Research Article

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Using Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia to predict the outcome of the dissolution of states: factors that lead to internal conflict and civil war

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Abstract: During the process of the dissolution of countries, there exist multiple critical junctures that lead to the partition of the territory, where the different groups cannot find a consensus on who rules and how to organize the government. The outcome of these crossroad decisions and political dynamics, who are often set-up centuries ago, either lead to conflict or relative peace between the nations and peoples who express opprobrium towards each other. The most recent cases of the divorce of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have many similitudes and are therefore appropriate to attempt to theoretically analyze the essential difference between these two types of partitions. The Yugoslav situation led to War between the nations of Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia and Serbia, with an estimated 140,000 citizens of the former Yugoslav Republics killed, while the Czechoslovak case led to an innocuous settlement of differences and the creation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, who joined the European Union ten years later and saw zero casualties.

It is worthwhile to study the relationship between the dissolution of states and conflict using the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav cases for three main reasons. First, the similitude of the two instances enables one to identify variables that bring the outcome of having either peaceful relations or conflict between divorcing nations. Second, it is possible to compare the opposing disposition of variables with other countries that faced dissolution at one moment in history. Third, the sources and research for the two events are extensive, but very seldom put into conflict, since the causes for dissolution in both instances seem patent and explicit, contrasting significantly in scope and depth. This paper may be an occasion to disprove the notion that unworkable forces were at play here and demonstrate that the situation could have skewed in either direction, even though those structural forces are what lay the groundwork of the situation devolving into conflict.

Keywords: State-Dissolution Decentralization Federalism Central Europ

1 Introduction

As post-Soviet states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia seem to have overcome extreme barriers to integration and joined the European Union in 2004, only fifteen years after the dissolution of the USSR. Both countries are different in economic development, have discrepant political doctrines and even displayed different attitudes towards democracy, in the past. The autocratic government of Vladimír Mečiar in 1992 and the dictatorship of Jozef Tiso in 1939 in Slovakia contrast the long-standing liberal-democratic tradition in the Czech Republic. They both, albeit, still have very convergent customs, a similar language, have fought against the most expansionist empires in history to preserve their identity, and are the two countries who have the most favourable opinion of each other in Europe.

The countries of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia, on the other hand, have been a hotspot for conflict and disagreements since the 19th-century wave of nationalism that swept Europe, conflicts which culminated with the dissolution of the Soviet-Union and the start of the Yugoslav Wars in 1991. The 2008 separation of Kosovo from Serbia had foreign dignitaries and representatives worried that this event, vehemently

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opposed by Serbs, would spark another wave of intervention and conflict across the region. The unstable nature of the break-up begs the question of *why* this was such a different outcome from Czechoslovakia's divorce.

This paper intends to make a complete analysis of the reasons for this stark contrast, with a comparative framework. It aims to dispel the notion that religion was the most important or only reason for such a divide while acknowledging the contribution of religious fervour to the violence. The paper will later, from an actor-oriented standpoint, look at how elites managed these conflicts differently, whether in the international community or the borders of Yugoslavia. Then, from a structural standpoint, the paper will delve into the contribution of ethnic divide and nationalism, historical legacies left behind by dominating Empires and the geographic and political dimension that contributed most to conflict arising.

1.1 The religious conflict theory

At first glance, the answer to why these states dissolved seems obvious. The case of Czechoslovakia has seldom been compared to that of Yugoslavia, even though they were both newly independent Soviet satellite states with distinct nations within their borders. The reason for this is because of the sheer convincingness, in retrospect, of the argument of a religious feud between the nations of Yugoslavia causing the dissolution. Conversely, the split of Czechoslovakia, depicted by academia as an agreement between politicians to let the two nations operate autonomously after the fall of the Soviet Union, was due to purely pragmatic reasons. Religion is studied as a non-factor for the divorce of Czechoslovakia as both countries were Christian-Majority and of Christian heritage, whereas Bosnia-Herzegovina was Muslim-majority and the rest of Yugoslavia was Christian-Majority.

However, this theory close to that of the Clash of Civilizations by Huntington fails to explain the devolution of the situation in every aspect since Christians were the primary opponents on each side in Yugoslavia. Even though Croatians and Slovenians are Catholic and Serbians are Orthodox, this had little to do with religion, since the same division exists between the Czech and Slovak peoples. The Czech Republic, although it has a deeply rooted Catholic tradition, it is the most anti-religious country in the world, the only with more than a majority of Atheists. Slovakia is a fervently orthodox country, quite a significant contrast to the Czech Republic that seems to have become much less religious than other Eastern Europeans and have dropped their religious identities in large numbers after the fall of communism, a time during which many former communist countries are experiencing religious revivals, like Hungary, Poland and Slovakia¹.

