering Yugoslavia toward confederation or loose union of states required tolerance of Slovenia’s violations of Yugoslav constitution, pressure on Yugoslav government not to use violence and warning Serbs not to question internal borders.
On the other hand, the Yugoslav premier Marković ordered federal police to restore federal control over border posts, but only allowed for “assistance” of the army. Since Kadijević was in direct communication with Serbian leaders behind the back of other members of the presidency, it is more likely than not that the intervention of the army happened with dual purpose. If the intimidation was to work, the success would have been declared and Slovenes would have been defeated or at least put in the inferior position in further negotiations. If the intervention was to fail, the message sent to other republics and to the world would have been that it was legitimate to intervene by force against secessionist republics. Of course, the message was addressed primarily to Croatia and sizeable pro-Yugoslav Serb minority there, claiming their right to stay in Yugoslavia.

The use of the army, therefore, emerged from the foggy relationship between three actors. The first was the pro-Yugoslav federal premier hoping to prevent fait accompli and keep negotiations indoors. The second was the “Serbian block”, eager to cut off Slovenia, but also to send the costly signal that violent secession will be met with violent response. The third actor was the army, still hoping to keep Yugoslavia together, deluding itself about pro-Yugoslav feelings of large enough number of Slovenians and Croats.

In the following decision-making tree, I tried to simplify the strategic options that led to Slovenia’s rejection of peaceful secession. It detects that the most logical reason behind it was the understanding that Croatia was going to reject adoption of the new law that would have enabled Slovenia’s peaceful secession. Otherwise, there would have been no logic in Slovenia’s rejection of Serbia’s offer. The decision-making tree below starts with the Slovenia’s dilemma following Serbia’s offer: peaceful and legal secession.
In the next section, I will discuss the logic of war in Croatia and its spill over into Bosnia, and two cases of Bosnian Muslims’ seemingly irrational choices.

### 12.3. Serb-Croat-Bosniak War

The escalating conflict between Serbs and Croats can be followed from the spring of 1990, during the heated atmosphere preceding parliamentary elections in Croatia. The first mass violence occurred during the soccer derby in Zagreb between Serbia’s “Red Star” and Croatia’s “Dinamo” in mid-May 1990. There are four periods we can follow to capture the logic of violence as a bargaining tool.

3. Civil war in Croatia: July 1991 - April 1992


The goal of the first two sections is to show the logic of introducing violence into the bargaining over the status of Serbs in Croatia.\textsuperscript{252} The third section will show the logic of extending violence into a full war between the federal army, Croatian troops and how that logic extended to Bosnia. The puzzling question tied to this section is why Croatian government believed it had a chance in fighting the federal army and the Serbs. The fourth section will discuss the diffusion of violence into Bosnia and then compare two seemingly irrational strategic decisions of Bosnian Muslims.

\textbf{12.3.1. Non-Lethal Conflict Escalation: Summer 1990 - February 1991}

After Croatian nationalist HDZ under Franjo Tuđman took the power in Croatia, one of their first actions was to impose new symbols. The attempt to impose exclusive Croatian symbols closely tied to World War II Croatia was rejected by Serbs. There was no room for compromise, since adoption of symbols meant adoption of political goals represented by symbols. As long as the coat of arms of Croatian federal unit was composed of red star on top of Croatian checkerboard, within Yugoslav political framework, Serbs were willing to accept it. These symbols expressed the great bargain achieved in 1943-1946 period: Croatia as a federal unit, but within Yugoslavia. Removal of the red star and Serbs’ rejection of such a move did not mean Serbs’ defense of communism, but defense of the equilibrium of crucial significance for the Yugoslav state.

\textsuperscript{252} I will refer to them as “Krajina Serbs” as a more precise term.
In May 1990, Croatian police chiefs came to Knin, capital of Krajina Serbs, to negotiate over the new symbols. One of the arguments was that the salaries under new government increased manifold (Silber and Little 1996, 82). It did not matter. There could have been no guarantees that the jobs were going to be kept (there were already massive removals of Serbs from works). In fact, the prospect of higher salaries did not seem sufficient to remove fears of new government’s neo-ustasha elements and secessionist aims. The negotiations failed.

The Croatian government’s next move was to prevent the Krajina Serbs’ referendum in August 1990. The Krajina Serbs addressed Yugoslav presidency after threats from Zagreb. Just few days before the referendum, the Croatian government decided to disarm police stations in Serb municipalities central to the growing Serb resistance. In one of them they did succeed, but in the others they failed. One reason was the gathering of large mass of people and the distribution of weapons from the police station depots. The other was the intervention of the Yugoslav air force, the first intervention of the federal army in the ongoing disputes. August 1990 Krajina Serbs rebellion was marked by road blocks, which were never removed. They were the first lines charting future frontlines.

The bargaining that used to be limited to verbal exchanges in political institutions was now being materialized in the physical world. The result of the intervention of the federal army was to force Croatian government to limit its short-term policy objectives to establishing control over Croatia without frictions with the federal army. The army would continue being the buffer between Krajina Serbs and Croatian government. However, the long-term Croatian goal imposed the need for a Croatian army. Not later than September 1991, Croatia initiated a large scale operation of arms imports (Špegelj 1999, 105). It was inflating its “reserve” police force largely with loyal members of the ruling party.
The primary arms supplier at that early stage was Hungary. The logical question imposing itself concerns the motivation of Hungarian leadership at the time to approve of such an operation. Yugoslavia hosted a significant Hungarian minority, predominantly situated in northern Serbia. Instability in Yugoslavia was concerning Hungarian government (Jenne 2007). Even if there was a lucrative motivation driving Hungarian policy, arms could have been sold further away from home. Given that the official position of the international community toward Yugoslavia in the 1990 was supportive of its unity (Glaudrić 2011), the arm supply was even more controversial. This episode is further puzzling, because the federal government of Yugoslavia was kept in the dark.

At the same time when Hungary was supplying arms to Croatia, its position toward the problems in Soviet Union was opposite. For example, the director for Soviet Affairs in the Hungarian ministry of foreign affairs stated: “We do what we can do not to pour oil on the fire that is going on in the Soviet Union… We do not want any explosions, God forbid” (Bohlen 1990). Quite naturally, Hungary’s top foreign policy objective was to get as close as possible to the West, as fast as possible. As foreign minister Jeszenszky stated in the summer of 1990: “Above all, we want to re-orient Hungary's foreign policy toward the West, to move as close as possible to Western Europe economically, culturally, and politically…. I do not think neutrality will be the general line Hungary will follow…. if the Cold War is over . . . it no longer makes sense to declare oneself neutral” (Cottey 1995, 96).

Of Hungary’s western partners, Germany was by far the most important one. Unlike Poland and Czech Republic, Hungary did not have any historical animosity toward Germany apart from the Cold War and frictions with East Germany (Phillips 2000). This contributed to the quick building of a strong relationship following the fall of the Berlin Wall in all areas. “Amiable
relations are reinforced by a fundamental concurrence in national foreign policy interests” (Ibid, 107).

Rapid progress in German-Hungarian relations was not triggered by the fall of communism. In fact, Hungarian pivotal role in enabling East Germans to cross into the West came within the framework of German-Hungarian opening within Ostpolitik (Borhi 2008, 82). By 1989, West Germany became the most valuable economic partner of Hungary. Fearing hasty Hungarian moves against Soviets that might have undermined Gorbachev, Kohl government advised Hungarians in the winter 1989/1990 to “not accelerate events” (Ibid.).

Because of such close knit relationship, it would be highly improbable that Hungary would have dared to supply weapons to Croatia without the tacit approval of top German leadership. Quite importantly, the big turn away from the Cold War’s policy of supporting Yugoslavia seemed to have occurred in the mid-1990, with the victory of the Croatian nationalists in the context of the victory of the right to self-determination. During Cold War, German frustration with Yugoslavia had several sources. Yugoslavia was a communist country, therefore an illegitimate tyranny. However, it was a communist defector country, which had to be embraced and nurtured. Lastly, it was aggressive in its fight against Croatian nationalists, often resorting to murdering them in Germany. As Klaus von Dohnányi (state minister in the German ministry of foreign affairs) and Gerhart Baum (minister of interior) respectively stated:

[Families of the assassinated Croat émigrés were] right when it comes to their personal suffering, but in politics things are what they are. Our primary interest then was to find ways to reduce tensions with the USSR… Easing that tough conflict was the question that, with an emphasis on Yugoslavia and Romania, was of supreme importance and in that context we probably did some things wrong.
Yugoslavia was an authoritarian state, just like East Germany, Poland or Soviet republics. We were reticent about that. We dealt with Yugoslavia in a delicate manner. We spared Yugoslavia because we needed Yugoslavia. (Grüll and Hofmann 2014)

With the fall of communism Slovenia and Croatia were thus quite expectedly identified as being in the same position together with other East European states and Soviet republics. While evolution toward confederal Yugoslavia would have both preserved stability and the exercise of the right to self-determination, the latter was more important than the former. By the fall of 1990, it was not clear whether Moscow and Belgrade were going to respect the right to self-determination. Gorbachev’s bloody intervention against Baltic States in the winter of 1990/1991 was met with threats of economic sanctions. Both Gorbachev and Yugoslav federal government, including Serbia, were invited repeatedly not to use violence. Yugoslav republics were invited to seek common ground, but in parallel, both Germany and Austria were establishing and/or deepening communication lines with the Croatian and Slovenian leaders.

It would have been dangerous to supply weapons to Baltic States and Soviet republics in defense of their right to self-determination. Gorbachev was, in general, moving in the right direction and, after all, there were dangers of nuclear weapons and wildfire of ethnic violence, as I discussed in the previous chapter. Yugoslavia was not like that. Its “Center” was much weaker, its northern republics much closer to Europe, there were no nuclear weapons and defending the right to self-determination was too important. While Kohl’s government certainly did not want to see bloodshed anywhere, it most certainly did not want to see self-determination crushed by the
force of a federal center.\textsuperscript{253} Chancellor Kohl reminded federal premier Marković and the presidents of all republics on 8 February 1991 that threatening or even employing violence to keep Yugoslavia together would lead to a dead end and that the “unity at all costs” was not acceptable (Biermann 2004, 39).

