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THE DYNAMICS OF VIOLENT COLLAPSE:
CENTRE-PERIPHERY ELITE INTERACTION IN YUGOSLAVIA

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to provide an answer to the questions of why the Yugoslav collapse had disintegrative consequences in some of the federal sub-units, but not in others and why in some cases the disruption was accompanied by significant episodes of violent ethnic mobilisation, while in some others it was substantially peaceful. The central argument of this analysis is that different outcomes of the Yugoslav disintegration process were mostly the result of the rational strategies pursued by Yugoslav political actors, given the institutional resources they had at their disposal and the constraints and incentives they faced.

It is examined how the Serbian leadership succeeded in gaining control over those federal units which remained part of rump Yugoslavia. Through the manipulation of mass protests organised from above, Milošević and his allies forced to resign the leaderships of Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro. Serbian nationalist meetings became possible thanks to the mobilisational resources made available by the party apparatus, whose functioning remained influenced by the principle of democratic centralism.

Different outcomes of the disintegration in terms of ethnic violence are analysed using a rational choice approach to look at the strategies of peripheral and central elites. It is argued that in the first phase of the disintegration, the breakdown of the equilibrium in the Yugoslav liberalised political environment was accelerated by the emergence of a nationalist leadership in Serbia and of a political elite in Ljubljana which accompanied its reformist program with an autonomist agenda. The Croatian and Bosnian wars and Macedonia's peaceful separation marked a

second phase of the process, where the federal centre ceased to play any role as an independent actor and where the outcome of the disintegration was mostly the result of strategies employed by the Serbian leadership to exert control over an increasingly narrow Yugoslavia.

Preface and acknowledgements

The idea to write a PhD thesis on Yugoslavia trying to make sense of its bloody collapse using the rationality assumption is probably the result of my earlier studies in economics and of the fact that, while I would not call myself an economist, I spent a number of years being taught by economists. Economists are famous for making assumptions. The joke of the hungry economist who is left on a desert island with a can of beans and "assumes" she has a can opener rings true. These assumptions, critics say, are then used to construct abstract and unrealistic models about human behaviour. Having followed the events in Yugoslavia through the media and the books, having then spent quite some time in the former Yugoslavia before and during my doctoral studies, it seemed natural to ask myself the question of if and how the assumption of rationality could be used to construct a realistic interpretation of the Yugoslav ethnic wars. Was it necessary to imagine a non existing can opener to see the dreadful consequences of Yugoslavia's disintegration as the result of purposeful and rational strategies? Would such an analysis stretch rather than reflect reality?

In my research I asked a fair number of questions to (former) Yugoslav journalists, scholars and most importantly political actors who were directly involved in the process that led to the demise of socialist Yugoslavia. In some cases my candid questions were followed by candid answers which pointed to the critical role of political elites and their strategies to explain the end of Yugoslavia. Occasionally these strategies may have been flawed, quite often they were not constrained by moral considerations, but nevertheless they had identifiable aims

and objectives. Ethnic conflict was not the result of an irrational outburst of hatred.

This thesis is an attempt to challenge overly simplistic interpretations of Yugoslavia's disintegration which explain it in terms of ancient ethnic hatreds between its nations. It is also an effort to analyse the Yugoslav collapse using a social scientific approach, in some cases based on formal models, rather than a historical approach. Simplifying reality using ahistorical models of strategic interaction between political actors inevitably leaves much of the complexity of the Balkan conflicts out of the picture. However, it helps us focus on a number of key questions which are not addressed in historical studies often centred on the unique path Yugoslavia has followed in its violent disintegration. It makes possible to see the breakup not just as a violent process, but as a process that had various outcomes in different peripheries, since what happened in Bosnia-Herzegovina was very different from what happened in Slovenia, Macedonia or Montenegro. It allows us to analyse the political dynamics in the eighties and early nineties using some of the interpretative tools of transition theories, keeping in mind that socialist Yugoslavia (unsuccessfully) tried to move from a non democratic regime to liberalised socialism even before the Soviet Union. In sum, this thesis uses the existing historical studies of the breakdown of Yugoslavia as a starting point to present a formal analysis of the dynamics between centre and peripheries and of the collapse of Yugoslavia as a system.

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1. Transition, nationalism, mobilisation and the Yugoslav collapse

This chapter will give a review of some of the literature on transition and regime transformation, revolutions and mobilisation, and nationalism and centre-periphery conflict. In my analysis of the Yugoslav disintegration these will be the broad theoretical areas from which I will depart. One section of the chapter will be devoted to each of them. In the concluding part of the chapter I will discuss different explanations of the Yugoslav disintegration identifying the few (and relatively weak) links that connect existing analyses of the Yugoslav conflict to the three theoretical areas analysed in the previous sections. In none of its parts will this chapter provide a detailed and exhaustive account of the vast scholarly production which, in different ways, has dealt with one or more of these issues. More simply, I will try to outline the logic and assumptions of those contributions which I consider to be particularly relevant in the context of my analysis.

Theories of transition

The collapse of Communism has greatly enlarged the set of transitional regimes and political systems, giving rise to the considerable development of the field of "transitology". Although socialist Yugoslavia was not part of the Soviet bloc in a strict sense, its regime retained some significant similarities with that of the Soviet Union and its allies. The final crisis and the breakdown of Yugoslavia were, at least to a certain extent, part of the same context in which other regimes in Eastern Europe began a process of transformation. Yet Yugoslavia has generally remained

on the margin of theoretical debates on political transition.[1] In the following paragraphs I will provide a review of some of those analyses which have represented a significant contribution to the field of transition studies, without being specifically devoted (totally or in part) to a study of the Yugoslav case.

Among the works which formed the basis for today's transition studies, one of the most important is Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (1993). Barrington Moore analyses the outcome, in terms of political regimes, of centuries-long historical processes of modernisation in a wide set of countries, ranging from France to China. Moore links the bourgeois and peasant revolutions, as well as their political outcomes (democracy, fascism, or communism) to the different roles played by the landed upper classes and the peasantry during modernisation and industrialisation. Lipset and Rokkan's analysis (1967), sometimes associated with Moore's contribution, explains the variety of party systems in Europe as a result of events during three "crucial junctures" in the history of each nation (the Reformation period, the post-1789 "democratic revolution" and the industrial revolution), which shaped different centre-periphery, state-church and land-industry cleavage structures.[2] For Lipset and Rokkan the "national histories of conflict and compromise" (1967: 35) across different cleavage lines resulted in the development of different party systems throughout Western Europe.

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[1] There may be two possible explanations for the scarce attention which so far has been devoted to the analysis of the liberalisation and failed democratisation of the Yugoslav regime. Firstly, the high level of violent mobilisation which later characterised the collapse of this country has been too important a disturbance variable to include Yugoslavia in most of the traditional analyses of transition in Eastern Europe. Secondly, the "deviant" position of Yugoslavia within the Communist bloc (to which in fact it did not fully belong) has made this case more difficult to be categorised and studied, the Titoist regime being non-democratic, but still significantly more open (and decentralised) than that of the other Communist countries.

[2] The owner-worker cleavage, which is the fourth critical division line identified by Lipset and Rokkan, explains instead the similarities in Western European party systems.

These contributions dating back to the sixties tended to combine a comparative historical analysis with the use of the analytical tools of political sociology, and were intended to provide explanations for the long-term development of democracy or, in general, of various political forms. Their roots can be traced back to (among others) Polanyi's *Great Transformation* (1944) and remain today classic and all-encompassing accounts of processes of modernisation and political/economic transformation. However, they have lost some of their popularity and have been increasingly questioned starting from the seventies, when democracy emerged in Southern Europe first, and later in Latin America. It has been argued that those approaches became increasingly unsatisfactory since they were too "deterministic" and left little space for the role played by the strategies of the actors directly involved in the transformation of the regime (Przeworski 1991: 96). Lipset and Rokkan claimed that "the outcomes of the early struggles between State and Church determined the structure of national politics [...] three hundred years later" (1967: 38). As Przeworski pointed out, "it made little sense to Brazilians to believe that all their efforts were for naught because of the agrarian class structure of their country; it appeared ludicrous to Spanish democrats that the future of their country had been decided once and for all by the relative timing of industrialization and universal male suffrage"[3] (1991: 96).

A different approach is adopted in Rustow's pioneering work (1970) which, while still devoting great attention to historical aspects, focuses on the shorter time span of political transitions from a non-democratic to a democratic regime, rather than on long-run modernisation processes. Rustow rejects, as prerequisites for democratic development, high levels of economic and social development, as well as a prior consensus either on fundamentals or on the rules because "a people who were not in conflict about some rather fundamental matters would have little need to devise democracy's elaborate rules for conflict resolution" (1970: 362). The main precondition for a democratic transition to begin, for Rustow, is what he calls "national unity", that is to say, a situation in which most of the citizens share

[3] The allusion is to Gerschenkron's theory (1962) which explains different political outcomes as a consequence of the timing of the industrialisation phase, a theory than can well be placed in the same "macrohistorical" framework.

a common sense of belonging to a community. "This excludes situations of latent secession [...] and, conversely, situations of serious aspirations for merger as in many Arab states" (1970: 350).

O'Donnell and Schmitter's *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule* (1986) remains probably one of the most influential contributions to the study of change of political regimes: the theoretical framework developed in this book has become, if not a paradigm, the model for a significant part of the literature on transition which emerged subsequently.[4] The focus in this case is on an even more limited period of time and on the strategic interaction between different actors involved in the transition process. The starting point of the transition is the moment when a split occurs between "soft-liners" and "hard-liners" within the authoritarian elite. For O'Donnell and Schmitter "there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence [...] of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners" (1986: 19). If and when the latter prevail, a liberalisation process becomes the instrument through which the legitimacy problem of the regime is expected to be solved. Liberalisation, "making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or other third parts" (1986: 7), initiates a process that goes beyond what was originally intended, giving the possibility to collective mobilisation and individual expression to emerge, and leading to a further loosening of the authoritarian pressure. When the game reaches its final stage, the political opposition becomes directly involved in it, and the outcome of the transition is determined by the interaction between those segments of the authoritarian elite and of the opposition, which take part in the bargaining.

I have just offered an oversimplified sketch of a much more complex theory, but what is important to point out is that in this case the attention is concentrated on political elites and on the interaction pattern that develops among them, as the crucial variable that determines the path and the aftermath of transition.[5] A number of later contributions to the transition literature, including those works

[4] Some of the ideas presented in this study are partly derived from a previous work by Linz (1978).

that, from the early nineties, started to deal with the process of political change in Eastern Europe can be related to the O'Donnell and Schmitter approach. Przeworski (1991) uses a game-theoretical approach for the study of political and economic transition, and concentrates in particular on the institutional and economic conditions for democracy to be consolidated. The underlying assumption is that "democracies last when they evoke self-interested spontaneous compliance from all the major political forces" (1991: x) and, in particular, that "some institutions, under certain conditions, offer to the relevant political forces a prospect of eventually advancing their interest that is sufficient to incite them to comply with immediately unfavorable outcomes" (1991: 19). Przeworski's analysis is conducted more explicitly at the micro level and devotes significant attention to economic variables. The focus however remains chiefly on elites, on the other relevant actors in the political arena, and on the bargaining game they become involved in. Also Di Palma (1990) underlines the importance of an appropriate institutional environment for democracy to consolidate, and looks at the "rules that are the best suited to induce reluctant players to play, and the transitional coalitions that favor the adoption of those rules; and finally the tactics [...] that assist democratization" (1990: 11-12). Attention is drawn, once again, to the interplay between actors during transition rather than to historical and social preconditions for democracy. Choosing the right rules of the democratic game (in Di Palma's words "crafting") becomes the central determinant of the successful outcome of the transition: "when an agreement on democratic rules is successfully reached, the transition is essentially over" (1990: 109).

A different perspective is adopted in Huntington's influential analysis of the "third wave" of democratisation (1991), which began in the mid-seventies in Southern Europe and Latin America and continued with the transition of Communist regimes. Rather than being concerned with providing a systematic theory of transition, Huntington attempts to define a broad interpretive framework for recent democratisation phenomena. He identifies a number of changes which "seem to have played significant roles in bringing about the third wave transitions in the

[5] However, O'Donnell and Schmitter underline also the importance of the "resurrection of civil society", particularly after the opening of the authoritarian regime (1986: IV: ch. 5).

country they occurred and when they occurred" (1991: 45). These are the deepening legitimacy problems faced by authoritarian systems, the unprecedented global economic growth, the changes in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church, the new role played by international actors such as the US or the European Community, the "snowballing" or demonstration effects enhanced by new means of international communication (1991: 45-46). After having classified different types of regime transformation and described their main dynamics, Huntington identifies some conditions favouring the consolidation of new democracies, such as a previous democratic experience, a higher level of economic development, an external environment "supportive of democracy" (1991: 273), an early (in comparison to the other "third wave" transitions) beginning of the transition, and a consensual and less violent transition.[6]

Another more recent attempt to provide an all-encompassing analysis of transition processes, focused in this case on a much more limited set of former Communist countries, is the one offered by Elster, Offe, Preuss and others (1998). Dealing in particular with the issue of consolidation, they argue that "institutional consolidation is the key criterion by which success or failure of the transformation of the communist into a democratic society has to be measured" (1998: 305). In this analysis attention is devoted to several variables, first of all to the institutional/constitutional and to the economic ones, and then to other factors such as the party system and the cleavage structure which characterise the countries in transition. The main conclusion about the failure, or the partial failure, of some of the post-Communist countries in transforming themselves into consolidated democracies is that in the least successful cases the Communist regime had imposed an abrupt industrialisation, which had not been accompanied by a cultural and political modernisation. Soviet-style regimes were a "congenial host which allowed the endurance of many forms of traditional domination characteristic of agrarian societies even in an industrialized, but not

[6] Finally, Huntington claims, the number and severity of contextual problems (e.g. ethnic conflicts, or extensive state involvement in the economy, etc.) appear to have an impact on the prospects for democratic consolidation.

simultaneously modernized society" (1998: 305). This produced an unfavourable legacy of instability and political fragmentation, which became the premise for the emergence of neoauthoritarian or populist regimes. In more successful cases of democratic consolidation (such as the Czech Republic) the Communist regime could perhaps produce an "institutional wasteland", but "was not able to create institutional shelters which were able to preserve considerable elements of a communist legacy" (1998: 304). For the authors, the "backward" and "forward linkages" between legacies, institutions and choices, and in particular the role institutions have in determining the choices of the agents, is ultimately shaped by other structural characteristics of the societies in transition.

The previous paragraphs, though certainly lacking completeness, should have made clear that explanations of the dynamics of transition and consolidation are often focused on one or both of two sets of factors. Transition and its outcome may be seen as a result of "context variables", including the legacy of a relatively distant past, and other factors which refer to the interplay between the actors who are directly involved in the process of political transformation. As previously noted, it is particularly from the eighties that the interest of the scholars has shifted to the interaction pattern (particularly among elites) in transitional polities as the central factor determining the outcome of the process. Moreover, the emergence between the late eighties and the nineties of new democracies in Eastern Europe has confronted "transitologists" with a new "type of past" they have to look at, which is not the remote one of the Reformation or the nineteenth century industrialisation, but a more recent "Leninist legacy" which, it is often claimed, is one of the relevant factors which shapes the path of transitions from Soviet-style regimes and may even undermine prospects for consolidation. In fact, "we may think of [...] three different pasts exercising their causal influence on the present: the communist period, the more remote pre-communist period, and the very immediate period of extrication from the communist regimes" (Elster et al. 1998: 35). Scholars such as Jowitt (1992) have devoted their analysis precisely to the "character, development, extinction and legacy of the Leninist phenomenon" (1992: ix); in a broader comparative framework, the prior regime type is one of

the "macrovariables" used by Linz and Stepan to analyse democratic transition and consolidation (1996).

To explain transition and its outcomes we have thus the history of a remote and more recent past, and the present (or the very recent past) of the dynamic strategies and choices of the agents who are part of the game[7] with, in the background, a wide and mixed set of variables which include economic and international factors. Those theories of transition that have focused on the interplay between political agents, have often identified institutions as one of the most important constraints determining the action of the agents involved in the political transition. Institutions may be important in the early phases of the transition, when what Linz and Stepan call the "constitution-making environment"[8] (1996: 81-3) still define the rule of what is, nevertheless, becoming a new game. We have just seen that, even more significantly, institutions are seen as crucial during the consolidation phase, when they may, or may not, create the necessary structure of incentives and constraints to make political players comply with the rules of the democratic game.

I will end this section with a question, which serves also as an introduction to the next parts of this chapter. What is the role of culture in explaining the development and the outcome of these processes of transformation? In fact, purely cultural factors do not enjoy a great popularity within the transition literature, unless we use the word "culture" with a very broad and extensive meaning that would transform it in a generic "box" for a wide range of historical "products" and "by-products". This does not mean that cultural variables have been completely neglected. In fact, there has been a growing interest for example in the religious factor, which has been used to explain problems of democratic development and

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[7] Also the timing and sequence of events during transition are often used to explain the outcome of the process. Linz and Stepan, with reference to the Soviet Union, argue that "the electoral sequence of holding the first non-single-party competitive elections at the republican rather than at the all-Union level had severe disintegrative consequences" (1996: 367).

[8] Which in many cases are simply the old non-democratic institutions/constitutions.

consolidation.[9] In relation to the use of culture as an explanatory variable, it is worth quoting extensively Barrington Moore, who had warned us that

> to explain behavior in terms of cultural values is to engage in circular reasoning. If we notice that a landed aristocracy resists commercial enterprise, we do not *explain* this fact by stating that the aristocracy has done so in the past, or even that it is the carrier of certain traditions that make it hostile to such activities: the problem is to determine out of what past and present experiences such an outlook arises and maintains itself[10] (1993: 486).

Indeed, reducing great processes of historical transformation and perhaps also relatively short-term changes of political regimes to their "cultural" origins may often entail the risk of offering overly simplistic account, which add little to our understanding of these social phenomena.

Theories of mobilisation and revolution

The last years of existence of socialist Yugoslavia were marked by a transformation and liberalisation of its regime and political system, by the emergence of nationalism and centre-periphery conflict (the literature on these themes will be reviewed in the next section) and, in a perspective "from below",[11] by phenomena of ethnically based mobilisation and collective action (which often took a violent form). This section looks at scholarly contributions on the latter of these aspects, that is at different approaches to the study of mobilisation and revolutions.

A first seminal contribution to the theories of mobilisation and collective action is the one offered by Theda Skocpol, who performs a comparative historical and sociological analysis of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions (1979). Skocpol deliberately avoids explaining revolutions in terms of one group's

[9] See for example Huntington (1996).

[10] Emphasis in the original.

[11] Rarely adopted by scholars who have analysed the Yugoslav collapse.

voluntaristic response. For Skocpol revolutions are not simply the result of the people's dissatisfaction and discontent (1979: 15-16) and cannot be explained referring to mass psychologies, class interests, ideology-driven actions, etc. Her analysis is mostly centred on structural factors which she identifies as being the main causes of revolutions.[12] Furthermore, for Skocpol revolutions are to be analysed not only from the standpoint of group relations within a given country, but also taking into account the international context of capitalist development and state-building processes and, more precisely, looking at the "transnational" relations linked to the internationally uneven development of capitalist economy and nation-states formation (1979: 18). In her own words Skocpol adopts a "structural perspective on sociohistorical reality" (1979: 18), which focuses "simultaneously upon the institutionally determined situations and relations of groups within society and upon the interrelations of societies within world-historically developing international structures" (1979: 18). An approach which, according to Skocpol, is necessary to understand not only revolutions, but in general all processes of transformation at the national level (1979: 22).