Current religious trends in the Czech Republic generally depict a movement away from the Roman Catholic Church. Czechs' relationship with Roman Catholicism has been volatile for most of their history. A substantive anti-clerical movement animates the Czech Republic, who was mostly in favour of a reformation. Figures like Jan Hus that elevated reformist and progressive ideals within the clergy have been martyrs and heroes for most of the region's history. Unlike the Slovaks, Czechs have viewed their Roman Catholic roots in tension with their autonomist desires for most of the twentieth century. The Catholic hierarchy was seen as a form of Austro-Hungarian Habsburg domination, thereby favouring dissent². Slovaks, who are a much less religiously homogenous nation because of a large protestant and Jewish minority, created a more vigilant Slovak Catholicism and Orthodoxy due to tensions. World War II sealed this difference between the two as the Slovak government embraced both fascism and Roman Catholicism. While the Czech regions occupied by German forces served as an unwilling Nazi "protectorate", Slovakia became an independent state under the rule of Jozef Tiso, a Roman Catholic priest. Tiso was a Nazi sympathizer and reconciled his Catholic affiliation with his fascist politics³. Slovaks, therefore, left their Czech neighbours to bear the brunt of Nazi cruelty. Therefore, a tension between both nations manifesting would be more than understandable, with a direct cause being religious differences. However, such a visceral destructive opposition did not come to be.

¹ Froese, Paul, 2005. "Secular Czechs and Devout Slovaks: Explaining Religious Differences", *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 46, No. 3, p 269.

² Skalník-Leff, Carol, 2014. "National Conflict in Czechoslovakia", *Project Muse, Princeton University Press, Chapter 1*, pp. 20-21

³ Froese, Paul, 2005. "Secular Czechs and Devout Slovaks: Explaining Religious Differences", *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 46, No. 3, p 277

Yugoslavia was a very similar case, in many respects. The Croat Ustashe regime actively cooperated with the Nazis and massacred Serbians during the second world war, with the help of the catholic clergy, therefore Serbs associate Croats with fascists. With the socialist regime of Tito, after 1945, the state encouraged nations and republics to emerge, especially encouraging the creation of a Macedonian orthodox church and identified a clear Bosnian Muslim nation, associating each nation with a clear religion and acting as though each was a homogeneous block with borders, thereby acting as an ethnoreligious entrepreneur⁴. Religion, to western analysts, seems to interplay with nationalism based on ethnic lines, as both inspire martyrdom and sacrifice for a cause far removed from the individual interests of a person. However, these wars cannot fit in the category of wars of religion. These wars are different from those between Catholics and protestants after the reformation in Europe, as they were fought not over theology and specific dogma, like during the counter-reformation, but over political hegemony over others and territorial claims.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that religion was an argument in support of those claims, through mass religious mobilizations and pilgrimages, mythical religious stories, framing of lands as holy and god-given, ritualized atrocities and the manipulation of bodies⁵. These acts stem from intense religious indoctrination. Croats, for instance, believe they are the original defenders of western Christendom in the region against the byzantine and Turkish Balkans, with Croat national leader Franjo Tudjman enamoured with Huntington's theory. A belief that Serbs are authoritarian by nature because of the "Dinanic" pastoral society which is supposedly patriarchal and aggressive. These "ancient hatred" of tribes argument is not very academic, as it does not delve into the detail of the mechanism of what sparked conflict but pictures it as an inevitable narrative in history. The Balkans are not uniquely violent; instead, our societies have successfully obtained the monopoly of coercive force, whereas Yugoslavia still had blood feuds and brigand rebel bands across the country on a local scale. Governments therefore resorted to terror on the civilian population and ethnic cleansing, using religion to ritualize the mass murder to create national effervescence in the troops in a Durkheimian way, with a focus on solidarity (cutting the throat like cattle for instance). The Serbian/Yugoslav army developed an ideology of genocide that links to mythicism. The 19th century fabricated myth of the extermination of the Turks during the Ottoman Empire and that of the vengeance of Lazar, a Christ-like figure avenged by having the Sultan and his subjects murdered, was used to label the "Turks" (Bosnians) as an ethnic group antithetical to Christianity where killing becomes sacred vengeance.

Although this only accounts for the demonizing of Albanians and Bosnians, the animosity towards Croats relates to religion, with the Catholic Church's involvement in the Second World War in the Serbian massacre, therefore Serb clerics initiated the anti-Croat discourse by exhuming tombs symbolically and instrumentalizing orthodox values against the Croats.