According to Kohl’s advisor Horst Teltschik, the first contacts between Kohl and Croatian leader Tuđman were established not later than August 1990 and were kept in secret (Lantis 2002, 84). The February 1991 founding of Croatian consulate in Germany was another indication that the official policy of support to Yugoslavia’s unity was eroding. This is even more underlined since January 1991 was very important month in Yugoslavia. First, Krajina Serbs formally denied jurisdiction to Croatian ministry of interior, to which Croatian government responded by introducing loyalty oaths and stepping up cleaning of Serbian cadre. Second, Yugoslav presidency reacted by formally ordering all illegal military formations to be abolished, while federal army threatened to elevate its combat readiness because of Croatian mobilization and indeed introduced such measures in some areas. Third, the January 25\textsuperscript{th} sessions of Yugoslav

\textsuperscript{253} There are works highly critical of German and Austrian actions in alleged arms smuggling. While it is not quite certain there was a direct connection in 1990, it seems that the tacit approval existed at least in the 1991. See works of: Schmidt-Eenboom (1995, Ch. 9), Blank (1995), Hudson (2003, Ch. 6), Gibbs (2009) and especially the articles by Vasić (2005) and Zgaga and Surc (2011). Throughout his diary, Jović (1995) blames German and Austrian policies for aiming to destroy Yugoslavia. He attributes their motivation to \textit{realpolitik} and/or historical revanchism. He usually refers to intelligence sources of his suspicions. For example, when commenting on Slovenian member of Yugoslav presidency, Janez Drnovšek, playing tenis with Austrian premier in the summer of 1990, he “knows” they discussed secessionist strategy (Ibid, 181).
presidency pressured Croatian representatives to promise they would disarm para-military units formed around the ruling party and Croatian ministry of interior. Yugoslav army released a movie evidencing secret preparations of Croatian government to attack federal army personnel and take over army installations in Croatia. The movie also showed evidence of secret arms transfers from Hungary to Croatia (Petrović 2015).  

The bargain achieved in the presidency session was to have personnel mobilized by Croatia disbanded, while federal army was to reduce its combat readiness partially elevated earlier. The promise Croats made to disarm was not fulfilled, but the time accelerated. It was a matter of when the situation was going to escalate, not if. In early November 1990, Croatian ministry of defense presented a study on the combat readiness of the federal army in Croatia, concluding that it was very weak. However, the Croatian president did not share that opinion (Špegelj 1999, 108-114). Now, the speed of events was making bargaining increasingly expensive.

The movie released by the army exploded in the public, revealing the full brutality of the ongoing undercover plans. Serbs in Krajina increasingly pressured federal army to give them weapons, often resorting to private initiative and appeals to Serbia, whose secret service at minimum tacitly approved arms transfers to Krajina. The importance of relying on Serbia’s public and secret support cannot be overstated. As one of top Krajina leaders said in the fall of 1990:”Serbs [in Bosnia and Croatia] often had a damning feeling of abandonment and neglect, as

254 In one moment, Croatian minister of defense was heard assuring the present about “Americans” promising military equipment because Milošević won the elections in Serbia.
if being a “sacrificed people”. What can I say about people whose villages were thrown into pits overnight? That is why this support means so much” (Grubač 1990).255


As Krajina Serbs rushed to politically constitute their territorial organization, they resorted to separating from municipalities where they were a minority and establishing their rule in the ones where they were a majority. They would have simply hold a session of the municipal assembly and vote for “joining Krajina”. In the process, they would assume command over the local police station. This is what they did in municipalities with absolute Serbian predominance, but when they tried to do the same in Pakrac where they had only slight majority, Croatian police intervened, dispelling Serbs and triggering federal army’s intervention. This was the first time federal army literally stepped on the physical ground between the conflicted parties. The skirmish occurred with few wounded, but nobody was killed. The agreement made was to have both Croatian police and federal army withdraw. Pakrac itself remained divided until the 1995 Croatian victory. The effect of the army intervention was to protect and encourage Serbs’ defense, but in Croatian government and public’s eyes, it could not have been anything else but carving out the “Greater Serbia”, which retroactively justified their urge to secede (Mesić 2003,

255 Biermann (2004, 43) noted how, in two meetings with all EC ambassadors in January and February 1991 Milošević very clearly stated that he would never accept Krajina Serbs becoming a minority in the independent Croatia.
On the other side, their secessionist policy justified Krajina Serbs’ secession from Croatia, or, simply their decision to remain in Yugoslavia.

The logic of the spring events of 1991 was following the classic security dilemma pattern. As much as the Croatian government wanted to prevent losing its sovereignty, it was at the same time eroding the sovereignty of Yugoslavia and threatening Krajina Serbs. Croatia was still not feeling strong enough to challenge the federal army, but feared the emerging Krajina was going too far. In the same time, Slovenes were not slowing down with their move to independence. This tension put a heavy burden on Croatian government to step up its army build up and intervene everywhere to at least preserve the claim on the territory. Next event, however, came very quickly. In the end of March 1991, Serbs attempted to have Plitvice national park and the town of Korenica with its Serbian majority as part of Krajina. The violent clash resulted in one dead on each side, the first victims of the escalation. The army intervened again as a buffer, further enraging Croatian public. However, two weeks prior, federal army failed to obtain the Yugoslav presidency’s approval to engage all paramilitary formations. The Yugoslav constitution tied army’s hands in dealing with the armed secessionists. Half of the members of the presidency voted in favor, half voted against authorizing army’s action. Half of those against the use of army were representatives of the secessionist republics. In essence, the constitution turned into Yugoslavia’s “suicide pact”.

All over Croatia, road blocks, check points and militarized local police, supported by local population, effectively charted the lines of future frontlines, but they were still porous. It seemed

---

256 This led to the first instances of short run physical blockades of the federal army barracks in Bjelovar and Varaždin in March 1991.
that during the day life was almost normal and people went to work across these lines, but at night the fearful expectations prevailed and stifled movement.

On May 1\textsuperscript{st}, Croatian police sent a couple of its members to Borovo Selo, a predominantly Serbian little town in Eastern Croatia, close to border with Serbia.\textsuperscript{257} Their goal was to remove the Yugoslav flag from the pole. They were shot at by local Serbs, who captured two while two fled (Silber and Little 1996, 119). The next day, a larger group of Croatian policemen simply drove their bus straight into the village, which was already alarmed by the incident of the previous day. Twelve Croatian policemen and at least one Serb were killed in firefight. The local Serbs were joined by Serbian volunteers from Serbia, while Yugoslav presidency ordered army to stop further fighting between the sides. Local Serbs resented federal army, because it refused to intervene until the fighting started:”By the time they create a tampon-zone, many heads will fall” (Biserko 2007, 352).

What is intriguing is that Borovo Selo was attacked just shortly before that, in a seemingly irrational act of provocation, conducted by some of the highest and most influential HDZ members.\textsuperscript{258} They drove to a Serb barricade at Borovo Selo, fired and RPG into it and left (Silber and Little 1996, 118-119).\textsuperscript{259} In late July, Croatian minister of defense, Špegelj, lamented about

\textsuperscript{257} On this day, a member of HDZ killed a Serb, Stevan Inić, who was the first victim in this region.

\textsuperscript{258} The leader of that group was Gojko Šušak, one of the most important Croatian emigrants. He financed HDZ and in the fall of 1991 replaced Špegelj as the minister of defense.

\textsuperscript{259} Josip Reihl-Kir, local Croatian police commander who objected use of force and maintained tensed but functional relationship with local Serbs, condemned this action. He was killed on July 1st.
this case as one of “small counterproductive provocations” (Špegelj 1999, 309). He concluded: “That is, in these circumstances, a disastrous policy. Or, perhaps, there is something which is not known to me. I do not understand these controversies” (Ibid.). What he advocated instead, was a decisive attack on Yugoslav army installations dispersed within Croatian populated territories in Croatia. Just like in October 1990, he did not believe in the fighting capacity of the federal army.

Following the massacre of Croatian policemen in Borovo Selo, Croatia was up in arms as national TV replayed gruesome scenes and inflammatory messages coming from top officials. All over Croatia violent incidents flared and in some cases mass demonstrations ended in destruction of Serb property. Croatia soon staged its first military parade in its capital. In May, Tuđman visited Italy and was received by the Pope in a pompous ceremony, greatly boosting Croat self-confidence (Mesić 2003, 42). In Split, the crowd demonstrated against the army and attacked a couple of young conscripts. The rioting ended up in one dead soldier, a conscript from Macedonia. Under such circumstances, Mesić was scheduled to become the chairman of Yugoslav presidency, which Serbia tried to prevent and thus triggered another political crisis.

Following another Slovenian-Croat defense pact forged toward the end of May and early June, both republics declared independence, but only Slovenia seized border crossings and ended up fighting federal army. Croatia essentially remained passive, to dismay of its minister of defense (Špegelj 1999). This crisis brought in the mediation of the European Community representatives. While the three month “moratorium on declarations of independence” was introduced in compromise with the EC, July saw perhaps the first use of artillery by one side, the federal army which is why I consider that civil war started in July of 1991. However, it was more a transitory period, than a moment. By the end of August, Croatian forces would start to siege army compounds, barracks, depots, etc. The attacks on the army were more often than not met
with a concerted fire from all possible weapons. In early September, the full civil war was raging in Croatia. What was the rationale behind the sudden extension of attacks to include federal army as a legitimate target?

12.3.3. Civil War in Croatia: August 1991 - April 1992

The diplomatic activity following the short violence in Slovenia boiled down to introducing three fundamental norms into the Yugoslav destruction. First, that no use of violence will be rewarded by Europe and the US. Second, that republics do have the right to self-determination and that the compromise between the two should be the confederal restructuring of Yugoslavia. The third came in the form of both carrot and a stick, depending on the viewpoint. That was the growing voice that any further use of violence by federal army would pressure Germany to recognize independence of Slovenia and Croatia. From Belgrade’s viewpoint, this seemed like a stick, but from Croatian viewpoint, this seemed rather like a carrot.

In June and July, even though the federal army suffered random attacks by local Croatian units trying to fight Krajina Serbs, Croatian government did not decide on attacking the army. Croatian defense minister Špegelj and the chair of Yugoslav presidency Mesić, advised otherwise. In a meeting in the end of July, they demanded prompt attack on Yugoslav army's infrastructure within Croat populated areas and the capture of weaponry in order to enhance Croatia's negotiations position vis-à-vis both Yugoslavia and Krajina Serbs. However, Croatian president was resolute, there was going to be no attack on the army, Croatia had to wait and negotiate (Špegelj 1999, 2007-2008).
When the news about ongoing coup in Moscow reached Yugoslavia, the chair of its presidency, Stjepan Mesić, revealed one of crucial factors in decision-making until then:

Conservative forces may adopt the Moscow event, trying to use it as a model for the solution of our problems. On the other hand... *the world will no longer have its hands tied by Gorbachev’s perestroika, and will, from now on, be more able to take part in the solving of our situation.* You see, they were constantly afraid for Gorbachev, and that was why they were so reluctant to get involved here. It is clear, however, that everything and anything that may escalate here would influence not Europe, but relations in the world as such. This is the only reason why the world must be interested in the peaceful resolution of the crisis...t. And all this is possible only if the existing borders are guaranteed; if certain forces give up the ambitions to widen their states at the expense of others... the Army... must return to its barracks.²⁶⁰ (Mesić 2003, 241)

The definitive change in German position to Yugoslavia came no later than August 1991.²⁶¹ As Thumann (1997, 579) evidenced, German foreign minister Genscher stated that the attempts to change internal borders by force only made recognition of Croatia’s independence more likely. At that time NATO was sending clear signals to Yugoslavia discouraging violence (Jović 1995, 243-244). Federal army was indeed engaged as a buffer between Croats and Krajina Serbs, but it seems that the message was not to attempt capturing Croatian capital and removing

²⁶⁰ My italics

²⁶¹ In early July 1991, Kohl was also in favor of recognizing Slovenia and Croatia (Bush 1991a).
Croatian leadership. Chief of army's counterintelligence was explicit about that (Spasojević 1992).