Indeed, for Skocpol the emergence of modern social revolutions is first of all affected by international factors which are important in shaping internal class structures "thus influencing the existing 'domestic' context from which revolution emerges (or not)" (1979: 23). Political dependency, military backwardness and war-related processes are other conditions that may trigger the outbreak of revolutions and "defeats in wars or threats of invasion and struggles over colonial controls" are especially important in that they help undermining political authorities and state control (1979: 23). Furthermore, Skocpol pays attention to the world-historical sequence of events marked by previous revolutions and other significant "breakthroughs" which may create new opportunities or necessities, not present at earlier stages, for the development of subsequent revolutionary outbreaks (1979: 23-24). Skocpol argues, for example, that the Chinese Revolution was directly influenced by the previous experience of the Bolshevik Revolution. Another element which characterises Skocpol's approach to the study

[12] Skocpol subsequently "relaxed" her structuralist approach when she included ideology as a determinant factor in her explanation of the Iranian revolution (1982).

of revolutions is the autonomy of the state seen as a "macro-structure" which fundamentally "extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organisations" (1979: 29). The fundamental state organisations for the administrative and coercive control make the state at least potentially autonomous from the direct control by the dominant class and, in fact, Skocpol claims that "state organisations necessarily compete to some extent with dominant class(es) in appropriating resources from the economy and society" (1979: 30). This means that the state is not regarded as a mere reflection of modes of production, class relations and struggles. It is an organisation whose autonomy makes possible for it to remain stable even when a legitimacy crisis occurs "especially if its coercive organizations remain coherent and effective" (1978: 32).

Skocpol identifies two main structural conditions for the emergence of social revolutions. The first is met when the administrative and military power of the states breaks down (such as in France in 1789, in Russia in 1917 and in China in 1911) (1979: 285). A second critical factor leading to the outbreak of social revolutions[13] is a high degree of autonomy and solidarity among peasants, who, after the collapse of the administrative-military apparatus can revolt against the landlords, initiating a process of revolutionary change. In Skocpol's analysis mass military mobilisation can become, during the revolutionary interregnum, one of the instruments for sectors of the leadership to reach power, and subsequently, in a different form, one of the outcomes of revolutions since "the types of organizations formed and the political ties forged between revolutionary vanguards and supporters [...] can readily be converted to the task of mobilizing resources [...] for international warfare" (1994: 281). Especially those revolutions which involve a prolonged and extensive use of guerrilla warfare in inter-elite struggles, pave the way for the subsequent emergence of authoritarian regimes and mass mobilisation, which is made possible by a "fusion of popular zeal, meritocratic professionalism, and central coordination" (1994: 281). Once again paying attention to the international context, Skocpol underlines that "revolutionary elites have been able to build the strongest states in those countries

[13] At least in the three countries Skocpol analyses in *States and Social Revolutions*, i.e. France, Russia and China.

whose geopolitical circumstances allowed or required the emerging new regimes to become engaged in protracted and labor-intensive international warfare"[14] (1994: 282).

Charles Tilly has developed a more formalised model for the study of collective action which can be placed within the Marxist tradition to the extent that it closely links political conflict with collective action (1978). Tilly's model, in contrast to Skocpol's structuralist approach, gives significantly more weight to human agency and analyses the role of groups, contenders and coalitions. It includes five main variables: interests, organisation, mobilisation, opportunity and collective action. Interests are defined as "the gains and losses resulting from a group's interaction with other groups" (1978: 7), organisation is "that aspect of a group's structure which more directly affects its capacity to act on its interests" (1978: 7), mobilisation is "the process by which a group acquires collective control over the resources needed for action", opportunity "concerns the relationship between a

[14] In explaining revolutions in the Third World Skocpol and Goodwin (1994) develop a different kind of state-centred analysis in which the main precondition for the emergence of revolutionary movements is the possibility to build a revolutionary coalition that goes beyond the agrarian classes and incorporates much broader sectors of the civil society. "Other things being equal, the narrower the regime, and the more repressive, the broader the coalition available to be mobilised by revolutionaries" (1994: 264). "Exclusionary" authoritarian regimes "leave the prerogative of the state and the benefits of politics in the hands of rulers and narrow cliques" (1994: 264) without promoting any form of mass political mobilisation which, even if strictly controlled, is a feature of other non-democratic regimes (like the fascist and the Leninist ones). Another important characteristic of a regime that makes more likely the emergence of revolutionary movements is its incapability to exert its full control over the territory, an incapability which obviously allows rebels to operate in peripheral areas (1994: 266). The rise of revolutionary coalitions, made possible by the exclusionary and indiscriminately repressive nature of the regime, favoured as well by an administrative vacuum in certain parts of the territory, is distinguished by Skocpol and Goodwin from the actual overthrow of the regime by the same revolutionary forces. Regimes which are particularly vulnerable to the action of revolutionary forces are neo-patrimonial/sultanistic dictatorships and colonial regimes "based on the so called direct rule of the colonizing country" (1994: 268). These regimes are essentially unreformable, incapable to incorporate newly mobilised groups and, in general, are "more narrowly based than other political orders, including other forms of authoritarianism" (1994: 268), which makes them more susceptible to be overthrown by revolutionary movements.

group and the world around it" (1978: 7) and, finally, collective action "consists of people's acting together in pursuit of common interests" (1978: 7). In particular, Tilly argues that the extent of a group's collective action depends on the "extent of its shared *interests*, [...] the intensity of its *organization* (the extent of common identity and unifying structure among its members) and [...] its *mobilization*"[15] (1978: 84). It is important to point out how in Tilly's model mobilisation is assumed to be a truly independent variable, while, as Tilly notes, "most alternative theories [of collective action] either make mobilization such an immediate function of changing interests that mobilization ceases to act as an independent variable, or maintain that under many circumstances unmobilized groups tend to mobilize so rapidly and effectively as to wipe out any general relationship between prior mobilization and present collective action" (1978: 141). Opportunity and threat enter into the picture within a second model, the "polity model", where the government and other contenders are included. The case of repression and facilitation by the government are the clearest ones in which a group plays a significant role in raising or lowering the costs of collective action. Tilly claims that "the extent to which a given collective action by a given group is subject to repression, toleration, or facilitation is mainly a function of two factors: (1) the scale of the action, (2) the power of the group" (1978: 115). In particular, to actions of larger scale usually corresponds greater government repression, and more powerful groups are less likely to be the subject of repression.

Violence is defined by Tilly as "any observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are seized or physically damaged in spite of resistance" (1978: 176). According to Tilly, collective violence usually originates from actions which are not intrinsically violent (e.g. strikes, demonstrations, etc.) and often involves the state and its repressive apparatus (1978: 177). In those cases "the authorities intervene because they find their interests - or those of their allies - threatened by the other actors" (1978: 183). Collective violence is thus the outcome of the interaction among groups and not the result of any kind of emotional response by a single group (1978: 183) and in Tilly's model violence is one of the by-products of the same political processes which can give rise to other non-violent forms of

[15] Emphasis in the original.

collective action (1978: 188). When looking in particular at revolutions, Tilly distinguishes between "revolutionary situations" and "revolutionary outcomes". The first are identified by "the presence of more than one bloc effectively exercising control over a significant part of the state apparatus" (1978: 190), in other words, they are characterised by a situation of "multiple sovereignty". A revolutionary outcome is "the displacement of one set of power holders by another" (1978: 193). These two dimensions combined provide a classificatory framework for revolutions where "coups", "insurrections", "civil wars" and "full-scale revolutions" are related but not overlapping phenomena (1978: 198). For example, "in the coup, members of the polity displace each other; in a full-scale revolution much or all of the previously dominant class loses power", and, in the case of civil war, the common outcome is "the permanent division of a territory previously controlled by a single government into two or more autonomous territories" (1978: 199).

For Tilly a revolutionary situation is usually a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for extreme revolutionary outcomes. Circumstances that produce revolutionary situations are the emergence of contenders advancing "exclusive alternative claims to the control of the government which is currently exerted by other members of the polity", "commitment to those claims by a significant segment of the subject population", and finally "incapacity or unwillingness of the agents of the government to suppress the alternative coalition and/or the commitment to its claims" (1978: 200). Short-run conditions for revolutionary outcomes are, as we have seen, first of all a situation of multiple sovereignty (i.e. a revolutionary situation), and then "revolutionary coalitions between challengers and members of the polity", and "control of substantial force by revolutionary coalition" (1978: 211-212). For a revolution to produce high levels of violence, the relevant variables (of which violence is a positive function) are the number of contenders involved in the process, "the fluctuation in control of various segments of the governments by different coalitions of contenders" and the repressive means under the control of the government[16] (1978: 121).

[16] This general model for the study of revolutions has been later developed and used by Tilly for a broad analysis of European revolutions in the last five centuries (1995). In this contribution the

While Skocpol and Tilly analyse revolutions and collective level chiefly at the aggregate level of the state, rational choice theories of collective action look at revolution from a different perspective,[17] focusing on its "microfoundations". Indeed, pure rational choice approaches have been successful particularly in explaining why revolutions do *not* occur (Kuran 1992: 14). To quote Olson's classic contribution in the field of rational choice group theory "if the members of a large group rationally seek to maximize their personal welfare, they will *not* act to advance their common or group objectives unless there is coercion to force them to do so, or unless some separate incentive, distinct from the achievement of the common or group interests, is offered to the members of the group individually"[18] (Olson 1965: 2). The self-interested rational individual, in other words, chooses not to take part in a (large) group or organisation since the benefits it provides are collective goods, and this means that "those who do not purchase or pay for any of the public or collective good cannot be excluded or kept from sharing in the consumption of the good" (1965: 15). Things may partially change in the case of sufficiently small groups where the "collective good can often be provided by the voluntary, self-interested action of the members of the group" (1965: 34). However, this is not the case when we are considering mass mobilisation phenomena or revolutions, which, by definition, involve a large number of individuals pursuing a common interest.[19]

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importance of the control of coercive means and of the armed forces in the development of revolutionary phenomena is particularly stressed. It is especially "when the power of rulers visibly diminished in the presence of strong competitors" that a revolutionary situation resulted in a revolutionary outcome (1995: 237) and the control of military force by challengers to existing rulers has been in general a necessary condition for them to seize power (1995: 241).

[17] Although Skocpol argues that her approach is not incompatible with rational-choice theories and that she "took for granted" Olson's contribution to the study of small-group action. See Skocpol (1994: 321 and ff.).

[18] Emphasis in the original.

[19] Olson criticises Marx pointing out how it is not in the interest of single individuals to take part in the class struggle. An individual (a worker) interested in the establishment of a "proletarian" government "would find that he would get the benefits of the class action whether he participated or not" (1965: 106). In fact, Olson claims that "communist" revolutions have been the result of the actions of small groups ideologically committed that could take advantage of the weakness of the state and of situations of social disorganisation (1965: 106). Lenin, argues Olson, provided a more

Hence, revolutions are difficult to explain in terms of the individual interests of the agents.[20] The overthrow of a repressive regime or of an exploitative economic system being a collective good, individuals choose not to take the personal risk of taking part in revolutionary movements (possibly in the hope of becoming "free-riders"), making revolutions very unlikely even when a substantial majority of the population opposes the regime (Kuran 1992: 14). This, claims Kuran in an analysis of Eastern European revolutions, explains why for so many years Communist regimes in Eastern Europe were not threatened (with a few exceptions) by mass upheavals. Looking at what happened in 1989 in the Soviet satellites, Kuran tries to understand why "the first people to challenge the regime choose selflessly to gamble with their lives" (1992: 14) and claims that, if on the one hand it would be difficult to analyse post-communist revolutions using conventional theories of rational choice, on the other hand a structuralist approach would not explain "why the old order collapsed so suddenly in several countries at once nor why the events of 1989 outdistanced all expectations" (Kuran 1992: 15).

Kuran attempts to make sense of the inherent element of surprise which characterises revolution using an approach related but not completely overlapping with rational choice theories, and distinguishing between "public" and "private preferences". Structural changes *à la* Skocpol, in Kuran's model, can lower the costs of joining the opposition and make revolution more likely; however, revolution does not follow necessarily from them. Everything depends on the individuals' private preferences, on the trade-off between the cost/reward of opposing or supporting the regime (a cost that is related to the size of the already existing opposition) and the psychological cost of "preference falsification" (i.e. of not saying what one thinks). A "bandwagon effect" can be initiated by structural

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consistent theory of revolutions stressing "the need to rely on a committed, self-sacrificing, and disciplined minority, rather than on the common interests of the mass of the proletariat" (1965: 106). In sum, for Olson "there are *no* individual economic *incentives* for class action" in Marxian terms (1965: 107).

[20] But see McCarthy and Zald (1977) for an analysis that look at how organisations channel collective action. McCarthy and Zald argue that in modern and rich societies professional movement organisations use the surplus generated in the economy and other resources increasingly available to advance their goals.

changes that modify the cost structure affecting individuals. Lowered costs for joining the opposition (costs which are function of the opposition's size) can produce an initially limited increase in the support of opposition movements. Since the individual chooses to take part in the opposition also depending on how many people are already part of it, a first increase in its size can eventually produce mass mobilisation against the regime. But this does not always happen, since the individuals' preferences, their "revolutionary thresholds", are not always structured in a way that makes the "bandwagon effect" the result of a structural change. However, preferences are not directly observable and "public preferences" can differ significantly from the true preferences of individuals. Preference falsification, argues Kuran (1992: 46-47) is especially common in the presence of authoritarian regimes and in particular of regimes which are based on forms of routinised and conformist public acquiescence. And this is precisely what made Eastern European revolutions in 1989 a largely unanticipated event.

The theories of collective action that I have reviewed in the previous paragraphs are characterised by approaches which differ in the level at which the analysis is conducted. Skocpol's theory of revolution clearly has a central focus on the state and her structural explanation of collective action deliberately leaves out such "subjective" factors as expectations, relative deprivation, or preferences. A state-centred, but less structuralist approach, is adopted also by Tilly who argues that "whatever else they involve, revolutions include forcible transfers of power over states, and therefore any useful account of revolutions must concern, among other things, how states and uses of force vary in time, space and social setting" (1995: 5). In contrast, Olson's rational choice theory of collective action and Kuran's analysis of Eastern European revolutions are examples of theories focusing on "agency", on the role of the individual, on his/her preferences and interests, and on the problem of "free-riding", which indeed leaves us with the puzzle of why, albeit rarely, revolutions do occur. Must state-centred analyses need necessarily neglect the purposive (or cultural) dimension of social action?

Goodwin, when discussing different theories of social revolution, argues that

> the conflation of state-centered analysis with the sort of 'structuralism' that denies the importance of purposive human agency would rest upon an elementary confusion. In fact statist analysis may emphasize the actions and policies of state actors just as much as the impersonal 'structural' characteristics of states [...]. For example, rationally calculating (and acting) state officials are the analytic pivot in some types of state-centered studies (1995).

While the breakup of Yugoslavia was not a social revolution in a strict sense, Goodwin's remarks could be applied, by analogy, to the study of all phenomena of collective violence. Although it may be difficult to explain violent collective mobilisation looking solely at ethnic groups in conflict as collections of rational individuals acting in pursuit of their goals, a central explanatory role for human agency can be identified at the level of political leaderships mobilising ethnicity. It then becomes necessary to understand the structural determinants of the behaviour of political actors as well as the strategies they adopt and the goals they pursue given the political environment in which they act. My analysis of the Yugoslavia collapse will be focused on the Yugoslav state and will look at the role of political elites in triggering ethnic mobilisation in order to rationally pursue their goals.

Theories of nationalism and centre-periphery relations

Looking at the violent disruption of Yugoslavia means necessarily devoting at least some attention to the role played by often aggressive nationalisms in the conflict that emerged between the Yugoslav centre and peripheries. In this section I will first review some classic contributions to the study of nationalism and then I will concentrate on the literature that has dealt specifically with peripheral nationalism and centre-periphery relations.

Nation-states are essentially modern phenomena and modernisation theories of nationalism can be traced back to the influential contribution of Deutsch (1966)

who analysed the emergence of nationalism as a result of the development of modern types of communication. For Deutsch "the essential aspect of the unity of a people [...] is the complementarity of relative efficiency of communication among individuals - something that is in some ways similar to mutual rapport, but on a larger scale" (1966: 188). Complementarity of communication habits is the basis of the "alignment of individuals" which constitutes a *people* in Deutsch's definition. Other secondary factors that produce this alignment are the "complementarity of acquired social and economic preferences" and the economic and psychological reward offered by the modern industrial society for group alignment (1966: 101). Social communication, as it is defined here, is not only language but entails also a set of interpersonal activities and relations that become the basis for one nation to be distinct from the others. Deutsch calls *nationality* "a people pressing to acquire a measure of effective control over the behavior of its members" (1966: 104). "Once a nationality has added this power to compel to its earlier cohesiveness and attachment to group symbols, it often considers itself a *nation* and is so considered by others"[21] (1996: 104-105). For Deutsch modernisation and its corollaries (greater mobility and linguistic assimilation) have shaped national communities on the basis of the "unevenness" and "discontinuities" in the division of labour, communication and culture, transportation and settlement patterns, speech communities, markets. The rise of the modern national community, more homogeneous from the ethnic, linguistic and economic standpoint, has created the only ground where modern industrial economy could develop.

The approach offered by Deutsch was a highly formalised attempt to analyse the development of modern nations as a result of the changes in social communication brought about by the modernisation process (Deutsch was strongly influenced by the contemporary development, during the fifties and sixties, of the discipline of cybernetics). A more recent contribution which presents a modernisation theory of nationalism is the one offered by Gellner (1983). For Gellner the elites and the state apparatus are the primary forces that have led to an increase in the degree of cultural homogeneity, in response to the requirements of the modern industrialised

[21] Emphasis in the original.

economy. Industrial societies need common and standardised "high cultures" and languages. Equally importantly (for the training of a new industrial workforce to be possible) they require a system of centralised and universal public education which, with the help of other linguistic media, makes sure that all citizens reach at least an elementary level of instruction and can easily be integrated in the new industrial economy. A centralised state is in fact the only institution which, through its educational system, is capable of creating and protecting idioms, high cultures, and hence, nations.[22] "Culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce" (1983: 38). With nationalism being "the political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent" (1983: 1) the birth of nation-states becomes the instrument to achieve the economic benefits of industrial development via the constitution of a "mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable population" (1983: 46). Gellner explains how new nationalisms can arise during the early stage of industrialisation, when social inequality is very high between the privileged, who are already benefiting from the birth of a new industrial economy and the poor, who remain still unaffected by the economic growth. In such instances, if these two groups of privileged and underprivileged are able to "identify themselves and each other culturally, 'ethnically' [...] then, generally speaking, a new nation (nations) is born" (1983: 75).