However, these major religious blocks have coexisted in the region since the medieval era. Secular leaders seem to have had a part of responsibility in using religion and (some) genuine religious clerics to advance other interests which were opposite to that of other actors of a different religion in the region. Even though the conflict had an ethnoreligious character, with heavily symbolized acts of violence, the higher-ups in the clergy seemed to want to gain political power over enacting divine justice. They used ethno-clericalism, whereby the state, clerics and nation were the three pillars of a system that defends against invasion and disappearance of an ethnic group through religion⁶. It was to maintain stability in the community and closely resembles ultramontaniam in Quebec and Hindu nationalism, in many respects. The englobing of religion in the lives of the citizens of each of the specific nations and republics of Yugoslavia was most certainly a factor in making the conflict much worse. Although, it cannot be the leading cause that sparked violence due to the simple fact of this mechanism, and the revision of history by clerics fueling hatred existing for centuries prior. It seems it was instead a change in leadership, interests and incentives that was a deciding factor, making the case of Yugoslavia much more comparable and on a similar level to Czechoslovakia.

⁴ Moe, Christian, 2006. "Religion in the Yugoslav conflicts: post-war perspectives", *Scripta Institute Donneriani Aboensis*, volume 19, p. 259

⁵ Moe, Christian, 2006. "Religion in the Yugoslav conflicts: post-war perspectives", *Scripta Institute Donneriani Aboensis*, volume 19, pp. 257

⁶ Perica, Vjekoslav, 2002. "Balkan idols: religion and nationalism in Yugoslav states", Oxford University Press, p. 16

1.2 The actor-oriented approach

The often described as “impressively legalistic”⁷ breakup of Czechoslovakia was the exact opposite of that of Yugoslavia in terms of bloodshed. Perhaps, just as the clerics in Yugoslavia were personally responsible for advancing their interests over the general welfare, the Czechoslovak leaders were just as inversely reasonable and prudent? Although things initially seemed to be bleak for Czechoslovakia rather than Yugoslavia, given that there was no referendum for the former and there were referenda for Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Slovenia and Krajina (a region that did not manage to secede). Furthermore, the push, in post-soviet Czechoslovakia, for a more privatized economy was perceived as satisfying primarily Czech economic interests⁸. Ever since the Czechoslovak 1919 republic, there has been an active disdain of Prague elitists towards what they called “artificial” Slovak nationalism, who were viewed as “a weak and isolated handful”⁹. Indeed, the Czech and Slovak lands had stark differences in development, with Slovak Lands producing many raw materials destined for manufacture in Czech lands, which visibly deteriorated their environment unless controlled. The only manufactured products that Slovaks were expansively producing were military products, which became obsolete under President Havel, who banned their export after the collapse of the Soviet Union¹⁰. So, it seems most decisions made by leaders at the time would have lead to a more violent Break-up in Czechoslovakia.

However, positive decisions heavily outway the political miscalculations according to political dissolution models for Czechoslovakia, and in Yugoslavia, terrible decisions lead to two million refugees and 140,000 murdered. Firstly, in Yugoslavia, the death of Tito is a catalyst. Serbians were quite averse to his policies and previous decisions. An ardent nationalist leader, Slobodan Milosevic, rose to power in Serbia’s republic. He and his political base disliked the more federalist policies of Tito, who gave more autonomy to the Republics like Croatia and Bosnia. In opposition, Franjo Tudjman rose to power in Croatia with a similarly nationalist agenda in opposition to Serbs and desiring separation from their dominance. The growth in secession movements led to even more Serbian dominance over other less powerful republics like Albanians and Bosnians.

Even though 52% of Slovenes were in favour of the federation and only 16% of Slovakia wanted to leave the unions they were in¹¹, these countries divorced from the others. It seems politicians’ manipulation of a population that is not used to democratic rules and their new nationalist sentiment after decades of Soviet repression and artificial management of ethnicity breeds conflict.

During the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, even though tensions between politicians were high because of the political deadlock national representants of Czechia and Slovakia, these same politicians never used it to assert unilateral dominance over the other party and revive nationalism. The divorce negotiations were reasonable once it was inevitable a compromise would not be found. The debt and budget were calculated on a 2:1 ratio, based on population and territorial statistics. A new tax system, monetary policy, army, legal system and trade agreements are then carefully drafted by Slovakia. They were given complete autonomy to do so, even though some difficult issues arose (80% of military installations were in Czech lands, gold assets gained from WW2 were in Prague, and the Czech land of Moravia and Bohemia produced much more than two-thirds of the GDP). They also preserved friendly ties with each other, both entering a customs union hastily and soon resuming beneficial trade. Yugoslavia was not so well managed, Slovenia declared its’ own independence because they were simply ignored. Their demands for one-third of the 7 Billion dollars in the federal budget were not based on population and territory (as required by the IMF) but on subjective economic factors tied to contributions to the economy which were much higher than the other Yugoslav republics. The Yugoslav central leadership was also not reasonable, as it was constituted mostly by Serbs who were not open to reform, having replaced young moderates during a 1971-72 purge¹². The Yugoslav Army (JNA) crushed secessionists in Croatia and