Toward the end of August, Croatian tactics were changing and targeting the army became more frequent, only to erupt in a wide scale in the end of August and start of September. The army barracks were besieged, soldiers invited to surrender and depots were seized immediately wherever possible. Despite the ongoing inter-ethnic escalation and increasing individual attacks on its members, federal army did not remove most of its assets out of the Croatian populated cities, ending up surrounded in multiple locations, losing huge quantities of various arms.

How can we account for the Croatian decision to attack the Yugoslav army? Applying the rational choice approach and its variant known as the “moral hazard”, or the “perverse incentive” can help (Kuperman 2002, 2006). According to this understanding, no actor will risk harm unless it can get an insurance against it. Insurance companies are very well aware of this. Once a car has been insured against accidents, its owners tend to be less careful. In insurgencies and civil wars, an external sponsor plays the role of an insurance company. Of course, one can never be absolutely certain that the insurance company will execute the contract, but if the alternative is riskier, it makes sense to hope that the insurance will step in.

Translating this incentive structure into August/September of 1991 events in Yugoslavia should explain the seemingly sub-optimal decision of Croatian leadership. Not only did they hope they were going to capture federal army’s compounds, but they expected to defeat both Krajina Serbs and the federal army. As I have shown, Croatian defense minister believed that this was possible, but Croatian president flat out rejected the idea. Toward the end of August, he changed his mind. Based on the accounted change in the external situation, I attach to it the greatest importance in explaining the Croatian leadership’s move against the federal army.
One of the close observers of the violent escalation in the late summer and early fall of 1991 was Croatian professor Žarko Puhovski. He was a member of the anti-war circle of intellectuals and from 1993 he headed the Helsinki Committee. Puhovski remarked on the nexus between the threat of recognition and the escalation of violence. According to him, Croatian leadership perceived German position as essentially saying: “If you go on fighting bravely, we are going to recognize you” (quoted in Thumann 1997, 581).

Some authors are critical of the Western policy toward recognition of breakaway republics as too slow and/or too complicated. They believe this only incentivized Yugoslav/Serbian “agression” (Caplan 2005; Glaudic 2011). According to them, Yugoslav “agression” would have been stifled or nonexistent, if only Slovenia and Croatia (and Bosnia), were recognized quickly and earlier. However this may look like explaining causality of Yugoslav/Serbian “aggression”, in fact this is more of a normative statement. Translated, it actually says “Serbian aggressive quest to dominate non-Serbs in Yugoslavia, by force if necessary, should have been prevented or stopped by earlier and immediate recognition of republics’ independence”.

However, this fails to establish the puzzling question of causality. If Yugoslavia did enjoy international support (as the claim goes), while its federal army, backed by Serbs, enjoyed undisputed military superiority (as it did), what accounts for Croatian courage to violently challenge Yugoslavia's sovereignty in territories populated by Croats? Even more, what explains Croatian calculation that it was going to be possible to impose Croatian sovereignty on Krajina.

262 One cannot but notice that this approach dismissed chances for peaceful ethnic coexistence within federal Yugoslavia, but implied peaceful ethnic coexistence within unitary Croatian and Bosnian states.

263 My italics
Serbs who were backed by the federal army, Serbia and the international community? This is the real puzzle.

Caplan (2005, 96-97) lists numerous authors, including insiders such as David Owen and Lord Carrington, pointing to the anticipation of recognition as the driving factors behind Croatian leadership’s assertiveness. However, he finds more explanatory power in republics’ defensive reaction against Serbia’s attempts to “recentralize” Yugoslavia. I agree with that. The motivation of Slovenia and Croatia was to further dissolve federal competencies, not to reverse the decade long trend. However, risking war against the superior force was not the optimal way to go. As I have shown in one of previous chapters, even if Yugoslavia was to introduce pure proportional democratic multi-party system, Serbs would have been unable to dominate, even if all of them were always to vote for a single party and a single leader. There was another structure of incentives at play if actors opted for sub-optimal choices, as Tsebelis would have suspected.

The all out war between Croatian troops and the federal army was sharply attacked by the German chancellor Kohl in mid-September: “There is no way that you can keep a state together by using tanks” (Bush 1991b). However, one could have applied this statement both to Yugoslavia and Croatia. Just as much Croatian government wanted Croatia out of Yugoslavia, Krajina Serbs wanted Krajina out of Croatia. Or, just as much Croatia used force against Krajina Serbs to keep Croatia together, federal army used force to keep Yugoslavia together and Krajina Serbs used force to stay in Yugoslavia. It seems Kohl was not sensitive about this in the press conference, so he went on, having Yugoslav authorities on mind: “I do think that we stand a small chance to impress it on the people responsible and the political leadership there in Yugoslavia that a further escalation of the conflict must at all costs be avoided, that a deployment of the central forces of the army of the central authority must at all costs be avoided”
(Ibid.) By the fall of 1991, German government took the lead in identifying Serbia as the main aggressor (Biermann 2004, 42).

That the moral hazard of threatening only Yugoslav authority did yield a perverse incentive to the Croatian leadership can be picked up from the statement of Zvonimir Šeparović, Croatian foreign minister at the time. He said in December 1991: “After recognition, Slovenia and Croatia will be exactly the same as Kuwait in the Persian Gulf crisis… Aggression is not supposed to pay… By recognition, we shall achieve the possibility for international protection… It will no longer be seen as just a civil war or the internal affairs of Yugoslavia” (Engelberg 1991). Clearly, it would be too naïve to assume that the minister came to this conclusion on his own and only then, after 4 months of fighting.

The European Community set up a peace conference headed by British Lord Carrington in early September. The conference had its roots in the July 1991 “Brioni Declaration” which ended fighting in Slovenia and approved sending of EC’s monitoring mission to Yugoslavia, but did not resolve the political and legal issues. The declaration itself implied single Yugoslav state was still functioning. For example, it invoked: …the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter for a new Europe (in particular respect for Human Rights, including the rights of peoples self-determination in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of International Law, including these relating to territorial integrity of States)…” while Annex I expected Slovenia to comply with federal regulations, for example (European Community 2015).264

264 My italics. Note the emphasis on people’s rights, not republics’ rights. Also, invoking respect for the territorial integrity of states could have referred only to Yugoslavia, since only Yugoslavia had the international personality.
One of the closest Milošević's aides, Dr. Smilja Avramov, later recalled in her testimony that the peace conference led by Lord Carrington did not have a mandate to propose a confederal solution because it was founded within the limits of the Brioni Declaration (Avramov 2004; 32424-32427, 32436-32438). However, in mid-October, the Carrington Paper proposed exactly that. The borders of republics were to be prioritized. It is highly doubtful whether this conclusion would have been reached had it not been for months of heavy fighting in Croatia.

As the German diplomat Ahrens (2007, 127-129) explained, the conference simply applied Helsinki Final Act’s clauses protecting borders to the borders of Yugoslav republics. The support in doing so was found in the article 5 of Yugoslav constitution, since its second and fourth paragraphs protected borders of republics (ibid.). However, paragraphs one and three protected unity and indivisibility of the whole Yugoslav territory, Ahrens replaced these paragraphs by dots. Radan (2002, 114) later described this as “selective quoting”.

Milošević and his advisors were stunned. Serbia rejected Carrington's paper. Accepting would have meant signing of Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and relegating them to the status of national minorities. The focus turned to the work of the Badinter committee, a panel of constitutional lawyers set up within the framework of the peace conferences.

The Serbian leaderships' hopes in Badinter's committee were not just based on trust in its legal logic. Back in July, Jović recorded federal army's recommendation to rely on political support of France and USSR in blocking German and American “plan” to destroy Yugoslavia (Jović 1995, 364). However, in the summer of 1991, Mitterrand himself assured Milošević to rely on international legal instruments in defense of Serbian interests. As one of the closest Milošević's aides in the trial before the international criminal tribunal, Belgrade law professor Branko Rakić recalled his conversation with Milošević about this episode:
Sloba\textsuperscript{265} told me that Mitterrand had said: “Your legal position is good… but your political position is bad, since the West is not on your side. I can recommend an ad hoc legal body to be formed which could produce a legal opinion. This would be of help to you. It could be composed of representatives of constitutional courts of larger European countries and I could make sure that it would be headed by my longtime collaborator and friend, president of the constitutional court of France”.

(Rakić 2015)

However, the findings of Badinter's committee went completely against Serbian interests. They reconfirmed the previously formulated political position in Carrington's Paper: republics were the new countries, if they wished to apply to be recognized. These findings were heavily criticized in Radan's book (2002), which essentially showed how arbitrary were the decisions. There were many reasons to decide either way, which, essentially, reduced Badinter's decisions to a legal form wrapping a political decision previously adopted.

The most important findings of Badinter's committee were that Yugoslavia was in process of “dissolution” (not “secession”!) and that the republics’ borders were inviolable. The introduction of the neutral, passive concept of “dissolution” saved the international system from having to act against secessionists. But it was not that the secessionists presented a threat as such. It was that the whole development of events in Yugoslavia was inseparable from the strategic priorities. They were: to manage the collapse of communism without provoking dangerous instabilities and to secure the victory of self-determination. The findings of Badinter’s commission could not have possibly been excluded from the political context which they would have delegitimized had they declared Yugoslavia was a victim of unilateral secessions.

\textsuperscript{265} Milošević's nickname
However, the findings were supplemented with the December 1991 “Declaration on Yugoslavia and on the Guidelines on the Recognition of New States” (European Community 1992). These documents regulated the emergence of new countries in Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They conditioned international recognition of Yugoslav republics on legal improvement of minority rights, which led to a bitter diplomatic fighting between Germans on the one hand and French and British on the other.\(^{266}\) Whether Croatia would have satisfied requirements or not was supposed to be evaluated again. There is no way to know whether, how and when Croatia would have been approved for recognition. Germany unilaterally decided to go ahead and recognize Croatia on December 23, 1991.

Several works have been written bitterly exchanging barrages of arguments and counter-arguments over German decision to go unilaterally into recognizing Croatia and Slovenia (Woodward 1995b; Libal 1996; Conversi 1998; Radan 2002; Libal 2004; Caplan 2005; Gibbs 2009; Glaurdic 2011). It seems that the British and the French wanted to drag out recognizing Croatia as long as possible. As it can be seen, recognizing Slovenia and Croatia was postponed in July for three months; in October for two months; and then again in December, when it was decided that Croatia was expected to improve its legal protection of human and minority rights (Crawford 1996, 515). Moreover, at the same time when the Declaration and the Guidelines were adopted, British and the French submitted a resolution to the UN Security Council, which would have effectively prolonged recognition by sending more UN observers to Yugoslavia and prohibiting any “political action” harmful to peace efforts, i.e. recognition (Lewis 1991).