Also Benedict Anderson (1991) has looked at the nation as a product of modernity defining it as an "imagined political community" (1991: 6). For Anderson it is imagined, as every other community "larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact" (1991: 6), in the sense that no member of even the smallest nation is likely to come into contact with more than a limited group of his fellow-members. However, its image remains part of the self-representation of each member of the

[22] On the modernisation of France see Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen: The modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (1976). Weber argues that the turning point in the process of nation-building in France was the end of the 19th century, when cultural homogeneity was achieved when economic integration was already at a more advanced stage. The main factors that led to the modernisation of France, in Weber's view, were the development of the railway and road systems, the introduction of a mass public education system and mass conscription.

community. Anderson argues that "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation" (1991: 46). Print-languages were able to make communication possible "below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars" (1991: 44) and became new languages of power. Furthermore, the new "fixity of language" made possible by print-capitalism set up the basis for the image of "antiquity" central to the nationalist discourse. For Anderson, after the spread of national movements in Europe during the first half of the 19th century, an "official nationalism" developed "*after*, and *in reaction to*, the popular national upsurge"[23] (1991: 86). This was constituted by a set of policies characterised by a conservative, or reactionary, orientation, which became the instrument for dynastic and aristocratic elites not to be excluded from the popular imagined communities (1991: 110). Official nationalism continued to be relevant also in more recent times, for example after revolutionaries came to power in countries such as the Soviet Union, China and Yugoslavia. New revolutionary leaderships came "to adopt the putative *nationalnost* of the older dynasts *and* the dynastic state"[24] (1991: 160) in the typical "Machiavellian" fashion that, Anderson argues, characterises the post-revolutionary elites' use of power.

Nationalism defends or claims to revive cultures which, argues Gellner, "are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition" (1983: 56). Hobsbawm's analysis of the "invented tradition" is in many respects parallel to the approach developed by Gellner and by Anderson (in particular to his analysis of "official nationalism"). For Hobsbawm tradition is defined as a "set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1983a: 1). For example, the development of a "secular equivalent of the church-primary education", "the invention of public ceremonies" and the "mass production of public monuments" (1983b: 271) were the basis for the birth of an official national

[23] Emphasis in the original.

[24] Emphasis in the original.

tradition in France.[25] In a later study (1990) Hobsbawm highlights how certain preconditions of technological and economic development are the only ones which can form the context where nations and nationalisms can emerge and underlines "the element of artefact, invention and social engineering which enters in the making of nations" (1990: 10). Nonetheless, he refers to nations as "dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below" (1990: 10-11), that is to say, considering also the role of ordinary people, of the sentiments of the illiterate majority, in giving rise to what he calls "popular proto-nationalism". For Hobsbawm this type of popular consciousness, which can be based on various forms of religious identity (and traditions), on popular epic and songs, on the existence of a sovereign like the tsar, etc., is not a sufficient condition *per se* for the birth of modern nationalism and becomes less important once a state has been established. However, "where it existed, made the task of nationalism easier" (1990: 77).

Billig (1995), rather than concentrating on "official nationalism", and on its importance in creating and consolidating a new national consciousness, focuses on what happens in contemporary democracies, on what kind of nationalist discourse is part of the everyday life of Western countries and on the set of national symbols that have become the constant reminders of national identity.[26] To do this he introduces the notion of "banal nationalism" "to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced" (1995: 6). National days, other public rituals that still exist in modern democracies are occasions when the national flag can be "consciously waved both metaphorically and literally" (1995: 45). However, it is not only by this means that a national identity is recalled. "National identity in established nations is remembered because it is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind, or 'flag', nationhood" (1995: 38). National flags which hang outside public buildings, national insignia on coins and bank notes are part of ordinary daily life and, even if they are usually ignored, the result of this routine-formation process (which Billig calls

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[25] On the German case George Mosse (1975) has provided an excellent historical analysis of the development of a national aesthetics, public festivals and political rituals and liturgy in Germany.

[26] Also Billig substantially accepts that nationalism and nation-states are modern phenomena.

"enhabitation") is that "the past is enhabited in the present in a dialectic of forgotten remembrance" (1995: 42). Nationalism, in Billig's contribution, is not the irrational outburst of national passion. It is something that we can (also) find in ordinary and banal forms such as the words of politicians, or newspaper articles. "In all this, the homeland is made to look homely [...] and, should the occasion arise, worth the price of sacrifice" (1995: 175).

All the authors examined so far have looked at nationalism as a relatively new "invention". One work which analysed nationalism from a different perspective, somehow closer to (but not overlapping with) primordialist positions,[27] is Anthony Smith's *Ethnic Origins of the Nations* (1986). Smith argues that "while we can no longer regard the nation as a given of social existence, a 'primordial' and natural unit of human association outside time, neither can we accept that it is a wholly modern phenomenon, be it the 'nervous tic of capitalism', or the necessary form and culture of an industrial society" (1986: 3). Smith claims that ethnic differentiation and ethnic communities have existed throughout history and that they have always been linked to the identity of different populations. The main elements which characterise an ethnic group in Smith's definition are a common collective name, a sense of "common ancestry and origins" (1986: 24), of common history, culture, territorial association and of "identity and solidarity which often finds institutional philanthropic expression" (1986: 29). Ethnicity, according to Smith, provides one of the central axes of alignment and division in the pre-modern world, and one of the most durable" (1986: 46).

The three transformations which for Smith led to the formation of modern nation-states were the significant increase in the degree of economic integration brought about by capitalist economy, the advancements in the military and administrative methods of control (which allowed great concentration of economic and political resources), and the cultural and educational revolution, in which "ecclesiastical authority and tradition were replaced by a whole new conceptual apparatus in which the sovereign state itself took the place of the deity" (1986: 133). Nation-states need to have a history and a past that is recreated and reshaped by the

[27] For a work on ethnicity which moves from primordialist assumptions see Geertz 1963.

cultural elites which, "by locating their community in space and time, by lovingly recreating poetic spaces and reconstructing golden ages [...] are driven back to whatever ethnic origins they can feel and convince themselves and others to be 'their own'" (1986: 209). However, for Smith nations are not "imagined" in a completely new way. A nostalgic attitude towards the "golden age" of the origins, argues Smith, can be found in modern nationalism as well as in ancient Greece and Rome, for example. Similarly, the idea of "*populus Romanus*" is not very different from the way peoples and masses are conceptualised in the modern nationalist discourse (1986: 216). Also the aims of nationalism and "ethnicism" are in many ways analogous in their attitude towards culture, in their belief that every community should be entitled to be "left intact and free from outside interference" (1986: 216). In sum, for Smith "there is a remarkable continuity between nations and *ethnie*, nationalism and ethnicism; continuity, but not identity" (1986: 216).

After having dealt with theories of nationalism in a strict sense, I shift to approaches which have analysed the emergence of ethnic and national movements in contemporary political systems. Melucci and Diani (1992) studied, from a sociological perspective, ethno-national movements in modern capitalist societies.[28] Ethno-national movements are here defined as movements which both refer to an ethnic identity and are characterised by a territorial dimension (1992: 21). For the authors ethno-national mobilisation is always related to a condition of relative deprivation both in terms of access to economic resources and in symbolic terms (1992: 39). This means that sheer economic factors, class structures, and the division of labour are not always enough to explain the emergence of ethno-national conflict. Social needs different than the material/economic ones can play a significant role in producing conflict along ethnic lines. For example, forms of cultural discrimination can become the basis for ethno-national mobilisation, when a group perceives its identity as being threatened. Furthermore, for Melucci and Diani relative deprivation is not a sufficient condition *per se* for mobilisation. Ethno-national mobilisation becomes likely only when the nationalist option is

[28] See in particular chapters 1-3, related to ethnic identity, collective action and activation factors of ethnic conflict.

perceived by the group as being advantageous from the standpoint of its economic or other social needs (1992: 52-53). With class structures becoming less homogeneous and stable, ethnic identity can be transformed into a new basis for the aggregation of interests. The authors discuss how ethnic identity may become an important resource in contemporary political markets. Ethnic identity constitutes an already existing heritage of solidarity, interaction, symbols, which facilitate identification and aggregation. Furthermore, it allows a high degree of differentiation from other groups, and hence a high level of competition (1992: 42). Melucci and Diani point out that ethnicity provides a response to the individual's needs of self-realisation, recognition, and communicative interaction in highly complex societies, characterised by a bureaucratic and impersonal nature (1992: 43-44).

Ethno-national mobilisation is not studied by Melucci and Diani within the framework of a centre-periphery model, however the phenomena they analyse are, by and large, phenomena of peripheral nationalism. Rokkan and Urwin explain the emergence of "regionalism" and nationalism in Western industrial societies using a centre-periphery model in a strict sense.[29] Rokkan and Urwin do not define centres and peripheries merely in terms of geographic location. "The key characteristics of peripheries [...] are distance, difference, and dependence" (1983: 3) while centres are defined as "privileged locations within a territory" (1983: 6). Moreover, the centre "controls a disproportionately greater share of the total communication flow in the system than any alternative location" (1983: 7) and can be identified as the "location of major military-administrative, economic and cultural institutions" (1983: 6). According to Rokkan and Urwin the origins of the emergence of peripheral mobilisation are to be found in the parallel processes of internationalisation of transactions, increased demand of resources to be allocated to less productive sectors and regions (with the consequent decrease in resources available to the centre), which have brought about, "the multiplication of efforts to mobilize peripheries, regions and even localities against the national centre, and an assertion (or reassertion) of minority claims for cultural autonomy and for

[29] Rokkan and Urwin's contribution is of particular importance, for the purpose of my analysis of the Yugoslav disruption, which will be conducted adopting a core-periphery perspective.

separate powers of territorial decision-making" (1982: 3). In explaining the differences across Europe in patterns of centre-periphery dynamics the authors take into account the unification strategies of the state-building elites and the "two major sources of territorial strain: cultural distances, whether linguistic, religious or, in a diffuse sense, 'ethnic' between core areas and 'less privileged' peripheries; and economic conflict between regional centres competing for the control of trade and productive resources" (1982: 4). The *nation-building* process is defined by these cultural and economic dimensions of differentiation. Unification strategies, which refer to the *state-building* process, are distinguished by Rokkan and Urwin between "centralising strategies" and "strategies of federalising accommodation" (1982: 6). The path followed by the *state-building* process is reflected in the form of state which is its final result.[30]

Rokkan and Urwin argue that the cultural aspect is more important than the economic one in defining peripheral identities. "There are economic peripheries in Europe, but no territorial identity on the continent can be defined solely in terms of a distinctive economy" (1983: 66). They identify three types of resources (territorial cultural and economic) that have to be available to the peripheral group for peripheral mobilisation to be possible. More precisely, mobilisation is less likely if the group is not "regionally concentrated and in physical occupation [...] of a territory" (1983: 128). Religious and (more importantly) linguistic distinctiveness can play a significant role in preserving a peripheral identity which can be strengthened also by identity maintaining institutions, "as with law, education, and religion in Scotland" (1983: 131). Such institutions can make possible some forms of local cultural autonomy or self-government and may ensure that local elites are recruited among the peripheral ethnic group. Finally, peripheries with more economic resources are more likely to mobilise against the centre and Rokkan and Urwin claim that "the major territorial challenge may well come from economically superior or improving regions" (1983: 135). However,

[30] The authors distinguish between union states, mechanical federalism and organic federalism (1982: 11).

they underline that the roots of peripheral mobilisation are chiefly in the territorial and cultural identities, while the economic element can even be absent.

For Rokkan and Urwin, when both economic and cultural differences are present, they can give rise to a "kind of economic division of labour based upon an ethnic hierarchy" (1983: 135). In this respect their analysis parallels Hechter's contribution (1975) which identifies "internal colonialism", i.e. a situation of "cultural division of labour" between centres and peripheries, as the reason behind the emergence of peripheral nationalism in Great Britain. Gourevitch (1979) has discussed peripheral nationalism in regions with "ethnic potential", i.e. where the population inhabiting the periphery is characterised by distinctive language, institutions and/or historical tradition (1979: 305). The conclusion he draws is that where economic and political cores coincide, peripheral nationalism is weak; where political leadership and economic dynamism are concentrated in different regions (one of which has ethnic potential), strong peripheral nationalism is likely to emerge; in the absence of ethnic potential, ethnically based politics does not emerge in any case, while some form of "regional politics" can develop (1979: 306).

We have seen how different theories of nationalism are characterised by distinct approaches but also have several points in common which make them appear more complementary than in opposition to one another. Most of the scholars who have studied nationalism agree on the modernity of nationalism. Different approaches to the study of nationalism have emphasised the "invented" and "imagined" dimensions of nations and of their alleged cultural roots. For Billig national identities continue to be kept alive and strengthened, in today's democracies, in an almost subliminal way, through the continuous use of symbols that remind us of the nation we belong to. Even Anthony Smith who depart most from "modernist" positions, cannot be called a primordialist in a strict sense.

However, this "deconstruction" of nationalism does not imply that national identities are simply seen as the by-product of symbolic narratives devoid of any "real" substance. Smith has discussed the "ethnic origins" of nations, Hobsbawm

has introduced the concept of "popular proto-nationalism" and, even for Anderson, "imagined" does not mean imaginary. National identities are the outcome of the nation-building process and, as we have just seen, studies dealing with recent forms of mobilisation in today's peripheries have stressed the importance of cultural distinctiveness (or, in Gourevitch's model, "ethnic potential") for the definition of a peripheral identity and for the politicisation of peripheral claims. The need of identification, according to Melucci and Diani, is one of the elements which have formed the basis for the emergence of ethno-national movements.

Hechter's theory of "internal colonialism" sees the centre's economic exploitation of the periphery as the main factor leading to the emergence of peripheral nationalism. Other scholars have pointed to economic disparities and/or situations of "relative deprivation", as important causes of ethnic mobilisation in the peripheries. However, while Rokkan and Urwin define peripheries as "less privileged" locations, they claim that it is from the most economically dynamic regions that territorial claims are more likely to be advanced. In the model developed by Gourevitch (1979: 306), peripheral nationalism might emerge if the core "stops promoting economic growth", or when, as in the case of Scotland, "the peripheral region improves its economic position relative to the center through the development or the plausible prospect of the development of some resource or newly acquired geographical advantage" (1979: 306).

It is interesting to recall how, analysing peripheral mobilisation in the context of Soviet "ethnofederalism", Roeder (1991) claims that those nationalities with "the highest levels of educational, occupational, and often political attainment" were engaged in the most extensive forms of peripheral protest and mobilisation. In other words, centrifugal tendencies came chiefly from the most socially and economically advantaged (territorially concentrated) ethnic groups. This, claims Roeder, was the result of the Soviet nationalities policy and of the institutionally induced incentive system affecting the behaviour of local ethnic cadres (1991: 215-218). With a declining growth rate, the burden of inter-republican redistributive policies became less sustainable for more modernised republics,

where local elites had to face increased "pressure of potential counterelites, the difficulties of further expanding elite positions and material rewards" (1991: 215). This means that the threat to their position was greater for those elites which were more successful in obtaining socioeconomic advantages for them and for their ethnic groups, elites which soon became the fiercest advocates of decentralisation.

For the purpose of this analysis of the Yugoslav disintegration, it is very important to underline that Roeder looks in particular at Soviet ethnofederal institutions, to explain patterns of ethnic mobilisation. Roeder argues that "[p]olitical institutions like Soviet federalism play a critical role in [...] shaping ethnic communities, politicizing ethnicity, and mobilizing protest". The Soviet ethnofederal model gave the opportunity to ethnic political elites to politicise ethnicity assigning to them a monopoly over what Roeder calls "mobilisational resources". We will see in the following chapters how and to what extent partly similar processes took place also during the disruption process of Yugoslavia, when new and old elites rapidly became the political entrepreneurs of ethnicity.

The final section of this chapter is an attempt to review the vast scholarly production which has dealt with the violent collapse of Yugoslavia. The "uniqueness", and "complexity" of the Yugoslav wars have ensured that Yugoslavia escaped comparison in many of the analyses which have looked at its collapse.[31] In fact, a considerable part of the literature on Yugoslavia is essentially historical. Even case studies which may not be historical analyses in a strict sense, are certainly difficult to be categorised simply as political science or comparative politics works since, in an attempt to cope with the extreme complexity of the phenomena analysed, they often adopt a historically grounded holistic perspective.

[31] This thesis is not an exception, in this respect. As we will see in the next chapters, however, my thesis is also an attempt to compare and contrast different federal sub-units and the different paths they followed in the process of Yugoslav disintegration.

Some authors, Kaplan (1993) is the best known among them, have attempted to explain the ethnic wars of Yugoslavia linking them to a past history of ethnic hatred. Such explanations of ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia are still rather popular, particularly in Western media accounts of the Yugoslav wars, but have been rejected as simplistic and inaccurate by the majority of the scholars who have studied the Yugoslav conflict. Alternative explanations of the Yugoslav disintegration have focused on international variables. Among others, Susan Woodward, in one of the most authoritative and comprehensive studies of the Yugoslav disintegration, argues that the Yugoslav conflict was the "result of the politics of transforming a socialist society to a market economy and democracy" (1995: 15) and points at the constraints and austerity measures imposed during the eighties by external actors, such as the IMF, as among the most significant factors that led to the collapse of the country. If in Woodward's analysis the failure of economic reforms and democratisation, in the context of a changing international setting, were the most significant factors that led to violent conflict, Warren Zimmerman, the last American ambassador to Yugoslavia, in his memoirs (1999) focuses on other external factors, and in particular on the role of the United States and of other Western countries in failing to prevent the bloody ethnic wars which ensued the Yugoslav disintegration.

In *Broken Bonds* (1995) Lenard Cohen correctly distinguishes between the causes of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and those of the violence that characterised it. For Cohen, the first and most important cause of the disintegration was the action of Yugoslavia's nationalist leaderships, although he also points to the important role of regional and international powers such as the US, Germany and Austria. Ethnic violence, on the other hand, for Cohen was mostly the result of historical factors promoting ethnic antagonism. A significant part of the literature on Yugoslavia has looked at the role played by Yugoslav political elites in leading to the country's fragmentation. Zimmerman states at the very beginning of his book that "[t]he prime agent of Yugoslavia's destruction was Slobodan Milošević, president of Serbia" (1999: viii). A first stream within this literature, in which Zimmerman's book could probably be included, is mainly concerned with the "role of personalities" (Jović D. 2001: 110-111), such as that of Josip Broz Tito or

Slobodan Milošević.[32] Branka Magaš rightly argues that "Tito's death marked a point of no return for Yugoslavia" (1993: xii) and, throughout her book, points to Slobodan Milošević as the main political actor who acted to destroy the fragile ethnic equilibria defined by the Yugoslav constitution. Richard Holbrooke sees the Yugoslav wars as "the product of bad, even criminal, political leaders who encouraged ethnic confrontation for personal, political, and financial gain" (1999: 23).

Among all ethnic leaderships, the first to be held responsible for the violent end of Yugoslavia is usually the Serbian one, whose hegemonic projects are often seen as the single most important factor which precipitated the Yugoslav crisis. For Viktor Meier (1999) Serbia's "abandonment of the principles of equality, democracy, and tolerance" was the "principal source of the implosion of Yugoslavia" (1999: xiv). Similar interpretations are quite common also in analyses less concerned with the role of personalities and more with the political history of the last years of Yugoslavia's existence and, in general, with the role of ethnic elites as political entrepreneurs of ethnicity. Hayden, however, accuses the Slovenian leadership of "selfishness"[33] and argues that the Slovenian leadership, instead of mobilising anti-Milošević support in other republics, "chose to withdraw from Yugoslavia even though their abandonment of federal structures destroyed those structures for the other republics, and also made it much harder for leaders elsewhere to fight Milošević" (1999: 30).