7 Macek-Mackova, Emanuela, 2001. “Challenges in Conflict management for multi-ethnic states”, *The Journal of nationalism and ethnicity*, p. 623

8 Bookman, Milica Z., 1994. “War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia”, *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 31, p. 178

9 Skalník-Leff, Carol, 2014. “National Conflict in Czechoslovakia”, Project Muse, *Princeton University Press*, chapter 3, p. 197

10 Bookman, Milica Z., 1994. “War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia”, *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 31, p. 178.

11 Bookman, Milica Z., 1994. “War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia”, *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 31, p. 176.

12 Moe, Christian, 2006. “Religion in the Yugoslav conflicts: post-war perspectives”, *Scripta Institute Donneriani Aboensis*, volume 19, p. 266

Slovenia under the direct orders of Miletic. The intention here was to salvage Serbia and create a “greater” Serb state by using the federal army by acquiring parts of Croatia and Bosnia. This expansionist policy caused a complete collapse of the state as the army was often encouraged to use genocide, rape and other crimes against humanity to force migration of these people away from lands they wanted dominion over, adequately named “ethnic cleansing”. Therefore, violence in Yugoslavia can directly be traced back to this centralist attitude of Serbian leaders, unwilling to compromise and play by the rules of a consociational regime. Other actors were also uncompromising, like Slovene policymakers, who amended their republic’s constitution to have the right to secede¹³ (which started the worry of secession in Belgrade), Yugoslavia declared this resolution void even though Slovenes voted at 95% to be independent. In most consociational regimes like that of Switzerland and Belgium or even South-Africa, a tradition, coming from the treaty of Westphalia of compromise of giving up rights and privileges for a more neutral (in Europe secular) government, a social contract of protection and mediation to arbitrate the interests of different parties with the aim to promote the general well-being. These states are often far-removed from this history and tend to have narrowly legitimate governments who use violence to secure this legitimacy in the post-soviet sphere of influence. The state losing any monopoly of this coercive force and legitimacy often leads to violence, and later state collapse. Serbian centralism is an expression of this uncompromising doctrine, through either strict federalism or outright Serbian rule through central government institutions. The federal-state became a vehicle for Serbian domination after 1990, thereby leading others to reject it. Croats had the Serb-dominated Army intervening in their lands while leaders of Serbia and Croatia were meeting, to which Croatian government responded unilaterally by stating they would leave the federation by June 30th, 1991 if the government did not become less centralized and Serb-dominated. The hard-liner communist Serb government and non-communist Croats both had visceral hate towards each other that politicians replicated at a country-level with sly tactics and shows of strength. The rare attempts at compromise were sabotaged by Serbian leaders, like during the 14th congress of the League of Communists of the Yugoslav republics, which voted to abolish the single-party system which Slovenes and Croats were very much in favour of implementing. Serbs vetoed this resolution, thereby pushing Slovenes and Croats to leave the party altogether. Other economic decisions, for instance, taxing core commodities like bread and oil, to increase federal power, were very destructive. Yugoslavia had just traversed an economic crisis in the 1980s, with 35,000% inflation by the time that Slovenia left the union¹⁴. This deepened the societal fissure between these republics and increased widespread dissatisfaction, which emboldened other nations to challenge Serbian rule even though others, like Croats, had demonstrably suffered from this strategy. Increasingly, the national republics’ interests were raised to the utmost importance, whereas those of the unity of the federation rarely upheld. Although it started as the fear of a powerful country “turning to crumbs” (even provinces like Istria and Sandzak wanted independence), Yugoslav intervention became a tool of Serbian dominance over the Balkans.

Notwithstanding, leaders also used nationalism to raise politicization in a country who had had its political identification levels to a deficient level due to forty years of single-party rule, both parties reached a compromise in Czechoslovakia. A similar movement of Czech and Slovak elites to their respective national governments, creating a competition between Prague and Bratislava over their interests¹⁵, was observable as soon as the Gorbachev regime came to power. Regional parties emerged, which would not have been possible under strict Soviet rule. The decision of President Havel, also, of not creating a federation-wide OF party also created an even more excellent opportunity for this factionalism to emerge. When it came time to negotiate over plans for the federations, both sides reached a deadlock. Czechs wanted a stronger federal government that was more liberal and less communist. Slovaks wanted a loose confederation with stable, independent republics who had international recognition¹⁶. The difference here was that no party emerged with an absolute majority in the federal assembly to implement their interests. No side prevailed over the other nor had the means or intention of doing so. The mediation from Vaclav Havel between both sides also contributed to calming tensions and coming to a bureaucratic accord for peaceful dissolution. President

¹³ Eastwood, Lawrence S., 1993. Secession: State practice and international after the dissolution of Yugoslavia”, *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*, volume 93, p. 323

¹⁴ Bookman, Milica Z., 1994. “War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia”, *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 31, p. 180.