\(^{266}\) Bosnia was conditioned by the demand to hold its referendum, which led to the January 1992 breakdown in Bosnian parliament I discussed in the end of chapter 11.
In anticipation of Croatia’s recognition, Krajina Serbs declared their Republic, “Republika Srpska Krajina”, and requested recognition from Serbia and the UN. Under the auspices of the conference, special representative of the UN Secretary General, Cyrus Vance, brokered a peace treaty on January 2nd 1992. Federal army was to withdraw from Croatia, while Krajina was to demilitarize and become a UN safe zone, until political solution was found. Krajina’s leader, Milan Babić, clashed with Milošević, rejecting such deal as it implied that Krajina was to operate within an implicit framework of Croatia. However, Milošević was able to bypass this resistance by working with the Krajina parliament and powerful presidents of local municipalities, promising Serbia's support and protection (Radulović 1996).

The “Vance treaty” was essentially a truce. Krajina Serbs, traumatized by the war and the “return of the Ustasha”, with full trust in both their right to self-determination and Serbia’s protection, were unable to agree on any solution which would have kept them in Croatia. In their view, Croatia could have never credibly committed not to endanger the survival of Krajina Serbs as a group. On the other hand, Croatia was not less traumatized by the war and the threat of losing territory connecting its capital with major cities on the coast, effectively splitting Croatia in half.

On January 15th, Badinter’s committee recommended recognition of Slovenia and Macedonia, but not of Croatia and Bosnia. Nevertheless, preserving European unity, the rest of the member states followed German push for recognition. This made Bosnian position untenable and Bosnia had to pick its way. However, there was not one, but three Bosnia’s within.


The escalating conflict in Croatia and its metastasis into civil war dragged in various groups and individuals from Bosnia. Bosnian Serbs were responding to mobilization calls by the
federal army, while Bosnian Croats were joining Croatian troops and even blocking the passage of federal army’s troops toward Croatia. The behavior of these troops, mostly reservists radicalized against Croats and Bosnian Muslims, was often threatening local Bosnian population. Bosnian Muslims were sporadically joining federal army in the summer of 1991, but mostly avoided mobilization, especially after its leadership invited them to do so.

Not later than summer 1991, the main Bosnian Muslim party organized sending its members and sympathizers to Croatia in order to get training and make contacts regarding arms supplies. By October 1991, the basic paramilitary underground network (“Patriotic League”) covering most of Bosnia was established, though it was facing grave problems with arming its members (Halilović 1997).

On the other hand, arms were supplied to Serbs by the federal army in the framework of mobilization for the war in Croatia as regular reserve formations. However, it was impossible to prevent them from taking weapons (captured or assigned by the army) back to Bosnia. Since the interests of the Bosnian Serbs and the army did not clash, the army felt comfortable issuing weapons to Serbs. But the interest of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats to separate from Yugoslavia was irreconcilable with the army’s position. The Bosnian Muslims’ interest was to avoid both war and ending up in a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia, without Croats and Slovenes to provide balance.

The war in Croatia spilled over into Bosnia already in the fall of 1991 in some border areas caught in the military operations (destruction of Croatian village Ravno in September by the

---

267 This was part of the “Ram” (Frame) plan, which later lead to the controversy over whether it was just focused on enabling enough reservists for the federal army fighting in Krajina, or it was a part of a conspiracy to target Bosnia.
The incidents, night watches, random individual murders and other acts of sporadic violence permeated Bosnian society especially in the first months of 1992.

The strategic importance of Bosnia in 1991 was in that it served as a bridge for Serbia and the federal army to move troops in support of besieged units in Croatia and Krajina Serbs. This is another reason why it was of strategic importance to keep Bosnia within a state union, as it was attempted in August 1991. On the other hand, peaceful Bosnia was essentially a Serbian collaborator in the eyes of Croatian government. Moving the war to Bosnia could have destroyed the bridge supplying Krajina Serbs and in the same time waste Serbian war capacity in Bosnia and away from Croatia.

One of the leading Bosnian Muslim politicians, Adil Zulfikarpašić, said that both he and Izetbegović agreed on that (Đilas et al. 1994, 205). Several Bosnian Muslim wartime commanders, such as, Jasmin Jaganjac, Esad Humo and Semir Drljević, described actions of Croatian activists aimed at provoking wider violence. The period extends from the summer 1991 up until the war erupted in April 1992 and the area in question was Mostar (Šarić 2014). In one of the early Croatian war plans (January 1991), the goal was not only to establish full control over Croatia, but to reach into Bosnia as well (Špegelj 1999, 123). On December 7 1991, a detailed plan was made on integrating Croatian defense with the units formed in predominantly Croatian parts of Bosnia (Ibid, 273).

That was the security context within which European Community represented by Pérez de Cuéllar organized negotiations between Bosnian ethnic groups’ leaders. The puzzling question is: how did the Bosnian Muslim leadership decide not to yield to the pressure from EC and Serbs and reject the proposed agreement to split Bosnia into ethnic units as a price of its
independence? Kuperman (2002, Ch.4) has done a marvelous job evidencing the crucial importance of Bosnian Muslims’ hope in external support against both ethnic separation within Bosnia and Serb violent response. The prevailing opinion was that the Serbs were not going to dare attack an internationally recognized state (Ibid, 159-160).

At this point, I will go a step further and compare another pair of puzzling choices made by the Bosnian Muslim leadership.\(^{268}\) The episodes that attracted somewhat less attention were the strategic decisions from the late 1993 in regard to the Owen-Stoltenberg peace proposal and late 1995 decision-making in the joint Bosniak — Croat offensive against Bosnian Serbs that led to Dayton-Paris peace accords. Bosnian Serb refusal to accept Vance — Owen plan earlier in 1993, was based on Serbian military domination, cooperation mostly with Croat troops, but in some cases with Bosniak troops as well and the insecurity in regard to the free communication lines between their eastern and western parts. However, choices made by Bosnian leadership, both in 1993 when they were in a bad position and in 1995 when the tide turned against the Serbs, warrant more attention. They will be analyzed in the third part of this paper.

Following the Bosnian Serb rejection of the Vance-Owen plan in the first half of 1993, the situation on the ground was much favorable to the Serbs. The outbreak of the Croat-Bosniak war in 1993 led to the ferocious fighting in Herzegovina and Central Bosnia. Serb troops were only affected in the Sarajevo war theater, where they had to withdraw from the dominating heights on Igman, under pressure from NATO. The effect on the international community was such that the idea of ethnic partition gained hold (Burg and Shoup 2000, Ch.6). Militarily, Bosniak forces were in the perilous position. As reported in the National Intelligence Estimates from June 1993:

\(^{268}\) In 1993, Bosnian Muslims adopted “Bosniak” as their official national name and hence, I will be using it.
The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) can hold virtually all its gains in Bosnia against local forces. It can take all remaining Muslim-held areas, but only at significant military and political costs it prefers not to incur. Croatian Defense Forces (HVO) can, with the help of the Croatian Army, hold current gains and take additional territory from the Bosnian Government. The Bosnian Army can neither hold its territory against determined offensives nor retake lost ground; without substantial external support, it will slowly deteriorate. (CIA 1993)

In the summer of 1993 the peace talks resumed, under the leadership of Owen and Stoltenberg. The explicit ethnic partition as a solution to the conflict has been put forward. Bosniak leadership was moving toward such solution after the failure of the Vance-Owen plan, in the context of dire military prospects. Owen-Stoltenberg plan in its essence was trying to solve three issues: boundaries of ethnic republics within Bosnia, status of Sarajevo and the political structure that would enable tripartite influence on the decision-making process.

That the Bosniak side was in a dire condition is evidenced by the situation on the ground and the statements of its leaders, such as Alija Izetbegović: “Our army has done what it could… the Americans wish to remove this war from their agenda” (Burg and Shoup 2000, 278). However, the hope in the foreign intervention was keeping them reluctant to yield and on the surface determined not to allow new constitutional design of Bosnia to be based on ethnic veto powers.

---

269 Later, this initiative was also known by the name of the British ship, “Invincible”, where part of the negotiations were held.
Lord David Owen, one of two chief negotiators delegated by the European Union, left a detailed insider account on the negotiations. According to him (1995, Ch.6-7), in June 1993, Clinton administration was not hostile to ethnic partition as a solution, and even Izetbegović seemed to be embracing it. However, the hardliners among Bosniaks, Silajdžić and Ganić did their best to undermine peace talks, hoping for NATO intervention. On the other hand, Clinton administration insisted on NATO-run implementation force after political settlement among ethnic groups. Administration’s threats against the Bosnian Serb army around Sarajevo only inflated the hopes of Bosniak hardliners. Owen concluded that they were giving only lip service to the peace plan, but that they did not actually embrace it. By the end of August 1993, the Bosniaks scored some major victories in their fight against Croats. A strong number of them put faith in the long run effect of international sanctions decimating Serbian economy. By extension, the effects were to eventually strike Bosnian Serbs’ logistics. The Bosniaks rejected the Owen-Stoltenberg plan.

The effect was dire in Western Bosnia, where a Bosniak faction under Fikret Abdić denounced this path and opened up for cooperation with Serbs, against the forces loyal to Sarajevo. The peace talks kept the momentum from the failed Owen-Stoltenberg plan and were continued as the European Union Action Plan in October 1993. Owen does not hide that Clinton administration was hostile to this French-German initiative and that the plan was largely abandoned because the administration did not want to put an extra pressure on Bosniaks. The Bosniaks were supposed to control about 30% of the territory, but then demanded a few percentages more.

However, Owen (1995, Ch.7) explains that after he met the leaders of Serbs from Serbia and Bosnia in Belgrade, they accepted the 33% for Bosniaks. Burg and Shoup (1999, 264) add
that in January 1994 Serbs agreed to 33.6% for Bosniaks in exchange for independence, but Bosniaks then asked for 40% of Bosnia. Owen (1995, 256-259) does not mention this offer to exchange territory for the breakup of Bosnia, but does confirm that Serbs and Croats jointly offered 33.5% to Bosniaks, leaving their own internal borders to be determined later. Bosniak president then asked for 1% more and Bosnian Serbs came up with only about 0.25% (Ibid.). The peace plan failed.