Michael Mann's work on ethnic cleansing (2005) has analysed the Yugoslav wars in the context of a comprehensive study of (mostly modern) murderous regimes and wars. Mann's work has as its starting point eight general theses, the first of which is that ethnic cleansing is essentially a modern phenomenon, which fully belongs to the "age of democracy". His complex model looks at a number of factors ranging from the role of ethnicity as a form of social stratification, to the role of states, and the importance of social structures in leading "ordinary people"

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[32] Dejan Jović, however, lists Zimmerman among the proponents of the "international politics" argument to explain the Yugoslav breakup (2001).

[33] This accusation to the Slovenian political elite is moved also by Zimmerman.

to commit atrocities. Mann is first of all interested in explaining mass atrocities and ethnic violence (i.e. the high degree of violence which characterised the Yugoslav collapse), rather than explaining the Yugoslav disintegration *per se*. and its different outcomes in various parts of Yugoslavia (which is instead the focus of this thesis). In parts of his book devoted to explaining the Yugoslav wars and their violence, he points to the importance of nationalism as a viable and attractive alternative to the discredited communist ideology, to the existence of conflicting nationalist claims over the same territories and to the role of external factors "emboldening" ethnic majorities in each area to gain full control over it. However, (and in the context of a rather sophisticated model) much of the blame for the violent collapse of Yugoslavia is again placed by Mann on political elites. He also claims that Slobodan Milošević "contributed more than any other person to murderous ethnic cleansing" (2005: 424) while recognising that "elites, militants, and core constituencies were all radicalizing" (2005: 425).[34]

Sabrina Petra Ramet (1992) has examined the political dynamics and the interaction between different sectors of the Yugoslav political elite before and in the first phase of the Yugoslav collapse arguing that Yugoslavia was functioning as a multinational balance-of-power system.[35] Other authors have attempted to explicitly "endogenise" the behaviour of Yugoslav ethnic elites looking at those variables that shaped the action of different sectors of the Yugoslav political leadership. Beverly Crawford (1998) argues that the Yugoslav ethnofederal arrangement was among the chief determinants of the Yugoslav political elites' strategies, and in particular of their choice to play the ethnic card, which ultimately had as its outcome state disintegration. The stream of literature that has looked at Yugoslav institutions to explain the disintegration is part of the scholarly production that has analysed, in general, the functioning of ethnic federations in a transitional context. In fact it is widely accepted that socialist federations in

[34] On political elites during the Yugoslav disintegration see also Goati 1997. Slobodan Antonić argues that "no politician in Yugoslavia believed sincerely in negotiations" and blames political elites for the country's bloody collapse (1997).

[35] In *Balkan Babel* (1999), Ramet discusses the loss of legitimacy of Yugoslavia as a state (and in particular after Tito's death and during the economic and political crisis of the eighties), as one of the causes of its collapse.

general, and Yugoslavia in particular, (Roeder 1991; Bunce 1999, Skalnik Leff 1999), were badly functioning federations and that, following the collapse of the regime, or anyway after the beginning of a liberalisation, ethnofederal systems provided a set of favouring conditions for the emergence of nationalism (Brzezinski 1989) and the disintegration of these countries.

Valerie Bunce (1999) argues that constitutional arrangements, what she calls "subversive institutions", can explain not only the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, but also the violence that accompanied it in the Yugoslav case. In her comparison, Bunce highlights the significance of the confederal (rather than federal) structure of the Yugoslav state. Moreover, Bunce points to the fact that the dominant republic (Serbia) had, contrary to what happened to Russia in the USSR and to the Czech Socialist Republic in Czechoslovakia, a full set of republican institutions which constituted available resources of nation- and state- building. This while Serbs were in fact underrepresented in all-Yugoslav institutions, excluding the army and the secret police, and "resentful" of this situation. Finally, she underlines how the Yugoslav army had always been an important actor with the task of fighting both external and internal enemies (whereas, she argues, the Soviet and the Czechoslovak armies were absent from domestic politics). All this, she claims, explains why the Yugoslav collapse "unlike the end of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia" (1999: 125) was violent.

Bunce's analysis is of particular value because it places Yugoslavia and its institutions in a clearly comparative perspective, contrasting its disintegration with the breakup of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. One problem Bunce's analysis exhibits is that she seems to take for granted that the Soviet collapse was not violent. Indeed, it was less violent than the Yugoslav disintegration but the breakup of the Soviet Union was accompanied by several episodes of inter-ethnic and centre-periphery violent conflict. In explaining violent conflict in Yugoslavia Bunce's argument is convincing especially when she compares the role of militaries in these three countries and she stresses the importance of the role

played by the Yugoslav army and by the territorial defence militias, which in the Yugoslav military structure were placed under the control of federal sub-units.

Also Carol Skalnik Leff has looked at the breakdown of the socialist federations arguing that "the crucial development in all three cases is the loss of control by the center over the key state prerogatives of revenue extraction, coercion, and elite recruitment" (1999: 208). Comparing the transition of these three countries with what happened in other transitional systems characterised by "territorially concentrated [ethnic] diversity", as well as looking in more detail at the different paths followed by the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, Skalnik Leff argues that ethnofederal institutions were crucial in shaping strategic contexts for elite actors conducive to disintegration (1999: 232). According to Skalnik Leff variations in the "patterns of initiative for change", prior republic autonomy under communism, and distinctive decision rules in the three countries she focuses on, determined the partly different ways in which their dissolutions unfolded (1999: 233). The author, however, focuses on the political process during the disintegration and does not attempt to explain different levels of ethnic violence in the countries she considers.

Skalnik Leff's work is one of the few attempts to look at Yugoslavia through the prism of transition theories. Snyder (2000) has produced a large scale comparison of democratising polities which focuses on the emergence of nationalism in transitional contexts. Snyder claims that "democratization produces nationalism when powerful elites within a nation need to harness popular energies to the tasks of war and economic development, but they also want to avoid surrendering real political authority to the average citizen" (2000: 45). Once again, Snyder's explanation of ethnic politics and conflict lies at the intersection between the action of political elites, that can be more or less "adaptable to democracy", and the character of political institutions in the democratising state (2000: 81). Snyder devotes a section of his chapter on "Nationalism amid the Ruins of Communism" to the Yugoslav disintegration. He argues that historical factors, combined with an extremely decentralised ethnofederal structure, which also made possible for ethnic elites to use the Yugoslav media as instruments for their propaganda, not

only led to Yugoslavia's fragmentation, but also triggered ethnic conflict (2000: 204-220). Yugoslav political elites, threatened by the impending democratisation, used the resources made available to them by institutions, to shape the political debate along the lines of ethnic cleavages (2000: 206). A failed democratic transformation unleashed nationalistic energies which could then be used by political elites to their advantage.

In what is a peculiar hybrid between a collection of book reviews and an independent scholarly analysis, Fearon and Laitin (2000) use as their source six books on ethnic conflict in different cases, including Yugoslavia, in an attempt to look at the relationship between ethnic identity construction and ethnic violence (2000: 847). Fearon and Laitin refer to Woodward's *Balkan Tragedy* (1995) to refute primordialist explanations of ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia and to point to the fact that, in the cases they review, "ethnic boundaries and antagonisms follow from the political strategies of elites seeking to gain power or undermine challengers" (2000: 874). The authors also deal with the interesting puzzle of why the "masses follow" in ethnic wars which are only used by the elites to achieve their goals. Fearon and Laitin use some of the evidence provided by Woodward to argue that, at least in some cases, self-interest may explain ethnic violence. They quote Woodward describing how, for many, the wars in Yugoslavia became an easy way to enrich themselves through violence and looting, in a time of deep economic crisis (2000: 871). Moreover, Fearon and Laitin suggest that, in some cases, publics initially do not follow, and do so only after elites "'let the thugs go', who have motivations besides or in addition to ethnic hatred" and after "processes begin that leave the moderates in the group little choice but to follow a similar path" (2000: 871). In these cases, it becomes eventually rational to fear members of the other group and see them as a threat (2000: 871). Similarly, De Figueiredo and Weingast (1999) claim that ethnic violence in Yugoslavia was the rational response to fear of victimization, of the choice between fighting and being a victim.

Although adopting different perspectives, most of the analyses of the Yugoslav collapse have considered the role of political elites as one of the central variables

to explain the country's disintegration. As we have just seen, they have often shed light on the importance of institutions in producing favourable conditions for the collapse of the state and the emergence of ethnic conflict. A focus on political elites and on state institutions is one of the few links, which is rarely made explicit, that connects the literature on Yugoslavia to the scholarly production that has analysed political transitions in the rest of the former communist world, and that has often devoted particular attention to the action of political agents and to its institutional determinants. However, as noted above, Yugoslavia has been often excluded from the literature on transition.

The relation between the literature on Yugoslavia and the one on mobilisation and revolutions is even feebler. Apparently for the very reason that it is often accepted that ethnic mobilisation in Yugoslavia has been substantially directed, or promoted, from above, very few authors have used the analytical tools of the literature on revolution and mobilisation to look at the Yugoslav case, or have otherwise looked at the "grassroots" origins of ethnic mobilisation throughout the process of Yugoslav disintegration.[36] Yugoslavia has been often ignored in the debates on mass mobilisation, with the partial exception, as we have seen, of Michael Mann's work (2005) on ethnic cleansing and of attempts at looking at mass mobilisation and ethnic violence, at least in part, as rational responses by individuals.[37]

It should not come as a surprise that among the types of literature reviewed in this chapter probably the one that presents the closest connection with the many analyses of Yugoslavia's breakup is the literature on nationalism and centre-periphery conflict. This is true not so much because the broader theoretical debates on nationalism and centre-periphery conflict have devoted particular attention to the case of Yugoslavia, but rather for the reason that those authors that have analysed ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia, or at least those who have refrained

[36] A partial exception is Vladislav Jević 2002.

[37] A rational choice approach to the study of identity and ethnic assimilation and conflict (in particular in the form of an adaptation of Schelling's (1978) tipping model) is used in Laitin's empirically rich analysis on Russian-speaking diasporas in the former Soviet Union (1998).

from presenting a mere account of historical event and have attempted to produce a theoretically relevant analysis, have produced a literature that is part of a wider effort to understand nationalism and ethnic conflict. Therefore, analyses of the Yugoslav collapse can be more easily placed in the context of the literature on nationalism.

Excluding journalistic accounts of the Yugoslav wars, and ancient ethnic hatred interpretations of the Yugoslav wars *à la* Kaplan, most of the authors who have studied the Yugoslav collapse have adopted an instrumentalist/constructivist perspective that sees political elites, possibly constrained by state institutions, as using ethnicity as the best way to gain and maintain power. In this respect the scholarly production on Yugoslavia is linked with the mainstream literature on nationalism, to the extent that it substantially accepts the view that the aggressive nationalisms which have led to the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia were socially constructed (from above) to serve the purpose of ethnic elites.[38]

The Yugoslav economic crisis of the eighties is certainly present, at least in the background, in many of the studies of the Yugoslav collapse; Woodward claims that "[n]ormal political conflicts over economic resources between central and regional governments and over the economic and political reforms of the debt-repayment package became constitutional conflicts and then a crisis of the state itself among politicians who were unwilling to compromise" (1995: 15). However, in the literature on Yugoslavia it is more difficult to find traditional explanations of centre-periphery dynamics focusing on the economic exploitation of peripheral regions, or pointing to the different geographical location of economic and political cores as possible causes of centre-periphery conflict. In

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fact it is difficult to frame the emergence of peripheral nationalism in Yugoslavia contrasting economically "dynamic" versus "stagnating" regions. At the beginning of the eighties Kosovo, the poorest among all Yugoslav republics and provinces, experienced phenomena of violent anti-centre mobilisation, which some consider marking the beginning of Yugoslavia's crisis. However, the first republic which between the late eighties and the early nineties began to progressively separate from the centre in a process that culminated with its separation, was Slovenia, the richest and most economically dynamic federal sub-unit in Yugoslavia. In both cases the issue of economic "exploitation" was used at the level of discourse, obviously in very different ways, by local elites promoting ethnic mobilisation. Nevertheless, what happened in Yugoslavia seems to confirm what Horowitz argued in his classic study of ethnic conflict, namely, that economic disparity and ethnic secession are not directly linked (1985: 229 and ff.).

To summarise, the analyses of the Yugoslav collapse we have just reviewed are characterised by different approaches and have provided answers to three different questions: what happened in Yugoslavia before and during the country's disintegration; why did Yugoslavia disintegrate; and why did Yugoslavia disintegrate in a violent way. Possibly, a fourth question could be added to the last one: why was Yugoslavia's violent disintegration accompanied by such widespread and systematic atrocities, which included mass killings, torture, and the forcible displacement of hundreds of thousands of people (for not all wars have to be as violent as the Yugoslav one). These questions, which here are presented separately, are not always kept distinct in existing literature on Yugoslavia. For instance, in some cases "bad" or "criminal" political elites are simply seen as directly or indirectly responsible for the Yugoslav break-up, for the Yugoslav wars, and for the atrocities that accompanied them. This is misleading, since the causes of mass atrocities need not be the same as the causes of state disintegration, although they may partly overlap.

For clarity's and rigour's sake, let us go back to the questions these thesis tries to answer and to how they relate to the existing literature on Yugoslavia. As already mentioned, this thesis is concerned with the process of Yugoslav disintegration

and with its *different* outcomes in *different* Yugoslav peripheries (i.e. republic and provinces). While explanations will be provided for the Yugoslav disintegration in general, this thesis mainly tries to give an answer to the question of why certain Yugoslav peripheries separated and why certain Yugoslav peripheries did not separate. In this respect, making sense of the "deviant" cases of those parts of Yugoslavia which came under Serbia's control and remained part of rump Yugoslavia, will be the most interesting part of this puzzle.

This thesis tries to explain neither why the Yugoslav disintegration was violent, nor why mass atrocities accompanied the collapse of Yugoslavia. It deals with centre-periphery conflict (rather than with ethnic conflict *per se*) and with the violent, or non-violent form it took during the disintegration process. Also in this case, this thesis tries to explain variance in violence rather than treating violence as a constant. However, it does not deal with different levels of violence in terms of the duration, or scale of the conflicts, but rather in terms of the presence or not of violent anti-centre or anti-periphery mobilisation. In other words, this thesis deals with the centre-periphery conflict which triggered interethnic wars but not with the mass ethnic violence which lasted until 1995 in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia and continued in Kosovo throughout the following years. For this reason, this thesis does not deal with the question of why masses followed nationalist elites in bloody wars, an interesting question which however falls beyond the scope of this study.

This thesis, rather than treating Yugoslavia as a case-study, or as a case in a multi-country comparison, treats Yugoslavia as a collection of cases to be compared and contrasted in the different outcomes of the disintegration process they experienced. The main questions that it tries to answer are partly different from the ones which have been addressed in the existing literature on Yugoslavia.

My analysis of the Yugoslav disintegration will borrow from recent literature on transition to the extent that it will focus on the interaction of political elites during and in the years immediately preceding the disruption as the main determinant of the outcomes of the disintegration process. In contrast with much of the existing

literature on Yugoslavia, in dealing with the role of political elites, I will refrain from interpreting it through the prism of the political actors' personalities. I will, as much as possible, adopt a more formalistic approach based on rational choice theories and models, which will add to the clarity and the rigour of the analysis. It is worth underlining from the very beginning that the assumption that members of the Yugoslav political elites were rewards-maximising rational agents is not in contradiction with the wars and violence which accompanied the Yugoslav disintegration. For a political actor, maximising his/her rewards does not necessarily mean maximising the rewards of members of his/her ethnic or otherwise defined constituency (this is especially true in a badly functioning nondemocratic political system such as the Yugoslav one). Moreover, rational strategies may have unintended consequences, which in this case may negatively affect both the political actor him/herself, or his/her constituency. Game theory, which will be used in this thesis, is the formal study of the strategic interaction of rational actors. As we all know, games have winners as well as losers. To predict the outcome of a game is even more difficult in the context of high uncertainty which characterises processes of state disintegration. Looking at the Soviet collapse Laitin (1998) has pointed out that "at the time of state collapse, it is very difficult for leaders trying to rule from the decaying center, or leaders of ethnically distinct regions within the state (e.g. Estonia), to properly calculate the balance of power between the center and the region" (1998: 327-328). Bad calculations may lead both parties to calculate positive returns to war.

Assuming that political elites are rational, is not the same as assuming that they are "nationalist", "criminal", or "bad". Whether a rational actor behaves "badly", or "criminally", or not, depends on the structure of his/her preferences, on the incentives and the constraints shaping his/her action and, to a certain extent, also on the information at his/her disposal. The added value of this analysis does not lie in the rationality assumption *per se*, but in what can be deduced on the incentives, constraints, and other factors shaping the elites' action if we assume that political actors acted rationally. In other words, the behaviour of political elites will not be taken as a given, or simply as being the result of "bad" personalities, but will be made endogenous, a variable depending on other

variables in the system. For this reason, a great deal of attention will be devoted to the factors which defined the political environment where political leaderships acted and the constraints and incentives shaping their behaviour.

Some space, for instance, will be given to a discussion of the "construction" or reinforcement of national identities, in the context of the Yugoslav nationality policies. In many respects the way ethnic relations were managed in socialist Yugoslavia contributed to the creation of the "raw material" for ethnic mobilisation: strong national identities.

In line with some existing studies of the Yugoslav disintegration, in this thesis I will look at the role of institutions in shaping the elites' action. In accepting existing analyses of the Yugoslav federal system as a badly functioning one, I will extend my analysis to the party structure, an aspect so far largely ignored in existing studies of the Yugoslav disintegration, despite its obvious significance in shaping political equilibria, particularly after Tito's death. It is precisely looking at the action of political elites at the party level, that I will try to understand why certain parts of Yugoslav did not separate from the centre.

The path followed by the Yugoslav transition (and what I will call Yugoslavia's liberalisation by decay) will be discussed as another important factor shaping the political elites' strategies. The analysis will be conducted using a framework similar to the one used in those studies of political transition which have focused on the elites' choices and strategies. This is not a new way to analyse political transitions, but it is a relatively new way to look at Yugoslavia's political transformation, which has been rarely looked at making explicit use of the analytical tools of "transitology". We will see how the Yugoslav political system changed, how the political centre went through a process of decay and, using Tilly's terminology, a situation or "multiple sovereignty", with antagonistic and competing elites at the centre, became one of the main factors leading to the emergence of disintegrative forces.

Crucially, being concerned with the strategic interaction of political actors, I will treat the strategies of each sector of the Yugoslav political elite as being shaped not only by structural or external factors, but also by the (expected) strategies and choices of other sectors of the Yugoslav political elites. In this respect, game theory comes particularly helpful, as it provides the best tools for doing precisely this, a formal analysis of the choices of a rational agent taking into account the other possible choices and responses of other relevant rational agents. Game theory has been widely used in international relations to understand the balance of power and the security dilemmas faced by international actors in the "anarchy" of the international system. Disintegrating Yugoslavia, with its eight semi-autonomous republics and provinces and with a decaying centre, has many aspects in common with an international system, as Sabina Petra Ramet has already discussed (1992). Game theory, therefore, appears to be a useful tool for understanding not only the "fear of the neighbour" which fuelled ethnic wars, but also the action of those political leaders who acted to trigger or to prevent them.

2. Definitions, classificatory problems and research questions

After having looked at the literature on transition, nationalism, mobilisation, and at the existing analyses of the Yugoslav disruption, in this chapter I will define and outline the theoretical foundations on which my analysis of the disintegration of Yugoslavia will be based. In the first section I will explain why I look at the Yugoslav collapse as a case of centre-periphery conflict, considering the main implications of my choice to employ a core-periphery framework. The second part will put Yugoslavia in the context of transition and, specifically, liberalisation theories. The rest of the chapter will be devoted to the outlining of the research questions which will be addressed in this thesis.