¹⁵ Macek-Mackova, Emanuela, 2001. “Challenges in Conflict management for multi-ethnic states”, *The Journal of nationalism and ethnicity*, p. 624

¹⁶ Macek-Mackova, Emanuela, 2001. “Challenges in Conflict management for multi-ethnic states”, *The Journal of nationalism and ethnicity*, pp. 619-620

Havel's opposition to Czech premier Klaus's plans for the Czech republic also created a healthy multifaceted political dynamic, with the latter a disciple of Milton Friedman who desired less of the state and institution. This ideology was in opposition to Havel's moralizing tone and institutionalism that would foster change, influenced by Western thinking too (Tocqueville, Hegel)¹⁷.

This compromising attitude can be traced back to a movement, during the 1980s, of "activist sociology". Used to be seen by the communist movement as a bourgeois pseudo-science, these sociologists played an active part in inspiring leaders of both parties in the 1990s. They saw social units like interest groups and villages as agents of social change, much more effective than the government at replicating and engineering social change. This sociological current was a move away from centralizing Marxist social science, as it advocated moving away from central planning, it instead advocated focusing on cooperation between individuals to increase output¹⁸. Fedor Gal, the leaders of the Czechoslovak Public against violence movement, said it was a dialogue between local communities and the government that this started, which reduced ideological pressures from the communist era. Authors like Stena and Slosiavik joined the movement which strongly opposed authoritarianism and violence. These sociologists had the courage questions about modernization theory and liberalism which other soviet states had never attempted, an idea of a normative thrust towards dialogue and feedback from the civil society instead of unilaterally pursuing the states' interests¹⁹. Most Czechs and Slovaks at the time overwhelmingly agreed about violence, which was antithetical to their values. This dynamic existed during the 1989 velvet revolution, which was an agglomeration of overwhelmingly peaceful protests against Soviet rule.

The international community's reaction was also essential in explaining the difference in outcomes. The European Community wanted Yugoslavia to retain its' territorial integrity to promote stability in the region, as they were redacting Maastricht at the start of the conflict in 1991. The fact the European Community did not have the military capacity to intervene and neither did the states in the region (Greece, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria). The EC tried diplomacy by leveraging a temporary peace treaty through sanctions²⁰. The IMF set the budget and debt-sharing imperatives during dissolutions; however, their numbers were tentative and not taken seriously by states in the Balkans. The United-Nations worsened the conflict by denying the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, a tool to force Yugoslavia to contain the dissolution. The UN's preference for the status quo and misinterpretation of the situation emboldened Serbia who became unwilling to cooperate in an orderly devolution of the federation and left the people of Yugoslavia unprotected, at first, by international law. Later, Bosnia is recognized as a separate state by the UN and EC to placate the military interventions of the Yugoslav and Serbian army in the region, but in a confused manner, since this was the first country outside a colonial context to profess its right to self-determination. Slovenia, Bosnia and Croatia had fulfilled the requirements for statehood for months, yet they withheld recognition without any accusations of human rights abuses against both countries at that time (a precondition to withholding any official recognitions of states).²¹ This reluctance of the UN came from a fear of internationalizing the conflict due to the heterogeneous nature of most countries, which would undermine the international order²². However, most states have not had violent secessions and have internalized the conflict (Alsace/France, United-Kingdom/Scotland) through coercion. The Wilsonian right to self-determination was intended for former colonial holdings and to justify decolonization rather than secession²³. Therefore, there was little support from the US-led international order in the Yugosphere, also because minimal American interests, like for the Rwandan genocide, existed in the region for them to intervene. By the time the United-States had recognized Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia by December 1991, most of the damage was irreversible, and the war was unstoppable. A UN peacekeeping force was then sent, with little success, but no military coalition of countries to stop the ethnic cleansing

17 Smith, Simon and Myart, Martin, 2003. "Local communities and post-communist transformation", *Routledge*, p.34

18 Smith, Simon and Myart, Martin, 2003. "Local communities and post-communist transformation", *Routledge*, p. 21

19 Smith, Simon and Myart, Martin, 2003. "Local communities and post-communist transformation", *Routledge*, p. 6

20 Weller, Marc, 1992. "The International Response to the Dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", *The American Journal of International Law*, Volume 86, No. 3, p. 582