One of the chief negotiators, Norwegian Thorvald Stoltenberg was explicit in accusing Clinton administration for stirring up Bosniaks’ hopes, which encouraged them to have maximalist aims (Štavljanin 2012). The hopes of the Bosniak leadership were kept by the American inconsistent attitude toward the agreement that evolved into opposition. Without it, it would be hard to imagine Bosniaks continuing struggle with their supplies dwindling as they simultaneously fight two enemy armies and one strong Bosniak militia which defected to the Serbs. The failure of these negotiations mounted an increased pressure for NATO to step in (Burg and Shoup 1999, 266).270

Comparing Bosniak strategic position in the late summer/early fall of 1995 with the 1993 is revealing a stunning contrast. The Bosniak army was well organized, supplied, armed and, following 1994 Washington agreement, allied with both Bosnian Croats and regular Croatian

---

270 Barenkoetter and Giegerich (2010, 437-438) maintained that crisis in Bosnia defeated EU’s civilian crisis management approach. Also, they asserted that Germany perceived US’s militarization of Bosnian conflict as a direct result of previous undermining of peace plans and non-military pressures to solve the conflict. Gibbs (2009) claimed German-American competition was driving international involvement in Bosnia.
Against itself it had exhausted and demoralized the Bosnian Serb Army, additionally burdens by the plight of more than 200,000 Serb refugees from Krajina and western Bosnia. Given the sacrifices Bosniak side endured to preserve Bosnia and the advantageous position they enjoyed in the western Bosnian front, it is obvious that they had no reason to stop their offensive. The main goal was to capture the capital of Bosnian Serbs, Banja Luka, and the surrounding region. Without that region, Bosnian Serb controlled territory would consist of a thin strip along the Bosnian border with Serbia and Montenegro. No doubt, they would have had to be incorporated into the rest of Bosnia peacefully, just as the remnants of Krajina Serb territory in eastern Croatia surrendered.

Bosniak president Izetbegović was quite clear when he said that the only reason they stopped advancing was clear American threat (delivered by the then US ambassador Menzies). Izetbegović was told that if his troops were to continue advancing, NATO was going to bomb them (Izetbegović 2000). The rationale Izetbegović offered was that the Americans were intimidated by Milošević who feared additional refugees might destabilize his power in Serbia. According to Izetbegović, Milošević was ready to send several brigades to prevent fall of Banja Luka. However, accessible transcripts from the meetings of the Supreme Defense Council of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia reveal no such activity, nor plans on behalf of the Yugoslav army (VSO SRJ 1995).

Former Bosniak commander Selmo Cikotić (2012) lectured that in the meeting with the Bosniak Army leadership, Izetbegović demanded not to enter Banja Luka for the fear of possible war crimes against the Serbian population. His rationale was that war crimes would have

---

271 In 1994, Clinton administration forged an alliance between Bosniak Croats and Bosniaks, supplied them with weapons and helped them reverse the situation on the battleground.
seriously undermined Bosniak image in the West and harm their political goals. Richard Holbrooke, chief US negotiator and praised creator of the Dayton peace accords that ended the war writes in his book that he received explicit instructions from Washington to prevent fall of Banja Luka (Holbrooke 1999, 172). The evidence presented suggests that it is reasonable to question their motives and seek them in the wider strategic interaction between the dominant regional powers. Domestic causes are insufficient to explain the dynamics of the civil war.

12.4. Serbian-Albanian Conflict

The puzzle of the Serb-Kosovo Albanian conflict over Kosovo is in the absence of Albanian armed struggle in the first half of the 1990’s. It would have been rational to engage in armed insurrection at the time when fighting in Croatia escalated in full fledged war and Serbia struggled to mobilize volunteers to fight. Another change was lost when war in Bosnia erupted, further draining Serbia’s resources and manpower, especially after international sanctions were imposed on it. Before focusing on this puzzle, I will briefly explain why an option cheaper than war was not tried first — elections.

12.4.1. Peaceful Voting: Sub-Optimal Choice

Albanians could have used their demographic strength and exploit elections to both regain control over Kosovo and team up with Serbian pro-Western opposition against Milošević, just like Serbian Bosniaks and Serbian Hungarians were doing throughout 1990’s. They did not. However, this puzzle is a false one, stemming from the confusion over Kosovo Albanian's preferences rank-list. Namely, the widespread opinion that Albanian's were aggrieved over
human rights' abuses has misplaced cause and effect. The human rights' abuses were the byproduct of Serbian counter-secessionist policy, resulting from Kosovo Albanians’ secessionism.

For example, the undisputed leader of Kosovo Albanians, Ibrahim Rugova, answered a journalists’ direct question: “I will repeat: not only for now, but for a long time, the best solution would have been an independent Kosovo…” (Oroši and Džezairi 1992a). Likewise, he saw no difference between Serbia’s rejection of Kosovo’s independence and Serbia’s rejection of negotiations (Oroši and Džezairi 1991). Because Serbia’s opposition parties shared this position, they were not partners for Albanian leadership (Ibid; Maliqi 2014, 202). Just skimming through interviews with other Albanian leaders reveals that this was a widely shared position. Hence, participating in Serbia’s elections would have meant recognition of Kosovo’s reduced autonomy and Serbia’s sovereignty. This clearly makes “grievance theory” of civil war highly relative to political context and ethnic preferences.

Dobrica Ćosić was president of rump-Yugoslavia at the time when Milošević was president of Serbia. In 1992, he pleaded with Chroboğ, the envoy of German foreign minister, to help get Albanians to vote against Milošević (Ćosić 2004, 75). At the same time, one of the opposition leaders, later Serbian ambassador to Washington D.C., also pleaded with Americans to help get Albanians to vote (Vujačić 2015). U.S. ambassador Zimmerman (1999, 80-81) recalled how he “worked hard” to get Albanians to vote, but failed to change their mind. Of course, such an advice could not have been made without authorization from ambassador's superiors. There is a problem with this statement. All that was needed to put real pressure on Albanians to vote would have been to link it with U.S. support. This conclusion was confirmed by Blerim Shala, at the time prominent journalist. Albanian leaders were surprised not to receive stronger pressure from
the US to act on the offer made by the FR Yugoslavia’s premier, Milan Panić, and participate in 1992 elections (Sell 2002, 263).

Without such strings attached, alternative voices could have been easily stifled. For example, two highly respected intellectuals and activists, Veton Surroi and Shkëlzen Maliqi, did put forward the idea of taking part in Serbian 1992 elections (Maliqi 2014, 231-233). Maliqi wrote that both Serbian opposition and foreign diplomats were in favor. However, Albanian public and membership of Rugova’s party passionately rejected the idea. Without prospects of losing international sympathies for rejecting peaceful option, they were able to afford prolonged struggle for the main goal — independence from Serbia. Even though foreign aid to Serbian opposition flowed into Serbia, it was never used to incentivize Albanian participation in elections (Spoerri 2015). Seemingly contradictory, foreign aid was supposed to help bring Milošević down, but not at the price of getting 1.5 million Albanians to the polls. Albanians did not want to legitimize Serbian elections and the West did not want to use a “stick” to make them do so.

However, the question of choosing an unarmed resistance to Serbia’s sovereignty in Kosovo remains. This is especially so since, unlike other regions in Yugoslavia, Kosovo has been experiencing various forms of violence throughout socialist Yugoslavia. Moreover, there had been significant inter-ethnic mixing in Bosnia and Croatia, and even Slovenia, unlike in Kosovo. Yet, as they flared up in mass violence and wars, Kosovo kept simmering between war and peace.

---

272 Both Zimmerman and Maliqi mentioned the same example of Irish delegates in British parliament.
12.4.2. Rugova and Non-Violence: Everyone’s Choice

The brutal state counter-secessionist policy had its roots in federal Yugoslavia’s militarized interventions against mass-violence in Kosovo (1944, 1950’s, 1968, 1981 and 1988/1989).\textsuperscript{273} The legacy of deadly rioting in Kosovo, massive imprisonments of Albanians, military interventions and virtual ethnic separation has led American analysts to conclusion that Kosovo was more likely to flare up in an armed insurgency than any other part of Yugoslavia (CIA 1990). The interviews with Kosovo inhabitants of various ethnic groups revealed general feeling of imminent armed confrontation (Ganer and Kuzmanić 1989, 237-275).

Following Kosovo Albanians' independence referendum in September 1991, the only country that recognized it was Albania, one month afterwards (Kola 2003, 282). However, there was no room for Kosovo Albanians in the peace conference under auspices of EC, led by Lord Carrington. The findings of Badinter's committee in the end of 1991, as well as EC's Declaration on Yugoslavia and Guidelines (for recognition of new states) have effectively cut off Kosovo Albanians from the negotiating table. Their question was treated within the framework of minority rights in Serbia as one of Yugoslav republics (Kola 2003, 2633).

The overall imperatives guiding the management of Soviet collapse elevated constitutive republics to the forefront of self-determination which included the right to independence.\textsuperscript{274}

\textsuperscript{273} From March 1989 to February 1990, there were dozens of Albanians killed in various incidents during mass demonstrations and riots in Kosovo. Some police officers were also killed and wounded.

\textsuperscript{274} This was largely the effect of the norm emerging with respect to Russia's sensitivity over Chechnia (Woodward 1995b, 399).
Treating communist constitutive republics as equal to European states, with their own individualized personalities, was supposed to safeguard inviolability of European borders as well. Kosovo was an autonomous province in Yugoslav context, even if only in name and legally just slightly beneath six constitutive republics. That is why both Germans and Americans supported Albanians’ self-determination, but not independence (Libal 1997, 67; Binder 1991).

After they proclaimed independence in September 1991, desperately imitating Yugoslav republics, Kosovo Albanian assembly elected Bujar Bukoshi to head the government. Ibrahim Rugova was elected president in 1992. Rugova emerged as the undisputed leader not only because of his work on the ground. Also, and perhaps crucially, he was perceived as such because of his access to the US leadership. As Maliqi recalled:

[Rugova] became [undisputed and untouchable] in the spring of 1990, especially after that hearing in American Congress… later, in Kosovo, the extraordinary respect [Americans] showed to Rugova caused the spread of the impression that Rugova was “chosen by Americans”… After meetings with [the US ambassador Zimmerman], Rugova would come out with euphoric statements that “the U.S. support Kosovo’s demands!”… [t]he people of Kosovo thought that the Americans were with us and that Rugova knew what he was doing… Americans would not have refuted him zealously, thus sending a threatening message to Belgrade to change its Kosovo policy. (Maliqi 2014, 213-215)

Rugova’s message to Kosovo Albanians and the world was: “We know that if we wait patiently, we will win” (Kaufman 1992). Indeed, Rugova’s patience was not without an external input. In March 1992, Albanian American Civic League members lead by the former US
congressman DioGuardi, met with Lawrence Eagleburger, the then Deputy State Secretary. Eagleburger said that the only leverage against Belgrade was the question of recognition of the newly established Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as economy. However, recognizing Kosovo was not mentioned as leverage. The only thing that can be done for Kosovo was to keep the CSCE mission. He concluded, according to DioGuardi (1992): “…the greatest challenge the U.S. faces is how to create the conditions in Kosova for Albanians to be free, secure and perhaps, even independent, without bloodshed…”

The hope of Rugova and his associates was, and had to be, put in the international community’s sympathies and the long term developments. As he put in 1991:’”We have never asked (unlike some other parties) weapons, destruction of other peoples, and war… We managed to internationalize the problem of Kosovo. We are satisfied that Kosovo became a topic demanding a solution in European framework” (Oroši and Džezairi 1991). Rugova kept his line even after the failure to be treated by the international actors as a republic and in early 1992 admitted: “It is encouraging that the world values our reliance on peaceful methods, political solutions, and not war, in overcoming this grave problem” (Oroši and Džezairi 1992a).