The Yugoslav disruption as a case of centre-periphery conflict

It is common knowledge that the collapse of Yugoslavia was marked by different phenomena of ethnic conflict which were often characterised by a high degree of violence. Is it enough to define all this simply as ethnic conflict without further qualifications? In this section I suggest that the Yugoslav collapse could be analysed within a core-periphery analytical framework, with this implying that the process of disruption was (or has been)[1] characterised by a conflict between a centre, where the elites employed their own nationalist discourse, and the

[1] Given that the future federation of Serbia and Montenegro appears to be uncertain, it can be argued that the Yugoslav disintegration process is still unfolding.

peripheries, where demands for autonomy, and eventually independence, emerged in response to the hegemonic project carried out by the political elite at the centre.

Centre-periphery conflict can be distinguished from inter/intra- peripheral ethnic strife, the latter being a form of conflict between two or more peripheral ethnic groups. This apparently clear-cut separation does not mean that the two classes of phenomena are mutually exclusive and that forms of conflict with both a centre-periphery and an inter/intra- peripheral component cannot emerge.[2] Things are made even more complicated by the fact that the two types of conflict might often have several elements in common, and might emerge simultaneously, particularly within liberalising environments like Yugoslavia in the eighties (or the Soviet Union during the second half of the same decade).[3] In fact, the boundary between inter-peripheral and centre-periphery conflict is not always crystal-clear, and this may be especially true in the case of Yugoslavia. It is, therefore, necessary to define better what I mean when I refer to the centre-periphery cleavage.

[2] Examples can be cited from contexts different from the Yugoslav one. The disruption of the Soviet Union was accompanied by numerous phenomena of ethnic strife, and in some cases ethnic conflict could be described both in terms of central intervention against peripheral claims and in terms of inter/intra- peripheral conflict. Ethnic strife in Azerbaidzhan, for example, involved manifestations of peripheral nationalism directed both against the Armenian population (particularly in Nagorno-Karabakh), and against the centre in Moscow, where a military response was already decided in early 1990. Ethnic tension in Moldova could also be seen, in a broad sense, as a hybrid between centre-periphery and inter-peripheral conflict. On one hand, clashes opposed the Trans-Dnestr militias and the Moldovans within the periphery. On the other hand, Moscow's involvement, formally with peace-keeping tasks, in reality on the side of the Trans-Dnestr secessionists (the Trans-Dnestr region is inhabited by a large Russian and Ukrainian population), gave to the conflict a centre-periphery dimension. It is true, however, that in this case ethnic tension became ethnic conflict only after the Soviet Union collapsed, when Russia became involved in the conflict as a separate, sovereign country; and this makes it more difficult to speak about centre-periphery conflict if by "centre" we still intend Moscow. To some extent, conflict in other (former) Soviet peripheries (Georgia, for example) could be described in a similar way.

[3] See Suny (1992), Lapidus (1992) and Zaslavsky (1991; 1992) for a discussion of the impact of Gorbachev's reforms on the emergence of national mobilisation in the Soviet Union.

I employ the definitions of centre and periphery adopted by Rokkan and Urwin according to whom peripheries are characterised by distance, difference and dependence, while centres are privileged locations in terms of "communication flow", military-administrative, economic, cultural institutions (Rokkan and Urwin 1983: pp. 3-6).[4] The definition of central institutions I adopt is strictly related to the Rokkan-Urwin analytical framework and classifies as central institutions those institutions which are the most important (institutional) means through which the centre exerts power, allocates economic resources, controls the communication flow in the entire system. This terminology, which might seem to follow quite obviously from the very definitions of centre and periphery I am using, is worth being made explicit. Socialist Yugoslavia, like other "socialist federations", was a one-party system where central institutions did not always and completely overlap with what were formally defined as federal state institutions.[5] This means that institutions at the centre could be, at the same time, federal institutions in a strict sense as well as the central party apparatus or institutions of the central, "dominant" republic.

I have just discussed what I intend by centre, central institutions and peripheries. What is centre-periphery conflict? By definition, a conflict opposing a centre and a periphery. This truism is not an exhaustive description, though. Centre-periphery conflict is first of all characterised by a territorial dimension, in other words, it is a conflict where the centre and the periphery are opposed in their efforts to exert their antagonistic control over the peripheral territory. Centre-periphery conflict can be either a conflict simply opposing the centre to a periphery or a conflict entailing a peripheral reaction to any attempt to establish a new centre, new central institutions, or to gain the control of existing central institutions. When competing

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[4] This thesis does not refer only to Rokkan and Urwin's centre-periphery approach but relies as well on some of the theories of nationalism reviewed in chapter one to look at how socialist Yugoslavia was able to reinforce, or possibly create, national identities. However, the discussion of these theories is not central to my argument as it mostly relates to some of the preconditions for the Yugoslav disintegration and will be presented briefly in chapter three.

[5] We will see in the following chapters that state institutions in Yugoslavia were significantly more important than, for example, in the Soviet Union or Czechoslovakia, where they were mere institutional *façades*, with power being in fact under the control of a centralised party.

elites are trying to exert their control at the centre, or even when competing central institutions are constituted, we can still speak of centre-periphery conflict, if to this situation of "multiple sovereignty" at the centre corresponds a significant peripheral anti-centre reaction. This reaction can be motivated by a perceived threat to peripheral autonomy or simply by perceived new possibilities for the periphery to lay its claims. In such cases, conflict can sometimes oppose a weakened centre and more assertive peripheries. This by no means implies that violence cannot emerge, particularly when the central military-coercive apparatus can still be directed against centrifugal tendencies.

Why then can the Yugoslav disintegration, in particular, be analysed as a form of centre-periphery conflict? Few problems arise if we look at the periphery side of the problem. The countries which became independent after the Yugoslav war were peripheries, first of all from the standpoint of their location, and then, clearly enough, by virtue of their dependence on and difference from, in cultural, political, and economic terms, the centre. Yugoslavia's centre was, also in this case quite obviously, Belgrade and, in a broader sense, Serbia. However, a few more observations are necessary at this point. Belgrade was not the centre simply as the capital of the country and as the location of federal institutions. In fact, during the eighties, the federal institutions' power was steadily eroding on the one hand, and on the other, the Serbian republican elite was carrying out a hegemonic project aimed at transforming Yugoslavia into a Serb-centred union. Hence, when conflict erupted, the centre was Belgrade not as the federal centre, but as the capital of Serbia, where the local elite was trying to impose its control on the whole federation. In other words, centre-periphery conflict emerged as a result of the attempt by one actor (the Serbian elite) to tighten its grip on the centre and reduce the autonomy of the peripheries, all with the military apparatus (the Yugoslav army) as its ally.

According to what has just been said, tensions between Belgrade and the other republics, as well as the brief war in Slovenia, were clearly phenomena of centre-periphery conflict. For similar reasons, I suggest that the whole process of disintegration of Yugoslavia, including the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia-

Herzegovina, can be analysed through the prism of centre-periphery dynamics. It is true that the Croatian and Bosnian wars could also be seen as cases of inter-peripheral ethnic strife opposing different peripheral ethnic groups in the two republics (i.e. the Croatian, the Serbian and, in the case of Bosnia, the Bosnian Muslim populations). As noted above, inter/intra- peripheral conflict and centre-periphery conflict are not mutually exclusive categories and, admittedly, these conflicts involved also an intra-peripheral component. However, if one looks at the heavy involvement in the wars of the Yugoslav army (which soon became a Serbo-Montenegrin army) and, more generally, at the support given by rump Yugoslavia to the Serbian party in these two conflicts, it should become clearer why it can be argued that these wars were (chiefly) phenomena of centre-periphery conflict. Furthermore, the intra-peripheral dimension of the conflict had one of its bases in the presence in the two republics of predominantly Serbian enclaves. This had powerful effects on the development of the conflict, since the Serbian elite at the centre often made use of a pan-Serbian nationalist discourse, presented itself as the protector of the Serbian population within and outside Serbia, and gave its concrete support to Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In sum, ethnic strife within these two republics cannot be understood unless it is viewed in the general context of the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia, a process that was marked by phenomena of peripheral nationalism, which eventually led to the separation of all the republics (excluding Montenegro), from an increasingly narrow and Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

Let me now open a brief parenthesis on the distinction between centre-periphery and international conflict between states. Centre-periphery conflict can sometimes have disintegrative consequences, that is to say, can result in the emergence of new independent states which had been formerly peripheries within a single system. This is precisely what happened in Yugoslavia. Clearly, a conflict which had begun opposing a centre and a periphery, can continue after the independence of the latter has been, for example, internationally recognised, if not completely achieved on the ground. In the context of the Yugoslav collapse international recognition of the new independent republics did not prevent (to say the least) ethnic violence. The problem is defining exactly how long we can go on analysing

these phenomena in terms of centre-periphery opposition and when we should start seeing them as international conflicts (or, in some cases, new internal conflict within new states). My answer is simply: until it is useful to do so. We can continue to use a core-periphery framework until the shape of the conflict does not change to an extent that makes necessary a significant shift in our perspective. From this "instrumentalist" approach to the definition of centre-periphery conflict (as opposed to international conflict) it follows clearly that it is not my intention here to define a universal criterion distinguishing the first from the latter. I am merely addressing the issue of determining until when it is reasonable to go on analysing the Yugoslav disintegration (and possibly other similar processes)[6] adopting a centre-periphery model.

Certainly, criteria based on unilateral declarations of sovereignty or independence by the periphery, or even criteria founded on international recognition, do not serve my purpose. Such acts have often a symbolic value and cannot transform instantaneously centre-periphery conflict into an international war. In this context, it appears reasonable to continue considering a conflict[7] a form of centre-periphery dynamics until the old centre controls directly, or through its political and/or military proxies, the periphery's territory or significant portions of it. While a centre-periphery conflict is, in general, a conflict within a system, which may be disintegrating, an international conflict is a conflict between (sovereign) states. One of the key features of sovereign states is their ability to exert control over their territory and when peripheries fully acquire this ability, the shape of the conflict changes significantly transforming an old centre-periphery conflict into something else, which could be better analysed as an international conflict.[8] Applying the above criterion to the disruption of Yugoslavia means looking at the Slovenian and Croatian wars of independence, as well as at the Bosnian war in its

[6] If and to what extent my classification could be applied in general to other phenomena of centre-periphery conflict with disintegrative consequences is not within the scope of this analysis and will not be discussed here.

[7] Which had started as a centre-periphery conflict.

[8] Even if the periphery's independence is not internationally recognised. According to this criterion, a hypothetical war between China and Taiwan would be classified as an international conflict and not as a case of centre-periphery conflict.

entirety (up the Dayton peace agreement signed in 1995) as episodes of centre periphery-conflict. Indeed, during the short war in Slovenia the centre had still a (limited) control over the periphery and, during the Croatian and Bosnian conflicts, local Serbian militias and political institutions were *de facto* controlled by Belgrade.[9]

To conclude this section let us briefly discuss the implications of analysing the Yugoslav disintegration using a centre-periphery framework. Firstly, this approach entails a recognition that the Yugoslav conflict developed along the centre-periphery cleavage, rather than merely along ethnic lines. Focusing on centre-periphery dynamics does not mean denying the powerful role ethnic identities have played, particularly in making possible violent ethnic mobilisation in some of Yugoslavia's peripheries. However, it involves the hypothesis that the main factor that triggered the process of Yugoslav disruption was a conflict between a centre and (some of) the Yugoslav peripheries over the very structure of the Yugoslav state and, in particular, over the distribution of power between centre and peripheries. Needless to say, making this assumption means rejecting explanations of the Yugoslav conflict only based on the role of past history and ancient ethnic hatreds.

Speaking about centre-periphery conflict means using a metonymy to describe a conflict, which in Yugoslavia was in fact a conflict between the political elites in these two geographical locations and the armies and militias they were able to mobilise. It follows from this that another central assumption in my analysis is that a key role in the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia was played by central and political leaderships. In looking at the Yugoslav collapse through the prism of centre-periphery dynamics I will devote particular attention to the centre-periphery cleavage at the level of political elites and at how it defined different roles and strategies for the political actors involved in the process. This clearly places this

[9] However, they were not controlled by the federal centre but rather by Serbia. Further evidence of Milošević's ability to exert significant influence over the Serbian enclaves in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina emerged during Milošević's trial at the Hague Tribunal. See for example *Institute for War and Peace Reporting Tribunal Update*, 6 February 2004.

thesis in the context of the existing literature on Yugoslavia, which (we have seen it in the previous chapter) has often pointed at the importance of political actors in mobilising ethnicity. However, looking at the role of political elites, many of the scholars who have analysed the disintegration of Yugoslavia have failed to identify formally in abstract terms, and without resorting to explanations based on the role of personalities, the actors involved and the determinants of their strategies. This thesis is an attempt to focus instead exclusively on the dynamics of strategic interaction between different sectors of the Yugoslav political elites..

The centre-periphery cleavage is not sufficient to define who are the political actors whose interaction should to be analysed if we want to understand the dynamics of the Yugoslav breakdown. We have already mentioned that Yugoslavia, or the Yugoslav centre, in the second half of the eighties was increasingly characterised by a situation of "multiple sovereignty", which was conducive to the disintegration of the country and, ultimately, to ethnic violence. We will see more in detail in the following chapters how, with the emergence of a new nationalist leadership in Serbia, competing elites at the centre acted to gain, or to maintain control over the Yugoslav system, in some cases channelling their actions through competing central institutions, including the Serbian republican institutions and the party apparatus. Thus, the dynamics of the Yugoslav disintegration was not defined merely by the centre-periphery cleavage, but also by the often unclear division line between federal institutions and political elite, and central Serbian institutions and political elite.

Figure 2.1 *Cleavages and institutional arenas*

Centre	*Peripheries*
Federal state institutions	Bosnia-Herzegovina
	Croatia
	Kosovo
Federal party apparatus	Macedonia
	Montenegro
	Slovenia
Serbian republican institutions	Vojvodina

In other words, the role of political actors was also shaped by the institutional arena where political agents played their strategies. A focus on political elites and on institutions links this thesis to the literature on the collapse of socialist federations and, more in general, to a significant part of the literature on transition reviewed in the previous chapter. In particular, I accept that a fundamental role was played by Yugoslav federal institutions in determining the breakdown of the country (but not violent conflict). The interaction between different sectors of the political elites, which in several studies of political transitions has been employed to explain the outcome of the transition process, will be used in this thesis to account for the outcome of the disintegration process or, more precisely, of a process whereby political transformation paralleled state collapse. Given that Yugoslavia has seldom been studied as a transition country, my analysis of the peculiar path of Yugoslavia's regime transformation may serve to fill partly this gap in the existing scholarship and perhaps be a stimulus for further theoretical debates on aspects of state disintegration phenomena in transitional contexts, which are still under-researched. In the following section I will discuss in more detail specifically how this thesis attempts to analyse Yugoslavia as a case of early political liberalisation.

Yugoslavia as a case of early liberalisation

Yugoslavia, throughout its post-war history, was not a democracy. Starting from the late forties, however, after the split between Tito and Stalin occurred, it began to define its own, peculiar way to socialism which was to make Yugoslavia in many ways different from the other Soviet-style political systems in the rest of Eastern Europe. This rendered the Yugoslav regime, from the standpoint of economic, political and civil rights, in general more open than that of the Soviet satellites. In addition, during the last ten/fifteen years of existence of Yugoslavia, the issue of political reform became increasingly central debates of different sectors of the Yugoslav elite. In this section I suggest that the Yugoslav regime and political environment started to transform themselves earlier than the Soviet Union and its satellites, in a process which qualifies as an early, longer (and aborted) liberalisation process.

Before going on, I need to define in a more rigorous way the concept of liberalisation, to which I have only briefly referred when examining the pre-existing literature on transition. For O'Donnell, liberalisation "consists of measures which, although entailing a significant opening of the previous bureaucratic authoritarian regime (such as effective judicial guarantees of some individual rights or introduction of parliamentary forms not based on free electoral competition), remain short of what could be called political democracy"[10] (1979: 8). Liberalisation "is the partial opening of an authoritarian system short of choosing governmental leaders through freely competitive elections" (Huntington 1991: 9). It implies a "process of redefining and extending rights", (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 7) which takes place in a non-democratic setting and which "may entail a mix of policy and social changes, such as less censorship on the media, somewhat greater space for the organization of autonomous working-class activities, the introduction of some legal safeguards for individuals such as *habeas corpus*, the releasing of most political prisoners, the return of exiles, perhaps measures for improving the distribution of income and, most important, the

[10] Quoted in Przeworski (1991: 56n).

toleration of opposition" (Linz and Stepan 1996: 3). In sum, liberalisation consists of a set of policies and measures, which are introduced "from above" and are aimed at reducing the authoritarian pressure of the regime without being intended to transform it into a democracy. Obviously, democratisation entails liberalisation, but there can be liberalisation without democratisation (Linz and Stepan 1996: 3).

Being now clear what liberalisation is, let us briefly discuss if, when, and to what extent Yugoslavia became a liberalising system.[11] To do so, I will compare Yugoslavia to a classic case of liberalisation, i.e., to the period of political and economic reform initiated by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. It is largely accepted that *glasnost* and *perestroika* were changes aimed at liberalising, and yet not at fully democratising the regime.[12] Table 2.2 compares the situation in the two countries, using data provided by Freedom House, which since 1972 has annually classified all countries of the world according to their degree of democracy.[13]

Table 2.2 *Democracy in Yugoslavia and in the Soviet Union 1972-1990*

	72	73	74	75	76	80	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
YU	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF
USSR	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	PF

Source: Freedom House. NF=non free, PF=partly free

To keep things simple, table 2.2 only presents the outcome of the broad threefold classification employed by Freedom House, which distinguishes countries as "not free", "partly free" and "free" ones, according to the political rights and civil liberties granted. Looking at the table, we can see how the Soviet Union remained

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[11] A much more thorough analysis of what I call Yugoslavia's "liberalisation by decay" will be presented in chapter four.

[12] See for example Linz and Stepan (1996: 370 and ff.)

[13] Freedom House is a "non-profit, nonpartisan organisation" that has become the most widely quoted source of systematic data on political rights and civil liberties. All data cited here are available on-line at <www.freedomhouse.org>. Problems can arise since, throughout the years, the methodology employed in their surveys has partially changed, and this can make a diachronic analysis of the data less reliable. Obviously the reports produced by Freedom House are not necessarily free from errors. I am using here their data simply to provide some initial information on a topic which will be discussed more in detail at a later stage.

"not free" until 1990, despite the fact that Gorbachev had started to move towards the liberalisation of the regime from 1986 (the second year of his mandate). Yugoslavia, on the contrary, had already become a "partly free" country in 1983. This suggests that, if the USSR in the late eighties was a non-democratic regime that was making its first steps towards greater pluralism and freedom, Yugoslavia started much earlier to transform itself from a non-democratic/authoritarian political system, into a more open one. Yugoslavia was not the only example, in pre-Gorbachev Eastern Europe, of a regime at least partially departing from the Soviet-style utterly non-democratic model. The other two were Hungary and Poland. However, the fact that these two countries were under the direct influence of the Soviet Union meant that whatever limited freedom they could grant to their citizens in some spheres was restricted by their very condition of Soviet satellites. Any opening of the regime, in other words, was influenced in its development and in its consequences by the threat of a possible Soviet intervention; a threat which (clearly in the case of Poland) greatly affected internal political developments in each country of the Soviet bloc until the eighties.