21 Weller, Marc, 1992. "The International Response to the Dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", *The American Journal of International Law*, Volume 86, No. 3, p. 605

22 Eastwood, Lawrence S., 1993. Secession: State practice and international after the dissolution of Yugoslavia", *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*, volume 93, p. 299

23 Eastwood, Lawrence S., 1993. Secession: State practice and international after the dissolution of Yugoslavia", *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*, volume 93, p. 314

and ritualized murders. The disinterested stance of world leaders and strategists and the European Community's difficulty to affect change with embargos and sanctions as their only tool was an aggravating factor in Yugoslavia, and an encouraging factor in Czechoslovakia, where officials kept world leaders updated and were transparent in their intentions and the mechanisms by which the divorce would happen.

Foreign aid, in some cases, can contribute to peacebuilding. However, in Bosnia, it exacerbated violence: Bosnia had a weak state who could not redistribute aid, donors had geopolitical and commercial priorities rather than peacebuilding priorities and local states were not taken into account (there was an assumption of a regulatory vacuum).²⁴ Therefore Serb troops took advantage of the aid by confiscating it and using it. With a more competent and interested international community, violence could have been prevented and dampened.

However, could conflict have been avoided by increasing power-sharing? Was Czechoslovakia more decentralized than Yugoslavia and did this contribute to the peaceful dissolution as much as individual decisions and movements?

In Robert Hislop's "the generosity moment", a specific moment can lead down two paths: generous political decisions by elites in the dominant group can soothe ethnic tensions in a multiethnic state. With the example of South-Africa, he demonstrates that Nelson Mandela's accommodation of the white minority's interests and allaying of white fears through a dual-presidency, a representative cabinet and consensus-based democracy and assurances that they would not nationalize white property and businesses. Although South-Africa has a recent history of ethnic violence and many of the same structural factors as Yugoslavia, there was no ethnic war. Hislop explains there was an absolute absence of generosity in Yugoslavia with Serb supremacy being the only guiding policy. The illiberal elites are the difference here with South-Africa, whereas in Czechoslovakia, there were numerous generosity moments from a much less authoritarian elite²⁵. Such examples as the "Hyphen-War" agreements to give Slovaks their name for the federation, the state-treaty concessions in 1991, the 1992 Klaus-Meciar talks and the decentralization measures in 1991 contributed to an albeit productive dialogue. The Czech Premier, Petr Pithart, admitted when his people thought he was giving in to all Slovak demands, that they wanted to avoid conflict at all costs²⁶. The divorce of Czechoslovakia can be perceived as the last concession Czechs made to Slovaks, as the growing nationalist movement in Slovakia could not be contained. Slovaks wanted to make their republic's laws superior to federal law in their constitution, thereby facilitating concessions as either decision would render Slovakia a mostly independent state.

The union of Serbia and Montenegro and Czechoslovakia filled all the requirements of Lipjhart of consociational regimes in *The politics of accommodation*. However, it seems that stirring up ethnic sensitivity was the best way for politicians to gather political support in these countries where participation and political involvement was low²⁷. This idea from Lipjhart of consociational regimes neutralizing social and ethnic divisions through central power-sharing does not apply to every country. Perhaps certain divisions are less prone to cause conflict? Indeed, Lipjhart analyzed Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Austria, all western-European states. Lipjhart's theory fails to see the profoundly concerning economic and developmental issues that exist in other countries, and contexts of a high probability of violence due to previous regimes acting in more assertive manners to territorial conflicts, like, say, the soviet union. This modelization can reverse Lipjhart's four conditions, namely the part concerning securing a veto right for each of the republics, which can often make violence the only solution elites see due to the structural, psychological context in which they operate. For instance, a very low compromise, assertive environment. Moreover, in a previous context of domination by other states, the consociational model, much more free and democratic, can increase and embolden sentiments of secession due to the now feasibility of independence.

In a theoretical model for dissolutions, the mathematical division of public goods is essential in averting conflict. These public goods can be culture, language, defence, laws of a country, but also transfers and tax concessions are essential to make for the ruling party to preserve unity and equilibrium in the system. The paper by CJ Ellis trying to compute conflict probabilities in countries demonstrates a clear relationship between the distribution of riches and

²⁴ Miliken, Jennifer, 2002. "State Failure, State Collapse, and State Reconstruction: Concepts, Lessons and Strategies", *Journal of Development and Change*, volume 33, p. 18

²⁵ Hislop, Robert, 2007. "The generosity moment: Ethnic politics, democratic consolidation and the state in Yugoslavia (Croatia), South Africa and Czechoslovakia", *South Africa and Czechoslovakia, Democratization*, Volume 5, No. 1, p. 85