Kosovo status was not sealed with the failure to obtain treatment equal to republics. As Jović's (1995) diary shows, the issue has been raised periodically, in the framework of human rights, but in a way that blurred the difference between human rights and the level of territorial and political autonomy. The impression one gets is that the Bush administration did not want to encourage violence, but it also did not want to settle the issue of Kosovo's political status. This is even more so, since there was an option for Kosovo to be independent of Serbia, but not an independent country. That would have been the status of a republic within the rump Yugoslavia,

\[^{275}\text{My italics}\]
established in 1992 by Serbia and Montenegro. This idea, indeed, was rumored in the years just before and after the 1999 war.

However it may be, not only Bush administration ended up with undefined policy of postponing the final settlement. When the president of FR Yugoslavia, Ćosić, proposed for Kosovo to be divided in January 1993, the American Cyrus Vance and the British/European Lord Owen did not reject the idea. However, they frustrated Ćosić: “EC is not ready for any division of Kosovo… And neither is America. We recommend to you, president, to keep quiet at least for five years about dividing Kosovo” (Ćosić 2004, 77-78).

Rugova’s passive resistance victory, hence, was not determining Albanian strategy because there were no alternative views and initiatives, but because his authority was decisively secured by firm support received from the only source of Albanians’ hope — the US. Maliqi leaves no doubt: “In every critical moment for the Movement and himself personally, he would have been invited to Washington also to London, Paris and Bon. That would cement his popularity among the Kosovo masses anew and influence his opponents to stand down…” (Maliqi 2014, 216).

12.4.3. Insurgency: Sub-Optimal Choice

Rugova was an advocate of non-violent approach, but there were always alternative voices. The violence throughout 1980’s resulted in some initial forms of combat organizing. The initiative came from Germany, where émigré organizations suffered assassinations by the Yugoslav secret police. By 1991, several different groups coagulated into the Popular Movement for Kosovo and initiated its armed wing — “the Kosovo Liberation Army” (Kubo 2010, 1140). They sought contact with prominent figures already engaged in various violent forms of conflict with the authorities, as well as Albanians, officers in the FR Yugoslavia’s army (Ibid.).
sporadic weapons smuggling operations imported worrying quantities into Kosovo, while radical
groups of Kosovo Albanian men frequented between Kosovo and Albania, often getting basic
training across the border (Jović 1995, 244; Jevtić 2002a).

In the summer of 1991, Kosovo Albanian leaders visited their Croatian counterparts. The
meeting seems controversial, given that different sources give different conclusions on why the
meeting failed. Croatian defense minister recalled how Tuđman told Rugova that Albanians
should solve their problems in Belgrade, not Zagreb, in effect cutting of any sort of joint action
against Serbs and the federal army (Špegelj 1999, 119). On the other hand, Maliqi (2012, 215)
reports that Tuđman offered weapons for starting war in Kosovo, which Rugova rejected. About
that time, Albanian lobbyist DioGuardi refused to visit Tuđman because he publicly stated that
Kosovo was Serbia's internal issue (AACV 1999). Tuđman held that position at least since
summer 1990, the time of the Krajina Serbs' revolt, as leverage in negotiations with Milošević
(Jović 2010, 45).

However, these two positions did not have to be mutually exclusive. Tuđman was capable
of publicly equating Kosovo and Krajina, while secretly working with Kosovo Albanians. A
number of Albanians joined Croatian troops, some of them in prominent roles (Rahim Ademi
and Agim Çeku), while leaders such as Fehmi Agani and Veton Surroi had separate meetings
with Croatian leadership (Maliqi 2012, 216), indicating that the idea was entertained. Not later
than the end of 1992, Croatia encouraged Albanians to open the “southern front” (Kola 2003,
303). Maliqi concluded that: “Essentially, there was no support from the world, from the western
powers. Without their support it was not smart to initiate an armed resistance. Rugova knew that,
or that was suggested to him…” (Maliqi 2012, 216).
Throughout 1992, Albanians fully acknowledged high potential for civil war onset. For example: former communist leader Vllasi (Reljić 1992); prominent journalist Veton Surroi, whose father was a Yugoslav ambassador (Oroši and Džezairi 1992b); Maliqi (Kaufman 1992). However, not only that the external signals were discouraging, but the kin-state Albania was experiencing severe transitional problems which drastically reduced its capacity to extend serious logistics. This was recognized by all above-mentioned individuals.

Albanian president Sali Berisha tried hard to prevent mass violence in Kosovo, which is why Kosovo Albanian hawks labeled him a traitor (Kamm 1993). Berisha did not refuse a certain level of cooperation and support to violent groups from Kosovo, but at the same time he did not want to help them intensify their operations (Jevtić 2002b). One of such “hawks” was Adem Jashari. He was trained by Albanian military, as part of the program for Kosovo Albanians, but in 1992 the program was ended. In 1993, Jashari was arrested “on British and French orders” (Pettifer and Vickers 2007, 118 and 279).

Berisha urged restraint on Kosovo Albanians “for the moment”, while at the same time inviting Western countries to send troops to Kosovo (Ibid.)

Albanian government’s policy was aligned with the signals from the U.S. Presidents Bush and Clinton were clear about keeping Kosovo stable, which was also what Milošević wanted. In the fall and winter 1992/1993, George Bush's administration was so worried about escalation in Kosovo that, even though it famously “didn’t have a dog in this fight”, he threatened Milošević with military intervention in case of mass violence in Kosovo (Binder 1992). Bush

---

276 He was killed with part of his family in a brutal Serbian attack on his compound in 1998, after his group ambushed and killed Serbian policemen.

277 The oft cited statement was made by State Secretary, James Baker, in the summer of 1991.
explicitly feared war diffusion reaching Greece and Turkey via Kosovo and Macedonia (Sciolino 1992).

In the spring of 1993, Clinton administration's policy was summed up by State Secretary, Warren Christopher:

We fear that if the Serbian influence extends into [Kosovo and Macedonia], it will bring into the fray other countries in that region — Albania, Greece, Turkey — and from there, on it could extend very broadly… So the stakes for the United States, are to prevent the broadening of that conflict to bring in our NATO allies, and to bring vast sections of Europe, and perhaps as happened before, broadening into a world war…²⁷⁸ (Engelberg 1993)

Kosovo Albanian premier Bukoshi shared Rugova’s non-violent strategy until early 1993. Then, he established ministries of defense and interior, accelerating preparations for armed rebellion (Phillips 2012, 68). He was inspired by the ongoing wars in Croatia and Bosnia and encouraged by the former’s government. However, Serbian security services quickly reacted, arresting dozens of officers and activists of Bukoshi’s nascent military wing. Internal rift followed, opening room for the influx of more activist oriented members. They were former Marxist-Leninists, often former prisoners in Yugoslavia (Kola 2003, 303-306).

Kuperman (2002) in his invaluable research on 1999 Kosovo war, offered an explanation for Kosovo’s “peace” in early 1990’s. In essence, his conclusion was that Albanian leadership was seriously frightened by Serbian violent reaction, especially after they saw Serb brutality in

²⁷⁸ Note how Christopher fears extension of Serbian influence in Kosovo, as if it was not already covered by Serbian troops and administration.
Bosnia. He (Ibid, 344) cites Rugova as saying in early 1992:” [W]e have nothing to set against the tanks and other modern weaponry in Serbian hands. We would have no chance of successfully resisting the army. In fact, the Serbs only wait for a pretext to attack the Albanian population and wipe it out”.

Statements like this reveal more information if we take a step back and ask what would have happened if Albanians had appropriate weapons? Furthermore, why Albanians did not have such weapons? In comparison with Bosnian Muslims, Albanians were not less equipped. Moreover, they enjoyed far more homogenous territory, largely mountainous (which reduces government reach) and adjacent to their kin-country, whose ports and airports could have serve to supply weapons. What Kosovo Albanians did not have, was the prospect of international recognition, after which they would have been expectedly protected by the international system. At the time when Bosnian Muslims did not know how brutal the war was going to be, neither did Kosovo Albanians, hence, the argument of fear does not hold. In other respects, I fully subscribe to Kuperman’s argument. The key variable explaining absence of Kosovo Albanian’s insurgency during the war in Croatia and Bosnia is to be found in external signals. Some of them were discouraging insurgency passively, using legal means such as excluding Kosovo Albanians from the 1991 International Conference on Yugoslavia. Others were active, such as advising Kosovo Albanian leaders to be patient and pressuring Albania’s government not to inflame violent actions of hawkish groups.

12.4.4. Boycott: The Optimal Choice

By freezing the conflict in Kosovo, western countries opted for the least bad option from their perspective. Supporting Kosovo’s independence by treating it equally to other republics in
1991 would have set of Serbia’s violent response. As Bush and Clinton’s administrations feared, that would have seriously threatened setting off a chain reaction. Albania would have been sucked in; pushing Macedonia with its large and restless Albanian minority to the brink. Grave instability in Macedonia would have attracted Greece and Bulgaria. The latter considered Macedonia a historic Bulgarian land and felt obliged to be the first one to recognize its independence and invest in closer relations.

Intervening militarily in protection of Kosovo Albanians’ declared independence was not an option, since military intervention in protection of newly declared independent states was at first excluded even in cases of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia. Europeans did not have unity, strength nor will to risk military intervention, while Americans passed the buck to Europeans early on. Also, equating a province with constitutive republics was from the start problematic not only for Russians, but for a lot of Europeans as well. So there was an international frowning about this idea.

On the other hand, seriously pressuring Albanians into participating in Serbian elections would have turned western countries into Serbia’s ally, exactly at the time when Serbia emerged as the primary source of violence in the Balkans. This contradiction most likely would have diluted western policy in regard to the Bosnian war, since it would have been increasingly hard to pressure Serbia into ending support to Bosnian and Krajina Serbs, while in the same time giving Serbia free hand to “defend” itself from Albanian secessionism. This is why the issues of human rights and the return to the 1974 quasi-independent level of Kosovo’s self-rule were merged into a single issue. The solution was to be found later.

Until then, the equilibrium was found in freezing the conflict. Milošević enjoyed Albanian boycott because it was enabling his parliamentary majority, without challenging Serbia's rule
militarily. Albanians opted for boycotting state institutions because otherwise they would have legitimized the new political system and Serbia's sovereignty. Armed insurgency was irrational without external support. After the war in Bosnia and Croatia ended and NATO enlargement to Eastern Europe was recognized as a set US policy, the frozen conflict in Kosovo began to thaw, revealing the content of Albanians' right to self-determination.