By virtue of Yugoslavia's condition of "non-aligned" country, its rulers were not confronted with such powerful external constraints, and liberalisation in this country could develop more independently from international factors. The "deviant" position of Yugoslavia within the Communist bloc was important also in that it allowed the definition of a distinctive and original Yugoslav socialist system. This meant that by the sixties elements of pluralism were introduced in Yugoslavia that would not be present in the USSR until the late eighties. In fact, the 1963 constitution and the subsequent implementation of other political and economic reforms significantly opened the Yugoslav political environment allowing, for example, multi-candidate elections (although the central role of the party, and complex delegation mechanisms reduced the actual significance of the electorate's choices). Later, a new constitution introduced in 1974 consolidated, reinforced and institutionalised a considerably high degree of decentralisation in the Yugoslav institutions and in the party. We will see how the most important event which marked a discontinuity point in the recent history of Yugoslavia was the death of Tito in 1980. His disappearance from the scene was an event of

paramount importance, in that it eliminated one significant source of authoritarian power (Tito's power and influence were reflected in his "life" and *sine die* appointments). The system lacked now the arbiter who had the authority to find a settlement in the many situations of conflict (including conflict between republics) which arose in the complex Yugoslav political arena. No doubt, Tito's charismatic figure was a very important cohesive element in the system, and his death left a vacuum at the centre. We will see how during the eighties, an increasingly weak regime was in many ways simply incapable of effectively exerting (authoritarian) power in conditions of economic crisis and escalating ethnic tensions. These precedents and events paved the way for a transformation of the Yugoslav regime which would probably fully qualify as liberalisation starting from the eighties.

Once again, I will conclude this section with a few words on the implications of characterising Yugoslavia, throughout the eighties, as a liberalising political environment. My analysis being focused on the role of political leaderships, it is worth mentioning in particular the effects of a liberalisation phase over the strategies of political actors. In a multiethnic federation, an opening at the centre may give rise to autonomy demands in the periphery where, particularly in the case of "socialist federations", local institutions can rapidly become an important arena for political action. However, in Yugoslavia the process did not start from the peripheries, but rather from the centre. More precisely, from the attempt from Belgrade to constitute a Serb-centred Yugoslavia, an attempt which was later followed by a strong peripheral reaction. The vacuum of power and the liberalisation attempts at the federal level allowed the constitution of a new centre in Belgrade, characterised by a nationalist and non-democratic orientation, which made Serbia the most important centripetal factor in the system.

The above argument will be developed in more detail in the fourth chapter. At this stage I would only like to stress that, from what has been discussed in this and in the previous section of this chapter, it emerges that three main factors determined the action and interaction of political leaderships before and during the collapse of Yugoslavia. The first two are the political leadership's positions in terms of centre-periphery cleavage, and the institutional arenas where its action is concentrated.

The third one, briefly dealt with in this section, is the degree of openness of the political regime and the consequent "freedom of movement" granted to local and central elites.

Disruption and violent mobilisation in Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia has undergone a disruption process and this process has been, in general, a violent one. We already saw in the introduction that if, instead of dealing with Yugoslavia as a whole, we choose as our unit of analysis the Yugoslav republics and provinces (i.e. all the federal sub-units, the provinces being in most respects "quasi-republics"), the picture becomes more complicated. Centre-periphery conflict in Yugoslavia produced different outcomes, both from the standpoint of the presence, or not, of violent mobilisation and from the standpoint of the secession, or otherwise, of the periphery. Before going on with an analysis of these two dimensions, I have to briefly explain what I mean by secession of the periphery and by violent centre-periphery conflict.

The first of these two aspects does not require to be dealt with at length. A very simple criterion is the following one: a federal sub-unit has successfully seceded when it has established a sovereign state able to exert its authority independently on its territory, or a significant part of it, and the (old) centre is not able to do so. This criterion reflects the previous discussion on the distinction between centre-periphery and international conflict. Its corollary is that, in my analysis, secession is accompanied by the end of centre-periphery conflict or by its transformation into an international conflict.

The second dimension I am taking into consideration is the presence, or absence, of phenomena of *violent* centre-periphery conflict. I will, in general, adopt Tilly's terminology in order to define what is violence and what is mobilisation. It is worth quoting again Tilly's definition of violence as "any observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are seized or physically damaged in spite of

resistance" (1978: 176). Defining violence can be a difficult task and this definition has been criticised as "under Tilly's definition shooting an unsuspecting passerby in the back would not be considered an act of violence" (Kotowski 1984: 413). While Kotowski offers an alternative definition of violence as "illegal actions to do physical harm to persons or property in violation of recognized social norms" (1984: 413), Tilly's definition is preferred when studying phenomena of collective violence like the ones that took place during the Yugoslav war. After all, when looking at such phenomena are we really interested in episodes (which, in other contexts, might certainly be considered as violent) like the ones Kotowski describes, i.e. passers-by shot in the back? Collective violence in Yugoslavia could probably be studied even restricting our definition of violence only to those events in which harm is inflicted "in spite of resistance". This limitation was introduced by Tilly "in order to exclude self-destruction, potlatches, ceremonial mutilation, urban renewal, and other collective damage in which all parties are more or less agreed to the damage" (1978: 176). Perhaps more appropriately, to solve the "passer-by problem", Tilly's clause could be substituted by a slightly different one according to which violence becomes "any observable interaction in the course of which persons or objects are seized or physically damaged without the consent of all parties involved". Any definition based on concepts such as "recognised social norms" or "illegal acts", is of little use in situations where it is very difficult to define what is legal and what is an accepted social norm. That is to say, in situations in which legality loses much of its practical meaning, precisely because of the collapse of state institutions, of civil war, of conditions of "multiple sovereignty".

After having tentatively defined violence, we can now define violent anti-centre mobilisation as a situation in which a peripheral ethnic group increases the resources under its collective control (mobilises, in Tilly's definition), acts in pursuit of its common ends, which in this case is the assertion of peripheral autonomy/independence, and this produces phenomena of collective violence. Phenomena of anti-centre mobilisation were certainly common during the Yugoslav collapse, however, looking only at this form of mobilisation makes the picture incomplete. In Yugoslavia, centre-periphery conflict was not produced

only by anti-centre mobilisation. Things are made more complicated by the fact that the process was initiated mainly at the centre, for the Serbian political elite, undertaking its hegemonic project, led a process of "central mobilisation" which generated "an increase in the resources or in the degree of collective control" (Tilly 1978: 54) at the disposal of the ethnic group at the centre. The attempt to gain, or increase, the control at the centre, also took the form of ethnic mobilisation "from above" clearly exemplified by the Serbian leadership's strategy of the "meetings"[14] organised in support of its nationalist agenda.

From what I have just said, we can derive a more general definition of violent centre-periphery conflict, which could be stated as follows. We have violent centre-periphery conflict when peripheral and/or central ethnic groups increase the resources under their collective control (mobilise), act in pursuit of their common ends, which are

i) in the case of the peripheral group(s), the assertion of peripheral autonomy/independence
ii) in the case of the central group, the assertion of its control at the centre and/or the limitation of peripheral autonomy

and this produces phenomena of collective violence.

My analysis will focus on the two dynamics of violent conflict and disintegration and will have the federal sub-unit as its unit of analysis. Although the existing literature on Yugoslavia often considers disintegration and ethnic conflict jointly, as two aspects of the same dynamics, my analysis attempts to separate and distinguish the causes of disintegration and of violent ethnic conflict. I regard these as two separate phenomena, which do not necessarily have to be closely connected. In general, ethnic violence is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for disintegrative phenomena and indeed, while the Yugoslav breakup was undoubtedly violent, the Czechoslovak separation was peaceful. Similarly,

[14] That is, mass demonstrations. The Serbian leadership's use of the crowd will be analysed more in detail in chapter five.

there are many instances of violent ethnic conflict that have not resulted in secession. This is immediately clear if we look at phenomena of violent ethnic mobilisation in Kosovo, which, until NATO's intervention in 1999, remained a province under Serbian control. State disintegration and ethnic conflict have thus different causes and, as I have stated in the introduction, my two research questions are:

i) why did some of the Yugoslav federal sub-units separate from the centre, while some others did not?
ii) why did violent ethnic conflict emerge in some of the Yugoslav federal sub-units but not in others?

To provide an answer to my two research questions, the central arguments I develop in this thesis are the following:

i) it was chiefly acting at the party, rather than state level, that the Serbian leadership successfully prevented the secession of some of the Yugoslav peripheries;
ii) different patterns of strategic interaction between peripheral and central elites (acting rationally) explain why in some peripheries the level of violent ethnic mobilisation was high and in some others violent ethnic mobilisation was absent, or almost absent.

Leaving to the following chapters a detailed investigation of these two hypotheses, I end this chapter with a few words on the nature of my research questions, and of this analysis, using as a starting point Figure 2.3, which we have already seen in the introduction.

Figure 2.3 Disintegration and violent conflict in the Yugoslav peripheries

	Violent conflict	*Absence of violence*
Secession	Slovenia Croatia Bosnia-Herzegovina	Macedonia
Unity preserved	Kosovo	Montenegro Vojvodina

In Figure 2.3 Kosovo falls in the category (unity preserved; violent conflict). This was certainly true before the NATO intervention in 1999 when, despite episodes of heavy ethnic conflict in the province, Kosovo continued to remain under Belgrade's control. Following the 1999 war, Kosovo became an international military protectorate, formally still under Serbia's sovereignty but *de facto* administered by the international community. Kosovo's final status being unclear, it would perhaps be difficult to understand its current international position in terms of the dichotomy "secession" vs. "unity preserved". Despite the ambiguity of Kosovo's status after 1999, the secession variable will be treated as a simple two-state variable. Kosovo's *de facto* separation from Serbia was the direct outcome of NATO's intervention, certainly a powerful external variable, which however is not relevant in this analysis of the Yugoslav collapse which focuses on internal dynamics.

The second variable is the emergence of violent centre-periphery conflict. Also in this case this variable will be treated as a two-state variable simply distinguishing between situations of violent centre-periphery conflict and situations in which centre-periphery conflict was absent or in which centre-periphery conflict did not produce widespread phenomena of collective violence. I am using the term "widespread" since I am not interested in sporadic episodes of unrest. I will regard as significant only those phenomena of collective violence which were serious enough to prompt a direct military intervention from the centre. In Yugoslavia, all cases where violent centre-periphery conflict developed qualify as cases characterised by widespread and significant episodes of collective violence. This

is clearly true for the two bloody and full-scale wars in Bosnia and Croatia, but also for the limited conflict in Slovenia, which saw chiefly the peripheral group mobilising, but which nevertheless produced a half-hearted and confused military intervention on the part of the federal centre and the Yugoslav army. The Slovenian war was indeed the best example in the process of Yugoslav collapse of "pure" centre-periphery conflict in the classic sense, as its dynamics were not influenced by the presence of Serbian population in the periphery. The fact that the conflict in Slovenia was considerably less violent than other forms of centre-periphery conflict which accompanied the Yugoslav collapse does not mean that we can simply ignore it. In fact, we will see in the following chapters how the tensions and eventually the conflict between Belgrade and Ljubljana are central to our understanding of the Yugoslav disintegration. Finally, ethnic unrest in Kosovo was characterised by local mobilisation of the peripheral group and central military intervention, and produced widespread episodes of violent conflict.

I am aware that looking at the emergence of ethnic conflict as a two-state variable is not unproblematic. The fact that the conflict in Slovenia and the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were different in terms of their sheer duration as well as their scale had a powerful and tragic impact on the way in which the dissolution of Yugoslavia unfolded. However, this thesis does not address the question of why centre-periphery violent conflict reached very different levels of violence. In fact this question appears to be less interesting than the question of why centre-periphery conflict emerged in the first place. There is significant *prima facie* evidence to hypothesise that different levels of violence, *where centre-periphery conflict emerged*, were linked to differences in the ethnic composition of the periphery. More precisely, ethnic conflict was more violent where sizeable Serbian communities (i.e. communities belonging to the central ethnic group) were concentrated in parts of the periphery's territory. It is important to emphasise that the level of violence appears to be linked to a structural variable such as the periphery's ethnic composition only in those cases where centre-periphery violent conflict emerged. Vojvodina remained peaceful despite its mixed population (with an important Hungarian component), while ethnically homogeneous Slovenia experienced a brief war. This, as well, makes the question of first understanding

why conflict erupted, regardless of the degree of violence that the conflict subsequently produced, particularly important.

As previously noted, my unit of analysis is the federal sub-unit and in this thesis my intention is to compare and contrast different outcomes in different Yugoslav peripheries in the context of the disintegration process. Despite the explicit use of a comparative approach, it would not be possible to apply directly and straightforwardly the results of my analysis to other disintegrative phenomena, even if we were to focus only on the collapse of socialist federations. In other words, this thesis is a comparison of all Yugoslav peripheries, whose results are not intended to be extrapolated in other contexts. In this respect, my analysis could be treated as (yet another) case study of the Yugoslav disintegration. But even looking at it as a case study, this thesis could have, to use Sartori's wording, "comparative merit" (1994: 23) as a hypothesis-generating inquiry since, as I have tried to highlight in the previous paragraphs, it deals with aspects of the Yugoslav breakdown which so far have not yet received the scholarly attention they would deserve.

3. Ethnic relations and nationalities policy 1945-1973

In this chapter I will give a brief historical introduction on ethnic relations and nationalities policy in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1973.[1] This historical account will also serve as an analysis of the construction, or strengthening of national identities in Tito's Yugoslavia which subsequently, immediately before and during the collapse, allowed local elites to mobilise ethnicity. The first section will deal with the 1945-1963 period, which saw the introduction of a Soviet-style federal model and the subsequent departure from it, with the development of the "self-management" doctrine. The second part will analyse the period between 1964 and 1973, when decisive steps were taken towards decentralisation and reform. In the last section I will look at some of the main characteristics of the Yugoslav nationalities policy and discuss the extent to which it provided preconditions for the development of national identities and local ethnic elites.

[1] Information contained in this chapter was partly obtained in interviews with former vice president of the Yugoslav Federal Executive Council (the Yugoslav executive) and first president of independent Macedonia Kiro Gligorov (Gligorov, interview 2002), former head of the Yugoslav party's presidency Stipe Šuvar (Šuvar, interview 2002), former head of the Croatian party Jure Bilić (Bilić, interview 2002), former president of Vojvodina's presidency Nandor Major (Major, interview 2002) and former member of the Serbian party's central committee Latinka Perović (Perović, interview 2002).

1945-1963: from Soviet-style federalism to self-management

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was officially born on the 29th of November 1945, immediately after the Second World War, when Yugoslavia (and Albania) came to be the only European countries where a communist regime was established without the Soviet Union's intervention or involvement. The constitution adopted in 1946 was modelled after the 1936 USSR constitution and defined a federal structure similar to the Soviet one. The partition of the Yugoslav territory was, generally speaking, based on the ethnic principle and the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia were constituted. Within Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina had a special autonomous status, the first as an autonomous region (*oblast*) and the second as an autonomous province (*pokrajina*). The Yugoslav communist leadership paid particular attention to the creation of a balance of power equilibrium between the most important republican players and, in particular, created the two autonomous entities in Serbia and a separate republic of Montenegro also with the aim of preventing Serbia from regaining a hegemonic position in Yugoslavia (pre-war Yugoslavia was *de facto* Serb-dominated).[2] The Communist leadership hesitated to establish a republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Ramet 1992: xv). However, it finally resolved to constitute Bosnia-Herzegovina as a federal unit at the highest level (and not as a lower level autonomous province, for example), in order to subtract central Yugoslavia from the hegemonic projects of Croatia and Serbia. As in the 1936 Soviet constitution, the Yugoslav basic law formally granted to the republics the right to secede. Article 11 introduced the right for national minorities to use their language and to develop their culture. A bicameral parliament was created, with the upper chamber representing federal sub-units (Pavlowitch 1971: 178).

[2] Despite a traditionally weak national identity, not always clearly distinguished from the Serbian one, the inhabitants of Montenegro were encouraged to think of themselves as Montenegrins rather than Serbs (Pavlowitch 1971: 186).

The internal borders defined in 1946 were to remain unchanged until the disruption of the country (and, during the nineties, most of them became international frontiers). It is worth mentioning that despite the Yugoslav communists' adoption of an ethnofederal model, many federal sub-units were not ethnically homogeneous. Croatia included regions prevalently inhabited by Serbs and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Vojvodina and Kosovo were far from having a monoethnic structure.[3] The 1946 constitution defined both a state based on the principle of a common Yugoslav citizenship and a community of nations. This ideal and juridical dichotomy was reflected in the early phase of Yugoslav nationalities policy. On one hand its frequently stated ultimate goal was to create a unified Yugoslav national consciousness through a process of ethnic "revolutionary fusion" under the slogan of "brotherhood and unity" (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*). Furthermore, the Serbs appeared to be on their way to became the Yugoslav "guiding people" in the edification of socialism and were in general overrepresented[4] (together with the Montenegrins) in the party and state apparatus (Rusinow: 18). On the other hand a few measures were put in place to reduce the risk of Serbia becoming too powerful an actor and the Yugoslav federal structure implied the recognition of some limited forms of cultural autonomy in the peripheries (particularly when this served other internal and/or foreign policy purposes). In general, we can say that ethnic heterogeneity was the only reason why the Yugoslav leadership chose to adopt a (formally) federal system, which remained highly centralised and which anyway, in the expectations of the communist elite, was to become superfluous after the eventual withering away of national differences (Ramet 1992: 50).

Despite this early centralising program, Macedonia provides an interesting example of how the Yugoslav leadership tried from the very beginning to establish and protect some forms of (chiefly cultural and linguistic) autonomy.

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[3] Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular, was inhabited by a mixture of Bosnian Muslim, Serbian and Croatian populations.

[4] This was in part inevitable, particularly when it came to overrepresentation in the officer corps of the army and the security police. During World War II Tito's partisans were recruited principally in regions inhabited by a Serbian and Montenegrin majority. See Rusinow (1977: 18).

Also the creation of a Macedonian republic in post-war Yugoslavia was a decision of the new communist elite which was motivated, at least to a certain extent, by an effort to contain Serbia. Moreover, it allowed Yugoslavia to present itself as the "protector" of the Macedonian nation within and outside Yugoslavia and to become a possible "pole of attraction" for Macedonians in Greece and in Bulgaria. Already starting from the late forties, the Yugoslav authorities encouraged a Macedonian national and cultural revival which produced the rapid development of a Macedonian nationalism (Pavlowitch 1971: 186n).

The dialects of the Bitola-Veles region were chosen as the basis for a written Macedonian language[5] and a Macedonian alphabet and orthography were adopted already in 1945. The following year a Macedonian Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje was founded while the Yugoslav authorities began promoting the use of the Macedonian language within the educational system[6] and the republican bureaucratic structure (Poulton 1993: 50). The ashes of the national hero Gotse Delchev, together with thousands of books from Bulgarian libraries, were brought from Sofia to Skopje where a Macedonian national history was being "re-discovered" and taught in schools.