²⁶ Hislop, Robert, 2007. "The generosity moment: Ethnic politics, democratic consolidation and the state in Yugoslavia (Croatia), South Africa and Czechoslovakia", *South Africa and Czechoslovakia, Democratization*, Volume 5, No. 1, p. 79

²⁷ Macek-Mackova, Emanuela, 2001. "Challenges in Conflict management for multi-ethnic states", *The Journal of nationalism and ethnicity*, p. 616

the prospects of violence over secession. To avert dissolution, individual decisions like sharing the national budget more generously, imputing taxes more proportionally and reducing central bias towards more developed regions are all adequate policies. However, if these fail, dissolution can either be violent or peaceful, like in Czechoslovakia. This outcome depends on structural issues.

2 The structural Approach

It seems, when looking at individual contributions about each outcome, Czechs, the dominant group when it comes to Czechoslovakia, preferred the divorce because a secession of outflow of capital towards Slovakia would be beneficial towards their economy. Their attitudes towards Slovaks were that of mutual cultural compassion, but the attitudes of Slovaks towards nationalism, the press and democratic principles was profoundly worrying for many Czechs, and Czech leaders particularly. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, had much to lose in having Slovenia exit the union. It was only 8.6% of the population of the federation, but 16.8% of the GDP²⁸. Slovenes did not want to share their wealth, and therefore, combined with the conditions from the international community, the brazen attitude of leaders and the nationalist fervour in the country, it made war more than likely. The other Yugoslav republics had a massive debt burden and economic crisis since the 1980s, making them even more likely to turn towards ethnic ranks and make desperate decisions based on the economy.²⁹ However, other countries have a similar disposition to Yugoslavia in terms of GDP contribution. Quebec is 22.7% of the population of Canada and 19.5% of GDP of the country³⁰, and far from a much less developed undemocratic burden for Canada, yet it did not face nor was expected to face violence from the federal army during the two attempts at secession in 1980 and 1995 through, similarly, a vote.

Other, more specific historical causes made the difference between Quebec/Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The first, different empire's influence over economic and political institutions' development, is the most patent. Czechoslovakia was under the heavy influence of Austria-Hungary, with Slovakia carved out of the Hungarian crown lands and Czechia being a constitute of parts of Poland, Moravia and Bohemia that were Austrian possessions tied to former German states³¹. Although Slovaks inherited of the strict Magyar aristocratic institutions and attitudes towards democracy, Czechs were Germanified and more interestingly Austrified, a much more embourgeoisified and industrialized central power³². They enjoyed a diversified national movement that was able to negotiate with Emperor Franz-Joseph to have more rights and autonomy. This period created generations of young, cautious Czechs with a mind open to negotiation and realpolitik through adaptation and adjustment, much like the Canadian elite influenced by cautious British governance. The 1919 liberal federation of Czechoslovakia, although a construction after the treaty of Versailles to defend against Germans, was a feat of concessions. The triangle elite, where Czech nationalists, Slovak nationalists and Federalists (policymakers not favouring any particular nation/ethnicity) was proof of the capability of Czechs and Slovaks to work within a more liberal and autonomy-based framework. Serbia's institutions, heavily influenced by Russian, more authoritarian settings in previous eras, had much more of a tendency to reject compromise and select force over diplomacy. Democratization, after the end of the Soviet Union, opened many opportunities for nationalism in these countries, which are periods of weakness for the state since questioning of the previous regime often leads to questioning of the state's existence itself³³. The Czechoslovak identity, created by western powers in favour of Czechs, had a reference to fall back to when liberalizing. This influence was visible even during the Soviet era in Czechoslovakia, with mass peaceful protests, democratic movements that were extraordinarily heterogeneous and dialogue with Moscow that ultimately led to the federation in 1969 after the invasion and velvet revolution. The history of previous ethnic conflicts is also extremely salient, with Yugoslavia having many conflicts based on nationalism and

²⁸ Bookman, Milica Z., 1994. "War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia", *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 31, p. 177.

²⁹ Moe, Christian, 2006. "Religion in the Yugoslav conflicts: post-war perspectives", *Scripta Institute Donneriani Aboensis*, volume 19, p. 258

³⁰ Canada, *Government of Canada*, Statistics "Gross domestic product, expenditure-based, provincial and territorial, annual", 2018.