12.5. Conclusions

12.5.1. On Yugoslav Destruction

Case comparison reveals how norms and strategic interests of dominant countries in international system structured intra-Yugoslav conflict. Otherwise, it would have been quite troubling to explain the variation of forms of political conflict. For example, Slovenes — who were virtually ethnically homogeneous within their republic — resorted to mass violence in their bid for independence. On the other hand, Albanians were a strong majority in Kosovo (while minority in Serbia) resorted to non-violent forms of struggle for independence. Furthermore, unlike Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, Albanians and Serbs virtually did not inter-marry and maintained strong ethnic distance. The chart below should help visualize the differences revealing the external variables’ importance.

Slovenes should not have had to resort to any violence to secede from Yugoslavia. However, they rejected Serbian proposal to achieve independence peacefully, utilizing legal procedures. They opted for unilateral, i.e. violent (even though non-lethal) replacement of Yugoslav state functions. This triggered violent reaction of the federal government under the leadership of Bosnian Croat, Ante Marković. Yugoslav and Slovenian state organs vied for control over the same physical space symbolizing monopoly of violence — border crossings and
country flag poles. The escalation was quick, deadly and short. There was no political substance behind the federal intervention in keeping Slovenia within Yugoslavia.

Croats should not have attacked the federal army, at the time when the international community officially supported Yugoslavia’s unity. Federal army was superior; it relied on Krajina Serbs and Serbia’s support. The same goes for Bosniaks as well. Unlike Croats, Bosniaks were virtually unarmed, almost completely landlocked and mixed with Serbs in almost all municipalities of Bosnia, including the capital, Sarajevo.

Albanians should have resorted to violence in their bid for independence. They were already radicalized in the 1980’s in virtually total opposition to political trends in Serbia. Throughout 1980’s they experienced military and police interventions with deadly results, as well as mass imprisonments. They were roughly as numerous as Slovenes, Bosniaks or Macedonians. When war erupted in Croatia and Bosnia, while Serbia suffered under sanctions, almost 2 million Albanians remained remarkably passive.

The varying levels of violence in the course of Yugoslav destruction, in the light of evidence presented, indicate tremendous importance of international context for domestic stability. The role of international politics was secondary; if important at all, in the process of state capacity’s decay during the Cold War. However, it was large in escalating decay into violence of different degrees.

The capacity of the Yugoslav state to deal with its internal problems was eroding steadily for decades, primarily due to internal political and ideological struggles. The root cause of evaporating state capacity is to be found in the elites’ constant resort to ethnic nationalism in support of their legitimacy. This was characteristic both for the pre-World War II period of capitalist monarchy and the post-World War II period of communist dictatorship. Ethnic
nationalism as the key variable behind Yugoslavia’s demise has been obscured by two ideologies within which ethnic entrepreneurs operated: Yugoslav and communist.

Yugoslav ideology fluctuated between the poles of ethnic nationalism (Illyrians/Yugoslavs as one “tribe”), political coalition (among South Slavs in Austria-Hungary) and civic nationalism (Yugoslavs as citizens of Yugoslavia). Unlike Soviet Union or Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia had a strong ideological root in the 19th century romantic nationalism.

(Chart: 12.1. “Actors, norms and their interactions”)
However, its internal contradictions were revealed and exacerbated after Yugoslavia was created in 1918. Once it was supposed to be put in practice and shape state and society, Yugoslav ideology was not able to avoid aggrieving large parts of Yugoslavs. Primarily, Croatian nationalists did not get the autonomous Croatian political unit, let alone the one comprising territories of Croatian “historic state right”. Yugoslav unity was not supposed to absorb Croatian rights, but to protect them. This sensitive internal logic of Croatian-Yugoslav identities escaped not only many politicians, but even the vast majority of scholars.

Communist ideology, class based and universally oriented, was supposed to break ethnic animosities and forge cross-ethnic solidarity, by deconstructing ethnic sentiment as a byproduct of capitalism. However, the most confusing aspect of Yugoslavia’s demise has been exactly the penetration of nationalism into communist ranks prior to World War II. This penetration ignited two opposing competitive processes within Serbian and non-Serbian communists. Since Serbian nation was detected as the “oppressor” and non-Serbian nations were the “oppressed”, Serbian communists legitimized themselves by fighting any form of Serbian nationalism. On the other hand, non-Serbian communists were also expected to fight “their” nationalisms, but priority was given to ethnic outbidding their competitors by promoting communist ideology’s superior protection against “Serbian hegemony”.

The result of these two processes was the grand bargain shaped in the period of 1943-1946 which was the foundation of communist Yugoslavia. The bargain consisted in federalizing Yugoslavia in a way to neutralize Serbs’ relative numerical superiority. That was the cardinal condition for removing non-Serbians’ suspicions about Serbian hegemonic aspirations. Further developments went against communists’ expectations. Regardless of relative economic trends, the demands for further decentralization pressured Serbian communists to prove they were not
harboring “unitarist”, i.e. hegemonic ambitions. The decentralizing spiral was labeled as the “withering of the state”, following the Marxist ideal. However, it did not result in withering of republics, but of federation, revealing its determining nationalist undercurrent. Centripetal inertia continued until early 1980’s Kosovo violence and the resulting out-migration of aggrieved Serbs.

The revolutionary wave rose in Serbia, demanding reversal of country’s dissolution, just at the same time when a much larger wave of decentralization and liberalization rose in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union under Gorbachev’s reforms. The resulting clash of these waves capsized Yugoslavia, because its 8 captains steered in different directions.

Had international community stood by Yugoslav unity in deed as well as on words, the secessionists would have had to risk clash with the self-confident federal army, backed by large Serbian block. The vehement external opposition to use of violence in limiting secessionists’ options created a perverse incentive. The more violence there was, the less support for Yugoslavia followed.

Without such an incentive, it would have been rational for non-Serbs to forge cross-ethnic coalitions and insist on multi-party federal elections, since non-Serbs had an absolute demographic majority. Quite paradoxically, such development would have suited Serbs’ interests, since it would have strengthened federal institutions and their competences. Ironically, both preservation of Yugoslavia, inter-ethnic cooperation and democratic transition would have been the optimal choice of deeply confronted ethnic agendas in their quest to prevent ethnic hegemonies.

However, full support of Yugoslavia’s unity — including approval of state’s exercise of monopoly of violence on its internationally recognized territory — was a sub-optimal choice for both Kohl’s and Bush’s administrations. It was a widespread impression that Yugoslav and
Soviet events inspired each other. Hence, it was of vital Western interest to forge a common approach to both processes. The imperatives were to enable full practice of self-determination, but prevent both “recentralization” and full disintegration — both could have triggered massive ethnic wars and even risk activation of nuclear weapons. The optimal way was to strongly advocate for looser confederation. The same had to be applied to Yugoslavia.

12.5.2. On Theory

My conclusions strongly support including international system more in studies of domestic stability and instability. As we witness full proxy war in Syria sucking in even direct foreign interventions, it is impossible to keep to the old focus on domestic variables only. International system sets up the normative and material structure within which domestic actors vie for external support in reducing government’s expected military superiority. Without sustainable external support, revolutionaries are most likely to fail and opt for non-violent protests and terrorism, as struggle methods of the weak.

Rational choice keeps dominating studies of war onset and its dynamics. However, as it was pointed elsewhere, rational choice is greatly dependent on preference formation, which pulls in sensitivity toward ethnic groups’ culture and historical patterns of mobilization. Drawing in cultural variables — core elements in a political actor’s environment — problematizes quantitative studies of civil war and gives priority to regional studies. Fluctuations in international and regional balances of power and interests further complicate quantitative approach. However, counterfactual analysis is a promising analytical tool, especially in regard to policy relevant research. In terms of research design, depending on resources at disposal, case studies should cover different regions and time periods. Destruction of the theoretical wall
separating international and domestic politics supports questioning of binary nature of sovereignty. Sovereignty should be rather considered as a continuous variable, regardless of numerous problems expected with its operationalization. Furthermore, conflict groups as the main actors in international relations should be theorized further. Conflict groups control or fight for control of the land. Even in territories enjoying the title of states, there are often active or dormant conflict groups challenging the existing order, as if putting out an advertisement seeking sponsorship. State-like conflict groups such as the Islamic State cannot be squeezed into a “terrorist” actor. The most potent conflict groups remain ethnic-based, though criminal and ideological groups should not be neglected.

12.5.3. On Policy

Practical policy recommendations can be grouped around three points: finding a credible external sponsor, dividing the competing group and lastly — not overestimating the importance of international law. First, it is an absolute priority to have a powerful external sponsor. External sponsor is not supposed to help deter competing group from attacking, but to deter eventual predators seeking ways to encourage the competing group. This priority demands from policymakers to discriminate between powerful countries primarily in terms of their reach. A supportive power that cannot effectively offer political, economic and military protection is useless. In fact, it may be even dangerous, since it can incite a group to act on hope, as Spartans incited hope among Melians and Korkyrians. Such a “Melian mistake” was committed by the Syrian opposition when it switched to the armed insurgency in hope of external military intervention. Refraining from acting on hope requires tremendous political effort and group discipline, which is often problematic for small countries without too much room for mistakes.
This makes investments in political sciences a vital long-term national interest. Sophisticated political analysis and valuing benefits of free speech help better grasp changes of international winds. They also help monitor domestic groups’ identity and preference formation and how they relate to external actors. Sometimes it may be necessary to amputate ungovernable parts of one’s sovereign territory, which is a traumatic national experience that may lead to tragic infightings. In such cases, preserving domestic stability depends on political elite’s unity. Otherwise, it may open an opportunity for external penetration and risk group cohesion and security.

Second, a group must seek ways to divide competitors over an issue of vital value. A status quo group, which is usually the dominant one, is prone to divide over whether to accommodate small demands put forward by a revolutionary group. Small victories accumulate into big advances, if the opposing group yields in hope to avoid conflict escalation. If the adversary does not yield, the next best option is to have its internal discord over the issue. Such a “salami tactics” can go a long way.\(^{279}\) Also, a revolutionary group can always try to attract external intervention and pressures on the status quo side. On the other hand, a status quo group can treat different parts of its opponent in a different way, hoping that the old “divide and rule” tactics might work. Different forms of soft power might work, such as attractive popular culture and lifestyle, sports, schooling and other channels of easier social mobility. Assimilation, while positive, may have limited reach if only urban population assimilates, while rural or regional remains intact, conserving revolutionary institutions and culture. Brutal threats and actions are risky, because they might unifying targeted group, especially if it has an external sponsor.