The period after the war also saw an improvement of the status of the Albanian population in Yugoslavia, although a significant number of Kosovo Albanians chose to ethnically declare themselves as Turks and to emigrate to Turkey, taking advantage of the emigration agreements between the two countries. For the first time Albanians were officially recognised as a distinct national group in Yugoslavia and publications and education in their language became available[7] (Poulton 1993: 59). Furthermore, in 1945 the Yugoslav authorities prohibited the

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[5] These dialects were quite close to the Bulgarian language however, since Bulgarian was based on eastern Bulgarian dialects, the Yugoslavs could claim that Macedonian was sufficiently distinct from Bulgarian to qualify as a separate language (Poulton 1993: 49-50).

[6] As Kiro Gligorov told me in an interview, post-war Yugoslavia gave for the first time to Macedonians the possibility to be taught in schools in their own languages (Gligorov, interview 2002).

[7] Albanian language schools were established not only in Kosovo, but also in other areas with a significant Albanian presence, particularly in Macedonia (Poulton 1993: 77).

return of those Serbs who were expelled from Kosovo after 1941, in an attempt not to further destabilise a region whose ethnic equilibrium was already rather precarious (Ramet 1992: 187). According to the 1948 census, Albanians constituted approximately two thirds of the province's population. However, these first steps taken by the Yugoslav leadership were far from constituting a full recognition of the Albanians' national rights and the administrative and political institutions of the Kosovo province continued, until the mid-sixties, to be dominated by Serbs and Montenegrins.[8] Moreover, Albanian nationalism in Kosovo was ruthlessly repressed and between 1946 and 1947 several Albanian "separatists" were arrested and some of them sentenced to death (Ramet 1992: 187).

In 1948 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform and, after the Tito-Stalin split, the Yugoslav communists had to "invent" the new ideology of communist self-management (*samoupravljanje*), which started being defined between the late forties and the early fifties (Jović D. 2003: 165). It is not my intention to analyse here its implications in detail, but note that it departed from the Soviet centralised model chiefly because at the local level and in each enterprise it established workers' councils and other local self-government institutions which progressively came to play a significant role in the political and economic management of Yugoslavia.[9] The entire history of Yugoslavia is marked by frequent constitutional reforms and 1953 saw the first, almost complete, rewriting of the basic law aimed at introducing the doctrine of self-management into the constitution. The constitutional amendments, in fact reduced the autonomy of the republics with the Council of Nations (the upper chamber), which lost its autonomy and was basically "incorporated" into the lower chamber. While republics had now less formal powers, certain competences were transferred to local government institutions. Many, in the party elite, were hopeful that the

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[8] In 1956, when Serbs constituted 23.5 percent of the population, they were 58.3 of the members of the security forces and 60.8 percent of the regular police (Ramet 1992: 188).

[9] The Titoist "heresy" had also a number of important foreign policy implications. Already in the second half of the fifties the foundations were laid for the creation of the non-aligned movement, where Yugoslavia played a prominent role.

process of creating a new all-Yugoslav socialist consciousness was already at an advanced stage and believed that the national question had by now essentially been solved (Rusinow 1977: 71).

This discussion about early Yugoslav institutions is made necessary by the fact that, already in the first half of the fifties, the Yugoslav model involved a greater separation between party and state than the Soviet one. The sixth congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party (1952) redefined the role of the party, symbolically changing its name into League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) (*Borba*, 8 November 1952: 1-4). Although the party retained its leading position within the Yugoslav political system, a total identification between the state and the LCY was avoided. It was decided, for example, to keep party organisations out of the state bureaucracy (Rusinow 1977: 75). The party also started partly to decentralise its extremely hierarchic structure. In the Executive Committee (the organ corresponding to the old Soviet-style Politburo) four out of thirteen of the members became officials from the peripheries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia), who did not play a primarily federal role (Rusinow 1977: 76). Hence, although from a strictly legalistic standpoint Yugoslav republics were less autonomous in 1953 than they had been in 1946, in practice a more open and decentralised party structure allowed for a greater role of the peripheries within both the Yugoslav federal institutions and the party apparatus. At the beginning of the fifties it was possible to speak of effective economic decentralisation (Ramet 1992: 71) which was already causing the (re)emergence of national antagonism and competition for resources at different levels of state and party institutions (Pavlowitch 1971: 256).

The first opening of the regime between the late forties and the early fifties, was followed by a period of stagnation and normalisation. Inflationary pressures and the disorderly development of the self-management system prompted the Yugoslav regime to tighten its control of the economy and also of the political and social spheres (Wilson 1979). After 1954 prices, wages and foreign exchange were strictly regulated. Enterprises were first encouraged, and then forced, to become members of vertically structured industrial organisations. The same

principle was applied also to professions: each of them had to have its own local organisation depending vertically on the republican and federal organisations (Wilson 1979: 111). The economic dirigism of the mid-fifties was also an attempt to reduce economic inequalities between different regions of Yugoslavia. These disparities had already been growing as a result of the early phase of Yugoslav decentralisation and the Yugoslav leadership reacted with measures which included the creation of republican emergency funds and the reestablishment of a social security system at the federal level (Wilson 1979: 112).

The change in the political atmosphere after 1954 is well illustrated by the fall in disgrace of Milovan Đilas, a prominent political figure and an "liberaliser", whose criticism against the party's unconstrained power had helped to articulate the "new vision" adopted in 1952-53 (Rusinow 1977: 77). As Đilas went too far in attacking "bureaucratism" and the Leninist organisational structure of the party, he had to resign from the LCY and later became one of the most prominent dissidents imprisoned by the Yugoslav regime. Đilas's fall was not an isolated episode and the fifties saw a general increase in the authoritarian pressure exerted by the Yugoslav regime. Throughout the second half of the decade more repressive policies were adopted for example against religious authorities.[10] A renewed control of the state over religious affairs brought to the establishment in 1958 of the embryo of an autonomous Macedonian Orthodox church through the revival of the archbishopric of Ohrid (Poulton 1993: 50). In 1958 relations between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria were tense over the Macedonian question (Pavlowitch 1971: 267) since the Bulgarian authorities no longer recognised the existence of a separate Macedonian nation. But the support of a Macedonian church, which was to become autocephalous in 1967, not only served foreign policy purposes. It was also aimed at reducing the influence of the Belgrade patriarchate on which depended the most important Christian church in Yugoslavia (Pavlowitch: 267). Unsurprisingly, the Serbian Orthodox church refused to recognise the establishment of both the Ohrid archbishopric and, later on, of a Macedonian autocephalous church.

[10] The Orthodox metropolitan of Montenegro was jailed in 1954 and the Catholic bishop of Skopje in 1960 (Pavlowitch 1971: 267).

Nationalities policies in the mid-fifties were characterised by a new return to Yugoslavism (*jugoslovenstvo*), seen as an antidote against the emergence, particularly among intellectual elites, of nationalist feelings, which were becoming a common way to express protest and dissatisfaction with the regime (Pavlowitch 1971: 268). In 1954, a coordinating body, the Council of Cultural and Educating Unions of Yugoslavia, was formed, and a meeting of Serbian and Croatian philologists and writers was organised, in order to create the basis for a dictionary and a grammar of a common Serbo-Croat language. The seventh congress of the LCY in 1958 marked the climax of this Yugoslavist program (Pavlowitch 1971: 269) based on the ideas of a pan-Yugoslav socialist patriotism and a common "Yugoslav culture" (Rusinow 1977: 106). Kardelj (the main ideologue of Yugoslav communism) still granted recognition to the national aspirations of the different nations composing Yugoslavia and, in a new edition of his pre-war book on the Slovenian national question, clearly stated that socialism could neither make nor deny the existence of nations (Jović D. 2003: 168). However, he somewhat contradictorily warned that the various Yugoslav nationalisms were inherently reactionary if not accompanied by a genuine "Yugoslav socialist patriotism" (*Borba*, 25 April 1958: 6; Ramet 1992: 51).

In these years increasingly repressive policies were adopted particularly against the Albanian population of Kosovo. Aleksandar Ranković, the head of the state security police (UDBa), was the main proponent of the hard-line against the resurgence of Albanian nationalism. The state responded to Albanian resistance and demands for greater rights (Serbs and Montenegrins were still dominating the political and administrative apparatus of Kosovo) with several arrests, which culminated in 1958 with the imprisonment for nationalist activities of the Albanian writer Adem Demaqi (Poulton 1993: 60).

At the beginning of the sixties an extensive debate on reforms started again, prompted by the economic recession of 1961-62. The increasing economic inequality between more developed and backward parts of Yugoslavia was one of the central problems that had to be tackled. During the previous decade Slovenia, Croatia and northern Serbia had been fairly successful economically, whereas the

rest of the country was still in a condition of substantial backwardness[11] (Rusinow 1977: 131). The 1962-63 attempt to impose a centralist solution to tackle regional economic disparities proved to be unsuccessful. Decentralisation during the past decade had already given the possibility to local elites to administer and exert power in relative autonomy. This, in turn, produced increased inter-republican elite competition over resources coming from the state budget (Pavlowitch 1971: 300). The richer republics of the north, in particular, became gradually more vocal and critical of redistributive policies.

The debates on economic reforms were intersecting with inter-republican rivalries and often saw Serbia and Montenegro, which supported increased federal investments, in opposition to the northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia. A 1963 agreement between the Serbian and Montenegrin central committees on cooperation in the spheres of economics, culture and education incorporated also the project to build the Belgrade-Bar railway, a costly project which was to be the fulfilment of the old dream of creating a pan-Serbian route to the sea (Rusinow 1977: 134). This agreement was seen with suspicion by others, who considered it to be the expression of the Serbian (and Montenegrin) support for policies of centralised investment. Moreover, the threat of Serbian hegemony and of "disguised" Great Serbian nationalism was often identified with projects of economic centralisation promoted by the Serbian elite. Other federal sub-units, such as Macedonia or Kosovo, on one hand could expect to benefit from central redistribution but, on the other hand, feared, like others, centralising policies promoted by Serbia.[12] Only in Montenegro the local elite clearly supported plans for extensive redistributive investment mainly because of their close connection with Serbia.

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[11] During the fifties the gap between richer and poorer regions had significantly grown. In 1953 the "social income" *per capita* of the richer regions was 110% of the country average and that of the poorer ones was 70%, in 1957 these figures became 116% and 67% (Wilson 1979: 142).

[12] Indeed, "liberal" economists tried to demonstrate how, also for the backward regions of the south, sustained central investment would have had negative, rather than positive effects and that, in the past, only the Montenegrins had really benefited from central redistribution thanks to their special relation with Serbia (Rusinow 1977: 136).

Republican divergences over economic policy issues were partly overlapping with renewed and heated discussions within the intellectual and political elites on Yugoslavism and Yugoslav identity. These discussions, by and large, opposed those, especially in Croatia and Slovenia, who saw Yugoslavism as another name for Serbian hegemony and those, notably in Serbia, who viewed it as a corollary of the centralising policies they were advocating. Reassurances had to come from Tito and Kardelj that Yugoslavism did not mean the creation of a unique Yugoslav nation (Jović D. 2003: 168; Rusinow 1977: 135) although already during the 1961 census, alongside with the other ethnic groups, a "Yugoslav" affiliation was introduced. However, not many chose to declare themselves as "Yugoslavs" (Ramet 1992: 51).

Another important event which took place in the early sixties was the adoption of the new 1963 constitution (*Borba,* 8 April 1963: 1-5) which showed the influence of the liberally-minded ideologues of the party. While the new constitution did not radically change the balance of power between centre and peripheries, some provisions led to a decrease in central control. For example, article 110 gave to the republics the right to start cooperative ventures among themselves, without any intervention of the federal authorities (Ramet 1992: 73). And, as Croats and Slovenes had been asking, the constitution linked enterprise profitability and investments (Rusinow 1977: 150) limiting the possibility to promote from the centre inefficient investments in the south. The new constitution created a complex institutional system (the chambers of the new corporatist-style parliament were now five) and the introduction of a new parliamentary system (which was reproduced in the parliaments of the different federal sub-units) started an unprecedented period of lively parliamentary debates at the federal level and, in some cases, also in the legislative assemblies of the republics and provinces. Together with the new federal constitutions, new republican constitutions were also adopted. The new basic law of Bosnia-Herzegovina recognised and included the Muslims, together with the Serbs and Croats, among the peoples living in the republic. Already during the 1961 census, it had become possible to declare oneself "Muslim in the ethnic sense". These were the first steps towards the constitution of a "Muslim" ethnic identity, after years during which Slavic Muslim

communities had been left in a limbo, being impossible for them to perceive and ethnically declare themselves as Croats or Serbs.

1964-1973: decentralisation and the emergence of nationalism

The eighth congress of the LCY in 1964 was a turning point for Yugoslav nationalities policy (as well as for inter-republican relations). "Integral Yugoslavism" was completely abandoned when the congress approved a resolution condemning the idea of creating a unified Yugoslav nation as an expression of "bureaucratic centralism and unitarism"[13] (Ramet 1992: 51). To quote Tito's own words, "The development of a unified Yugoslav culture should be conceived only as a free flourishing of the national cultures of all our peoples and nationalities unified by common interests and a common social system" (Wilson 1979: 154). The eighth LCY congress created the ideological basis for the acceptance of true federalism, economic and political decentralisation and paved the way for the future redefinition of Yugoslavia on a confederal basis[14] (Ramet 1992: 52). This political opening was the outcome of an alliance between the elites in the northern republics and liberal circles in Belgrade (Rusinow 1977: 138). Indeed, describing the debate on reform simply in terms of a north-south opposition or as dialectics between conservative Serbs and. liberal Croats/Slovenes would be simplistic. Though it is true that Ranković, the hard-liner at the head of the state security police and supporter of tight centralisation, was a Serb (Ranković was sacked and fell in disgrace in 1966), advocates of reforms could be found also in southern Yugoslavia. Marko Nikezić was probably the most prominent among Serbian liberals and Kiro Gligorov in Macedonia was strongly in favour of economic reforms.

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[13] See also *Nin*, 13 December 1964: 4.

[14] For a description of the debates taking place during the eighth congress see also its coverage in *Borba* between the 8th and the 14th of December 1964.

One of the results of this change in the political climate was that decentralisation became more and more a reality. Starting from the mid-sixties, at least in the economic sphere, republics were already substantially autonomous (Ramet 1992: 72). Republican (and other local) institutions had significant powers in the field of fiscal policy and in the appointment and personnel management in the public administration as well as in banks and enterprises. This granted to local political leaderships a considerable financial autonomy in deciding and implementing their policies and the possibility to create a network of clients at the local level (Rusinow 1977: 146). At this point well established regional elites could already use ethnicity and local economic interests both to gain popular support (which gave them more bargaining power) and to increase the political and economic resources at their disposal (Rusinow 1977: 147). In each republic this strategy began to be consistently implemented, in a process that became self-sustaining. Actors successfully adopting this strategy could only prompt other actors to follow the same path, in what was becoming an increasingly stiff competition for the allocation of limited resources. 1965 was the year of the great liberalising reforms which deeply affected the entire economy of Yugoslavia involving central investments, price mechanisms and ratios, foreign trade, fiscal policy, the banking system (*Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia)*, 22 June 1965). Decentralising reforms, which strengthened the role of the peripheries (Ramet 1992: 85), were seen as both necessary to promote sustained economic growth and as an antidote to national and local particularisms. Despite these attempts at restructuring and liberalising the Yugoslav economy, the second half of the sixties substantially remained a period of economic stagnation.

Between 1966 and 1967 the hard-liner Ranković was ousted from power (*Borba*, 3 July 1966: 1-6; *Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia)*, 2 July 1966; *Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Internal Affairs)*, 7 July 1966; *Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Internal Affairs)*, 12 July 1966) and further reforms, affecting the party structure, were implemented. The fall of Ranković was a victory for liberals in Croatia and Slovenia, for the Albanians in Kosovo, who were the victims of Ranković's secret police's repression and for the Muslim Slavs, since Ranković was fiercely opposed to any official recognition of the

Muslims' ethnic status (Ramet 1992: 178). The sixth session of the central committee of the League of Communists of Serbia condemned, in 1966, discriminatory practises of "certain sectors of the State Security Apparatus" against the Albanians and, shortly afterwards, the command of the security police in Kosovo was transferred to ethnic Albanian officials (Ramet 1992: 189).

By the mid-sixties the regime had been transformed "from a centralised Party oligarchy into a kind of multi-storied polyarchy of particular and institutionalised regional and functional interests" (Rusinow 1977: 192). In the following years new constitutional amendments were adopted, which further increased decentralisation and which first (in 1967) strengthened the Chamber of Nationalities and subsequently (in 1968) made it completely autonomous. The republics were granted the possibility to choose republican public prosecutors, whose appointment was previously a prerogative of the federal public prosecutor (Rusinow 1977: 227). Furthermore, the powers of the republican assemblies, particularly in the field of fiscal policy, were strengthened, while the autonomy of the two provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo considerably increased. Moreover, in 1968 "national minorities" were given greater rights, similar to those enjoyed by the Yugoslav "nations" (i.e. the main ethnic groups officially recognised as composing the Yugoslav community) (Rusinow 1977: 228). In 1969, in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, a law of "All-National Defence" was passed, which created a popular militia (territorial defence) based at the local level, which comprised all Yugoslav citizens from the age of 18 to 65 (Wilson 1979: 186). Weapons were distributed and basic training was provided throughout the entire territory of Yugoslavia. The new military doctrine implied the coexistence of two separate elements within the Yugoslav armed forces. The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), depending on the federal authorities[15] and the territorial defence, organised at the level of the different "sociopolitical communities", i.e. republics, autonomous provinces, communes and work organisations (Gow 1992: 50).

[15] Some attempts were also made in the direction of a federalisation of the JNA. The principle of proportional national representation among the officer corps was adopted and it was established that one fourth of any national contingent was to be based on "home" territory (Gow 1992: 57).

At the republican parties congresses held in 1968 and 1969 republican organs were by now able to appoint high and middle rank functionaries at the federal level (Wilson 1979: 189), a task that was previously the prerogative of the organisational secretary Ranković. Cadres, for this reason, were progressively becoming loyal to and dependent on the new republican power centres. (Rusinow 1977: 226). Moreover, reflecting an increased self-government at the state level, the provincial parties in Vojvodina and Kosovo became more autonomous from the League of Communists of Serbia (having for example their own statute) and, although Albanians and Hungarians still remained underrepresented, Serbian predominance became less evident (Ramet 1992: 190). At the ninth LCY congress in 1969 the federalised structure of the party was further institutionalised (Ramet 1992: 71; Rusinow 1977: 257-258) with the adoption of the principle of an equal number of representatives in the party organs from each republic (the Yugoslav army came to be also represented in the party presidency, alongside with republics and provinces). The only attempt to strengthen the LCY organisational structure at the centre, was the constitution of the party Executive Bureau (Wilson 1979: 190), whose task was to mediate in disagreements between republics and provinces.

Debates within the political and intellectual elites became increasingly free and open, often revolved around the inter-republican and interethnic relations in Yugoslavia and at times became the opportunity to openly manifest nationalist feelings. For example, the publication of the first two volumes of the new standardised dictionary of Serbo-Croat provoked angry reactions in Croatia and a declaration issued in Zagreb in 1967 and signed in the name of various Croat literary groups (including the influential Matica Hrvatska) rejected the notion of a Serbo-Croat language and demanded the official recognition of a separate Croatian language (*Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Nationality)*, 4 April 1967; Wilson 1979: 172). This declaration was followed by a reply, signed by more than forty Serbian writers who, on their part, asserted the separateness of the Serbian language.[16] The Yugoslav establishment responded with a violent anti-

[16] Croatia's Serbian nationalists started to demand the recognition of Serbian as one of the languages of the republic and the constitution of a Serbian autonomous province within Croatia. (Ramet 1992: 117).

nationalist campaign, which targeted both the Croatian declaration and the Serbian reply (Rusinow 1977: 225). The language question, together with the usual disputes over centralism and democratisation, were the most significant issues opposing Zagreb to Belgrade. In the same period, Slovenes and Macedonians were also engaged in an effort to obtain increased recognition for their own language at the federal level (Rusinow 1977: 245).