³¹ Skalnik-Leff, Carol, 2014. "National Conflict in Czechoslovakia", *Project Muse, Princeton University Press, Chapter 1*, p. 11

³² Skalnik-Leff, Carol, 2014. "National Conflict in Czechoslovakia", *Project Muse, Princeton University Press, Chapter 1*, p. 18

³³ Macek-Mackova, Emanuela, 2001. "Challenges in Conflict management for multi-ethnic states", *The Journal of nationalism and ethnicity*, p. 622

being a hotbed for conflicts. The first world war was sparked-up by a Serb nationalist with the assassination of Arch-Duke Ferdinand, the Assassination of Stepan Radic in the 1920s, the Croat genocide of Jews and Serbs under the Ustase cemented high ethnic tension between groups and made weapons' availability widespread across the region.

The third structural factor is geopolitics. Both "tribes" must be geographically separated for equilibrium to be preserved in the model by Ellis, and both tribes must not have enclaves of each tribe in each region, with ethnic cleansing then become more than probable and therefore violence, as migration promotes the dissolution of the enclave to the mother state.³⁴ It is what Lipjhart refers to as "segmental isolation" and applies perfectly to Czechoslovakia but not to Yugoslavia, with significant Serb populations in Croatia and Bosnian territories, thereby creating territorial disputes similar to that of Crimea where the national self-determination concept is used to annex parts of other states by the mother state of these populations.

Similarly, border disputes' existing between the states increase these incentives to military disputes. The number of negotiating parties is also a factor here. As observed in Czechoslovakia, South-Africa, Quebec and Belgium, only two parties are trying to reach consensus, which is made much more arduous and confusing with six, as in Yugoslavia. The likelihood of conflict arising over disagreements, therefore, increases much more.

A circumstantial time constraint also contributes to the model leading to violence in some cases. If there is an assumption that the rebel party will engage in military interactions in the future appropriation by the dominant party, this causes the majority tribe (Serbs) to engage in violence based on this discrepancy in assumptions³⁵. The decision of Serbs to double-cross Serbs during state negotiation meetings indeed came from the structural assumption of the violence and resistance to communism of Croats due to Second World War events and a resurgence in nationalism, a misunderstanding between peoples that did not exist in Czechoslovakia.

The final structural cause is that state structure shapes preferences. If the initial regime is more democratic with multiple parties (Czechoslovakia), it is less likely to devolve into civil war than oligarchic regimes and dictatorships based on a single-party rule (Yugoslavia)³⁶. This theory is particularly true when one considers that democracy is based on civil society's participation and therefore makes conflict less likely as all preferences are taken into account somehow. In Yugoslavia, it was not within state-constitution to accommodate and listen to minorities through representative political parties, of which even majoritarian democracies have some form which at times form coalitions or can cost elections (like when the Parti Quebecois cost the 1993 elections towards the conservatives in Canada). The Soviet nationalities policies did not give any real share of power between these actors and intertwined state formation with state collapse. In Czechoslovakia, although the party politics since 1969 were quite oppositional between Czechs and Slovaks, this vented reprimands between tribes in civil society, created a habitude of dealing with each other's nationalist movements and working within an ethnically proportional judicial/legislative system.

3 Conclusion

This paper has found that the complex issue of post-dissolution violence has structural issues as its' raw material to start the fire of civil war. Economic differences between the regions in accordance of who is the dominant land, the number of regions involved, territorial disputes, the time-frame of conflict, history of conflict and state structure are all the unintentional structural factors that lay the basis for a conflict to arise. In the case of Yugoslavia, the manipulation of elites of ethnoreligious differences was the primary mechanism by which they were able to commit crimes against humanity and produce ethnic cleansing. The impressively peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia saw no such manipulations of such differences to their benefit simply because they had no incentive to due to structural factors. However, in Yugoslavia, the particularly unhelpful international community's response to the problem was an aggravating factor. However, ultimately, the decision of Czechs and Slovaks to avoid contentious issues and war at all costs came from more democratic strands in elite circles and the general population, although this country was forty years in the soviet union. The sociologist movements in the 1980s were partly responsible for these democratic

³⁴ Ellis, Christopher, 2015. "Public Goods and the dissolution of States", *Bulletin of economic research*, Volume 69, No. 3, pp. 15-16

³⁵ Ellis, Christopher, 2015. "Public Goods and the dissolution of States", *Bulletin of economic research*, Volume 69, No. 3, p. 14

³⁶ Ellis, Christopher, 2015. "Public Goods and the dissolution of States", *Bulletin of economic research*, Volume 69, No. 3, p. 5

compromising attitudes, now an integral structural factor in Czech and Slovak states. It was not always the case that this was apparent though, with Carol Skalník-Leff stating, in *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia* (1988), that “the *us versus them* framework [in this country] means that confrontations are sharply delineated, [...] federations are not a means to cease and desist for Slovaks”. She was painting a bleak image for the future of the country at a time where others were hopeful due to Gorbachev’s more liberal and willing to compromise administration.

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