\(^{279}\) Kissinger (1969) masterfully described this piecemeal tactics and its application by Soviets and communist movements.
Lastly, policymakers should always be reminded that international law is but one of variables structuring action opportunities. Had Borisav Jović read the Melian Dialogue before coming to power, perhaps he would have come to the following conclusion before the war, not after:

My assessment today, after all that happen, is that [we] were mistaken thinking that we could have support in domestic and international law, that the great powers and international community would respect the law… it is realistic that the interest of stronger was what was making the decision, regardless the international law norms, so the norms were respected only when it was in the interest of mayor powers. They interpreted the laws as they wanted, even opposite of its real meanings when they needed it. (Jović 2001, 77)

The tragedy is that — in the end of Cold War — the “powers” were operating in a different set of problems limiting options in dealing with Yugoslavia. Their optimal policy was to support confederal Yugoslavia, which encouraged unilateral secessions, regardless of whether they wanted that effect or not. Otherwise, they would have risked inspiring dangerous ambitions of Soviet hardliners and/or ethnic nationalists across Soviet republics and East European countries. If Yugoslavia was a stronger federation, most likely it would not have been identified with Soviet Union. However, Yugoslavia was, both as a 19th century nationalist idea and as a country with different political systems (parliamentary constitutional monarchy and a communist federation), in a state of permanent *stasis*. With the end of Cold War, its dysfunctional political system *metastasized*. 
Appendix

(Map 5.1 “European areas with strong autonomist, independentist or separatist tendencies”, Association for the Promotion of European Minorized Peoples 2015)
(Map 6.1 “Uneven global population distribution, spikes representing density”, Merritt 2014)

(Map 6.2 “Every device connected to internet in 2014”, Matherly 2014)
(Map 6.3 “Nuclear arms distribution”, BBC 2012)

(Map 6.4 “Domains of maritime circulation”, Rodrigue 2013)
(Map 6.5 “Eurasian and North-African oil and gas pipelines in 2015”, Harvard World Map 2015)

(Chart 6.1 “Civil War Trends 1944-2004”; Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 419)
(Map 6.6 “The Pentagon's New Map by Thomas P.M. Barnett, simplified”, Eaves 2008)

(Map 6.7 “The Sino-Soviet Block and Three Central Strategic Fronts”; Brzezinski 1997, 7)
(Map 10.1 “Migrations of Christian population from Serbia and Bosnia to Croatia”, Ilić 1995)
(Map 10.2 “Čakavian dialect and its variants”, Brozović and Ivić, 1988, 120)
(Map 10.3 “Kajkavian dialect and its variants”, Brozović and Ivić, 1988, 120)

(Map 10.4 “Štokavian dialect and its variants”, Brozović and Ivić, 1988, 120)
(Map 10.5 “The Habsburg Military Krajina, 1792”, Lampe 2000, 19)
(Chart 10.1 “Early Croatian inclusion-exclusion problem”)

“Picture 10.1 “Communist posters from the World War II”, Tanner 1997)

“Everyone into battle for the freedom of Croatia!”

“Long live the elections for the constitutional parliament, the expression of statehood and sovereignty of the people of Croatia.”

*The word used for “parliament” was “Sabor”, which was the traditional name of Croatian parliament since medieval times, while Serbs used the word “skupština”.*
“STJEPAN RADIĆ
- leader and teacher -
of Croatian people”

“You fell for Croatian Istria and her holly ideals. We erect this monument to you in a liberated country, on the day of her glory.”
References


Albornoz, F. And Hauk, E. 2014, Civil War And Foreign Influence.


Association For The Promotion Of European Minorized Peoples 2015, *Peoples In Search Of Freedom*.


Bakarić, V. 01/22/1970, "Tenth Session Of The Central Committee Of The Alliance Of Communists Of Croatia", *Komunist*.


Bieber, F. 2007, *The Role Of The Yugoslav People’s Army In The Dissolution Of Yugoslavia—The Army Without A State?*, Purdue University Press.


Bosanac, S., 1897, Hrvatske Narodne Pjesme. 1 Odio, Knj. 2, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb.


British Broadcasting Corporation 2012, *Which Countries Have Nuclear Weapons?*.

Brozović, Dalibor And Ivić, Pavle 1988, "Jezik, Srpskohrvatski/Hrvatskosrpski, Hrvatski Ili Srpski" In *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, Ed. JLZ "Miroslav Krleža", Zagreb, Pp. 120.


Cederman, Lars-Erik, Gleditsch, Kristian Skrede,Buhaug, Halvard, 2013, *Inequality, Grievances, And Civil War*, S.N.], S.L.


Chenoweth, Erica And Lawrence, Adria. Belfer Center For Science And International Affairs., 2010, *Rethinking Violence States And Non-State Actors In Conflict*, MIT Press


CIA 4/1990, "NIC M90-10002 "The Direction Of Change In The Warsaw Pact"", *National Intelligence Estimates*


CIA 11/1991c, "NIE 11-18.3-91 "Civil Disorder In The Former USSR: Can It Be Managed This Winter?"", *National Intelligence Estimates*


CIA 09/1991a, "SNIE 11-18.2-91: The Republics Of The Former USSR: The Outlook For The Next Year", *National Intelligence Estimates*

CIA 09/1989b, "NIC M 89 - 10002: The Post-CFE Environment In Europe", *National Intelligence Estimates*

CIA 09/1989a, "2. SOV-8910077: Gorbachev's Domestic Gamblings And Instability In The USSR (U)", *National Intelligence Estimates*


Cikotić, S. 07/14/2012, "Lecture At The American University In Bosnia And Herzegovina".


Dabčević-Kučar, S. 01/22/1970, "Tenth Session Of The Central Committee Of The Alliance Of Communists Of Croatia", *Komunist*.


Gaddis, J.L. Karl Von Der Heyden Distinguished Lecture, Duke University, February 26, 2009.


Harvard World Map 2015, "Oil And Gas Pipelines".


Hechter, Michael, Kabiri, Nika, 2009, "The Dilemma Of Social Order In Iraq"]


Hodak, Orhidea Gaura, 2014, *Tuđman I Perković: Istina O Tajnoj Vezi Koja Je Formirala Hrvatsku*


Ilić, J. 1995, ""The Serbs In The Former SR Of Croatia" ", *Rastko*.


International Criminal Tribunal For The Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) 11/20/2003, "Testimony Of Borisav Jović"]


International Criminal Tribunal For The Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) 05/23/2003, "Testimony Of Milan Kučan".

International Criminal Tribunal For The Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) 01/18/2005b, "Testimony Of Ratko Marković".

International Criminal Tribunal For The Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) 01/13/2005a, "Testimony Of Ratko Marković".

International Criminal Tribunal For The Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Court Records.


Jevtić, D. 09/19/2002b, *Špegelj Traži - Pobunu!*.


Kamm, H. 05/31/1993, *Albania Chief Urges West To Send Troops To Kosovo To Prevent War*.


Klaić, V. 1878, *Bosna (Zemljopis)*, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb.


Knežević, B. 02/19/2007, *AMARCORD 2/17 (Video Of Krajina Serbs In Plitivice On 03/31/1991)*.


Krasner, S., *Are Bureaucracies Important*, Foreign Policy, V.7, Summer 1972, PGS 159-179.


Lantis, Jeffrey S., 2002, Strategic Dilemmas And The Evolution Of German Foreign Policy Since Unification. Praeger.


Lynch, M., Ed. (Ed) 12/18/2013, The Political Science Of Syria’s War, Institute For Middle East Studies, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.


Mueller, B. 2014, "Using Counterfactuals To Investigate Causality In International Relations", *Annual Convention Of The International Studies Association*.


Oroši, V. & Džezairi, S. 06/01/1992a, Većini Veća Odgovornost, *Vreme*.


Pavlaković, V. 10/15/2015, *Nation Building In Livade: Croatian Istria And The Istrian State*. 


Petrović, RužA., Blagojević, Marina., 1989, Migration Of Serbs And Montenegrins From Kosovo And Metohija: Results Of A Survey Conducted From 1985 To 1986: Summary, Statements Made By Serbs And Montenegrins (Excerpts), Serbian Academy Of Sciences And Arts, Belgrade.


Praljak, S. 2014, "The Truth About Political Positions Of The Republic Of The Croatia Towards Bosnia And Herzegovina".

Praljak, S. 09/01/2005, "Skupština BiH: Šest Točaka Predsjednika Predsjedništva Alije Izetbegovića O Budućnosti SFRJ (Sarajevo, 27. 6. 1991.)".


Rački, F. 1861, *Odlomci Iz Državnoga Prava Hrvatskoga Za Narodne Dinastie*, Knjigarnica Ferdinanda Klemma, Beč.


Rakić, B. 03/12/2015, *Lecture At The Faculty Of Law, University Of Belgrade*, Belgrade, Serbia.


Reljić, D. 04/06/1992, Kosovo Posle Rata.


RTB (Radio Televizija Beograd) 01/20/1990, TV Dnevnik.


Russett, Bruce M., Study Seminar 35: Land Tenure, Distribution And Reform, Institute Of Development Studies, Uuuu, "Inequality And Instability; The Relation Of Land Tenure To Politics.", N.P.


Saideman, Stephen M., University Of California Institute On Global Conflict And Cooperation., 1995, Is Pandora's Box Half-Empty Or Half-Full?: The Limited Virulence Of Secessionism And The Domestic Sources Of Disintegration, University Of California Institute On Global Conflict And Cooperation, La Jolla, CA.


Sandić, A. 1866, "Kratak Izveštaj O Stanju Rasejanoga Mnogobrojnog Ilirskog Naroda", Beč]


Savez Antifašističkih Boraca I Antifašista Republike Hrvatske (SABH) 2015, "Vjerske I Političke Slobode"


Spasojević, S., 06/19/1992, *Da Li Je Pripreman Državni Udar?*


Tanner, M., 1997, *Croatia: A Nation Forged In War*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.


The American Presidency Project (APP) "George H.W. Bush - Speeches And Interviews".


Tripalo, M. 01/22/1970, "Tenth Session Of The Central Committee Of The Alliance Of Communists Of Croatia", Komunist.


Vojinović, M. 2015, Političke Ideje Mlade Bosne, Filip Višnjić, Beograd.


Vrhovni Savet Odbrane Savezne Republike Jugoslavije (VSO SRJ) 09/112/1995, Stenografske Beleške 44. Sednice VSO SRJ.


Vujačić, I. 08/01/2015, "Lecture To Northeastern University Students In Belgrade"


Wendt, A., 1992, *Anarchy Is What States Make Of It*


X 1897, Vrlika U Borbi, Srpska Dubrovačka Štamparija, Dubrovnik.

Y 1898, Vrlički Hrvati Odgovaraju Piscu X, Vrlika U Borbi, Narodna Tiskara, Zadar.


Zubok, V. 2003, "Gorbachev And The End Of The Cold War: Different Perspectives On The Historical Personality" In Cold War Endgame: Oral History, Analysis, Debates, Ed. W.


- Two Faces Of Political Instability, 1987, Central Intelligence Agency.