Nationalist sentiments were emerging for the first time even in Montenegro, with the temporary prevailing of an "anti-Serbian" coalition, which stressed Montenegrin national and linguistic distinctiveness (Ramet 1992: 116). In 1970 the Montenegrin central committee adopted a program for the promotion of Montenegrin culture, a program which endorsed the constitution of a university in the capital Titograd.[17] Furthermore, the republican leadership decided that school textbooks with a special focus on Montenegrin history and culture were to be written (in the Montenegrin variant of the Serbo-Croat language) and adopted in Montenegrin schools (Pavlowitch 1971: 358n). However, the social and historical roots of the close association between Serbia and Montenegro remained very deep and the Serbian Orthodox church functioned as a strong cohesive element. In 1969 a bitter dispute opposed the Montenegrin party leadership and the Orthodox church over the mausoleum which was to be erected and dedicated to Njegoš, the prince-bishop of Montenegro who died in 1851. The ecclesiastic authorities, which opposed the transfer of Njegoš's remains, were accused by the Montenegrin party of denying the existence of a Montenegrin nation[18] (Pavlowitch 1971: 358).

In Macedonia the nation-building process continued, including through state intervention in religious affairs. In 1967 an (unilaterally declared) autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox church was established with the "encouragement" of the Yugoslav authorities, which continued to use the Macedonian question also for

[17] The city is presently called Podgorica.

[18] Statements of high rank members of the Serbian church hierarchy had been often implying that Montenegrins were, after all, Serbs (patriarch German was vehemently attacked for having essentially said this in a speech in 1970) (Ramet 1992: 116).

foreign policy purposes.[19] A further step aimed at the strengthening of the Macedonian cultural and national identity was the creation, in the same year, of a Macedonian academy, on the model of the already existing and well established national academies of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia (Pavlowitch 1971: 318).

Little has been said, so far, about the position in Yugoslavia of the Bosnian Muslim population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In fact, after their recognition as a distinct ethnic group in 1961 and the reassurances over their right of "self-determination" they received in 1964 (during the fourth congress of the Bosnian party), it was only at the end of the sixties that sectors of the Bosnian Muslim *intelligentsia* started to demand full official recognition of the Muslim nation (Ramet 1992: 179). These requests were reflected at the political level by the position assumed by the central committee of the League of Communists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which in 1968 approved a resolution stating the existence of a Muslim separate nation (Ramet 1992: 179). Negative reactions came in particular from some sectors of the Serbian leadership but in 1969, during the fifth congress of the Bosnian party, it was officially demanded the complete recognition of the Muslim national group (Ramet 1992: 179). A significant episode, in the light of what happened afterwards, took place in 1970, when parts of an *Islamic Declaration* were published. The author of the pamphlet, future president of independent Bosnia-Herzegovina Alija Izetbegović, rather than adopting a Muslim nationalist stance in a strict sense, prefigured the constitution of a wider Islamic community which was to comprise Muslim communities throughout the world.[20]

After the constitutional reform the two provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo had gained considerable autonomy and *de facto* became quasi-republics. Thanks to this, and to the victory of the liberals/decentralisers (and the consequent fall of Ranković), the Albanian population living in Kosovo experienced a considerable

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[19] In 1967 a military *junta* took power in Athens. The Yugoslav authorities "did not object to the making of Macedonian noises at the new Greek government" (Pavlowitch 1971: 318).

[20] Izetbegović was later sentenced in 1983 to 14 years' imprisonment for "Muslim nationalism", primarily for having written and disseminated his *Islamic Declaration* (Poulton 1993: 42).

improvement of its status. The increased freedom did not reduce, and indeed exacerbated, Albanian nationalism in the province, which experienced authentic phenomena of mass mobilisation. While Serbs were lamenting the ever more significant presence of the Albanian component in the political and administrative apparatuses of Kosovo (Rusinow 1977: 246), in 1968 large and sometimes violent demonstrations were staged by the Albanians in the province (as well as in Macedonia). Albanians demanded the full status of republic for the Kosovo province and further rights for the Albanian population (Rusinow 1977: 245). As a result, many of the leaders of the riots were arrested and several members of the LCY were expelled for having taken part in the demonstrations (Ramet 1992: 191). However, in the aftermath of the protests, certain steps were taken in order to meet some of the demands of the Albanian population. Kosovars were allowed to fly the Albanian flag and, perhaps more importantly, an autonomous Albanian university in Priština was founded, which was to become one of the biggest in Yugoslavia and the breeding ground for an Albanian intellectual class (Poulton 1993: 60). Relations between the Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo seriously deteriorated and a number of Serbs and Montenegrins started to flee the province, where now they had become the victims of ethnic hatred (Ramet 1992: 191-192).

At the end of the sixties the Yugoslav system was clearly in crisis, with the first serious episodes of ethnic unrest in Kosovo and nationalist feelings spreading throughout the federation (and particularly in Croatia). Regional leaders were acting more and more as national leaders, antagonistic and sometimes aggressive nationalisms were on the rise, while increasingly decentralised institutions were highly ineffective in mediating and resolving conflict.

In response to the continuing pressure of nationalisms and in an attempt to provide a solution to the problem of institutional paralysis, new constitutional amendments were approved in 1971 (Borba, 1 July 1971: 1, 6; Radio *Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Government)*, 1 July 1971). The powers of republics and provinces (which were further equalised) were now limited only by what was explicitly granted to the federal centre, that was now left with powers in the areas of foreign

policy, trade and monetary policy and with the task of ensuring the respect for the "principles of the political system" as well as ethnic and individual rights (Rusinow 1977: 284-285). Furthermore, even in the spheres which were formally within the competence of the federal centre, republics and provinces *de facto* retained a veto power in matters which affected them directly (Rusinow 1977: 285). In practice, as Jure Bilić stated in an interview with me, the 1971 amendments turned Yugoslavia into "something between a federation and a confederation", paving the way for the 1974 confederalisation (Bilić, interview 2002) To arrest the process of institutional fragmentation and bring some power back to the centre a collective state presidency was created, which was the natural extension of the party's Executive Bureau (Rusinow 1977: 280). With Tito at its head (and all republics and provinces represented in it), it was intended to provide the institutional arena for resolving conflict among republics and provinces and/or between federal sub-units and the centre.[21] Yet again, this collective institution proved unable in practice to effectively perform its task. It is worth mentioning however that five specialised inter-republican committees and one inter-republican coordinating committee, also established in 1971, were more successful in facilitating the political process resolving a great number of controversies among republics (Rusinow 1977: 286).

1971 was also the year of the full recognition of the status as a nation for the Muslim Slavs. After the 1971 census the issue of the Muslim national consciousness and of its recognition was heatedly debated. While Bosnia-Herzegovina endorsed the official policy of recognition of a Muslim nation, the Macedonian party, in particular, feared the use of "Muslim" as an ethnic label for those who considered themselves of Muslim background (Ramet 1992: 181-184). Macedonia was concerned because of its own Macedonian-speaking Muslim minority, which the Macedonian party insisted were not a separate nation but was simply composed of "Macedonians of Islamic faith" (Ramet 1992: 182). In general these controversies ended with a victory for Muslim nationalists who, in the

[21] The principle of equal ethnic representation was adopted also in most of the other Yugoslav institutions (for example in the constitutional court, in ministries, etc.) (Rusinow 1977: 280).

following years, demanded the recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina as the national homeland of members of the Muslim nation (Ramet 1992: 184).

At the beginning of the seventies, while the Slovenian and Macedonian elites were more or less satisfied with the degree of autonomy obtained and unwilling to further prevent federal mechanisms from functioning (Rusinow 1977: 290), a major crisis developed in Croatia, where a Croatian nationalist program rapidly gained popularity. In 1970 the tenth session of the central committee of the League of Communists of Croatia discussed the dangers of both nationalism and "unitarism", identifying the second as the greater threat (Rusinow 1977: 277). However, Croatian nationalism first emerged not as a direct result of the political leadership's action, but rather among members of the Croatian *intelligentsia*. The Matica Hrvatska, the most prestigious Croatian cultural organisation, became the main promoter of a nationalist campaign and, in fact, a political organisation outside the communist establishment (Rusinow 1977: 294), *de facto* threatening the communist monopoly.[22]

A mass movement of nationalist inspiration, known as *Maspok*,[23] rapidly developed. Aside from the usual issues of economic decentralisation and of the status of the Croatian language, discussions were conducted on the possible constitution of a Croatian territorial army and demands were made for the identification and recognition of Croatia as the "national State of the Croatian nation" (Rusinow 1977: 284). A project for a new Croatian constitution presented by Matica Hrvatska incorporated a "declaration of sovereignty" and the introduction of an autonomous Croatian central bank and of a separate currency. In an atmosphere of nationalist euphoria, for the Croatian communist elite it became increasingly difficult to distance itself from Croatian nationalism (Rusinow 1977: 291). In fact, among the Croatian communist establishment a tolerant and sometimes sympathetic attitude towards the wave of nationalism prevailed, which greatly disturbed Tito and federal authorities in Belgrade, and

[22] The "Croatian Spring" enjoyed the support of the Croatian Catholic church. See Ramet 1992: 111.

[23] Abbreviation of *Masovni Pokret*, mass movement.

extremely upset the Serbian leadership and members of the Croatian Serb communities. In November 1971 the Croatian central committee approved a resolution stating that the Croatian national movement had a "positively socialist orientation" (Rusinow 1977: 303), which in effect indicated the endorsement of and the Croatian communist leadership for the Croatian national program (Ramet 1992: 127). Shortly afterwards massive strikes were organised by the student unions in Zagreb and throughout Croatia, in support of the *Maspok*.

In December 1971 Tito publicly condemned the Croatian nationalist movement and ordered a purge of the Croatian League of Communists (*Borba*, 3 December 1971: 1, 5; Radio *Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Party Affairs)*, 13 December 1971). The suppression of the Croatian Spring did not meet with significant resistance within the Croatian party or in the form of mass mobilisation. In its aftermath hundreds of high rank officials of the Croatian League of Communists resigned or were sacked (*Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Party)*, 21 January 1972; Rusinow 1977: 310 *Vjesnik*, 21 January 1972: 1, 4-5) and tens of thousands of members were expelled from the party (Ramet 1992: 131). Matica Hrvatska was banned and its leaders arrested, together with those student leaders who had enthusiastically supported the Croatian national program. Franjio Tuđman, former partisan and JNA general, and future nationalist leader and president of independent Croatia, was among the hundreds of people convicted in 1972 of offences "against the people and the state" (Poulton 1993: 31). The Croatian crisis had repercussions not only in Croatia but throughout Yugoslavia and in the following years an anti-liberal atmosphere prevailed in the whole country. The reform-oriented leadership of the League of Communists of Serbia was forced to resign and similar, although less publicised, purges were carried out in the parties of Slovenia, Macedonia, Vojvodina and in the mass-media (*Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Party)*, 15 November 1972; *Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Party)*, 19 December 1972; Rusinow 1977: 325; Pirjevec: 25). While in 1970 discussions had been conducted on the opportunity to eliminate, from the 1971 census, the "Yugoslav" ethnic category, the period following the suffocation of the Croatian Spring saw, not a return to the "integral"

and assimilationist Yugoslavism of the past, but a revived emphasis on Yugoslav socialist patriotism (Ramet 1992: 52-53).

With the normalisation following the Croatian Spring I end this brief historical introduction, leaving to the next chapter a more detailed analysis of the 1974 constitution which was to regulate the institutional functioning of Yugoslavia until the disintegration. At this point it is only worth mentioning that the institutional changes introduced in 1971 created the basis for the 1974 constitutional reform, and marked the victory of Kardelj's concept of decentralised Yugoslavia. In the constitutional debates of the late sixties and early seventies Tito unenthusiastically abandoned Yugoslav "unitarism" and, for Dejan Jović, "unwillingly accepted that the state should be decentralised, but requested that the Party should remain united". (2003: 174-175).

Yugoslav nationalities policy and nation building

The previous sections of this chapter presented a brief outline of the history of the first three decades of socialist Yugoslavia and had the main purpose of providing background information on the development of the Yugoslav nationality policies. For this reason I have concentrated my attention on Yugoslavia's domestic politics and interethnic and inter-republican relations. In doing so, I have almost completely neglected Yugoslavia's relations with the rest of the world and in particular its role as one of the leaders of the non-aligned movement. Moreover, I have only very roughly sketched the main features and implications of the self-management doctrine, with the plethora of political and economic experiments that were carried out in its name by the Yugoslav leadership. In concluding this chapter, I take a closer look at some of the main aspects of Yugoslavia's nationalities policy ascertaining its long-run effects on the emergence and/or development of national identities and local ethnic elites.

The Yugoslavs claimed to have their own nationalities policy (Ramet 1992: 40) which Sabrina Ramet has defined as "a unified, purposeful and coherent program that is potentially consistent and that infuses specific decisions and actions of the state." (1992: 40). If this is a general definition of nationalities policy, we can say that it can easily be applied to the way the Yugoslav communists tried to address the problem of ethnic diversity. It is however essential to stress that nationalities policies not only refer to institutions in a strict sense, but also to the (sometimes informal) mechanisms and policies aimed at creating a local and indigenous elite, at promoting for instance some forms of cultural/linguistic autonomy, in some cases without necessarily implying any form of devolution of power, even from a strictly legalistic and formal standpoint. The federal "skeleton" and institutional structure can be a part or the outcome of the nationalities policy in a broader sense but they do not constitute its only aspect. This is important because when analysing, particularly in socialist federations, the role of nationalities policy in the development of interethnic and centre-periphery conflict it is necessary to distinguish between the effects of institutions in a strict sense and nationalities policy in a broader sense. Non-institutional aspects of the nationalities policy have long-term effects over the lengthy processes of nation-building and elite formation. Institutions, legal and constitutional frameworks, in the long run can affect the nation building process as part of the nationalities policy. However, they also have more direct and "short-run" consequences in that they provide incentives and constraints for political actors and ethnic leaderships acting within a particular institutional framework (as we will see in the next chapter when looking at the 1974 constitution).

In socialist Yugoslavia Serbo-Croat was in general considered to be a single language with two variants,[24] although Serbian and Croatian were often treated as distinct for legal purposes (Ramet 1992: 56). Particularly in Croatia, the language question was a very sensitive one as one of the main demands of Croatian nationalists was the recognition of a separate Croatian language. Despite the differences between the eastern variant of Serbo-Croat, spoken chiefly in Serbia

[24] Serbo-Croat was used in most of Yugoslavia as a vehicular language.

and the western one, spoken in Croatia and in most of Bosnia-Herzegovina,[25] it would be an exaggeration to say that the Yugoslavs implemented a policy of linguistic homogenisation. The two variants are so close that it would be difficult to seriously consider them as distinct languages.[26]

As for the other languages composing Yugoslavia's linguistic mosaic, the distinctiveness of the Slovenian language was in general recognised in the context of the Yugoslav language policy and the Macedonian linguistic identity was also protected. In this case, we have seen how the Yugoslav authorities even played an active role in defining and codifying a Macedonian literary language on the basis of dialects which were thought to be sufficiently distinct from Bulgarian to form a separate language. Education and publications in Albanian started to be available after the war. However, it is only from the early seventies that the linguistic rights of the Albanian population came to be fully respected, with the introduction of the official use of the Albanian language in Kosovo (Ramet 1992: 55). Policies of linguistic autonomy were adopted in the same period not only towards the Albanians, but also towards all other ethnic minorities or "protected nationalities" such as the Hungarians, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Romanians, Ruthenes/Ukrainians, Czechs and Italians (Ramet 1992: 55). Moreover, the Yugoslav school system (or rather, the different republican school systems) came to be organised so as to make education available in the language of each ethnic group.[27]

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[25] The language spoken in Montenegro has features of both variants.

[26] One of the main differences between the two variants lays in the use, by Serbs and Montenegrins, of the Cyrillic alphabet, whereas Croatian is written in Latin fonts. Moreover, a limited number of words differ in the two vernaculars and some spelling, orthography and pronunciation differences are also present. Judah points out that "the difference between the mainstream dialects is significantly less than say that between English English and accented Scottish English" (1998: 146). Ramet notes that "from a purely linguistic point of view, one might observe that Serbo-Croatian was 'obviously' a single language; this was, however, a political, not a linguistic-scientific controversy" (1992: 103). The issue of a separate Croatian language, and today, of a separate Bosniak language, remains a very sensitive one.

[27] Furthermore, school textbooks focused on the national history and literature of the "titular" ethnic group.

Mass media in Yugoslavia were, compared to other countries of Eastern Europe, relatively free and newspapers and publications in the languages of the various nations were made available, providing important channels at times used by ethnic and intellectual elites to promote (within the limits allowed) their agenda. The Yugoslav authorities subsidised the publication of periodicals and ensured the broadcasting of programs also in the languages of the smaller national groups (Ramet 1992: 55). Already established national cultural institutions continued to exist in Titoist Yugoslavia and we have seen how, when this was deemed to be necessary, the Yugoslav regime created new ones from scratch. I am referring in particular to Macedonia where a national academy was established with the support of the Yugoslav authorities. In Titoist Yugoslavia these cultural institutions (and the same can be said for the mass media) could never become the promoters of utterly nationalist or, even worse, separatist programs without running the serious risk of a harsh reaction from the centre. The regime reacted using repression when Matica Hrvatska went beyond the limits set within the Yugoslav doctrine of nationalities management actively promoting a nationalist agenda.

Yugoslav universities functioned according to the principle of equal ethnic representation. In his study on Yugoslav elites, Cohen (1989) analyses 1971 data from "higher schools of political sciences", where the party elite was trained, and from faculties of economics throughout Yugoslavia. Cohen wrote in 1989 that, with some exceptions in Croatia and Kosovo, "an explicit ethnic key is being used in student recruitment" (1989: 311). This was true in general in the whole Yugoslav higher education system, and not only in those faculties where the future party cadres studied. Despite the political subordination of the Albanian population in Kosovo (before the mid-sixties), the communist regime succeeded from the beginning in considerably increasing the level of education of the Albanian population and created the basis for the development of a new Albanian intellectual elite (Cohen 1989: 352). In 1970 an autonomous Albanian university was established in Priština, where previously there existed only an academic institution associated with the University of Belgrade. Enrolment in Kosovo higher education institutions grew to approximately 30.000 students at the end of

the seventies[28] (Cohen 1989: 361). Incidentally, the expansion of the student population in Kosovo was not accompanied by an equal growth in job opportunities for the new generation of graduates; high levels of unemployment among members of the Albanian *intelligentsia* often fuelled nationalist feelings.

Given the close relation and partial overlapping, particularly in Yugoslavia, of religious and national identities, it is important to discuss the relations between the Yugoslav state and religion. At least after the reforms of the sixties, the Yugoslav regime was fairly tolerant as far as religious freedoms were concerned, at least with respect to the mainstream, officially recognised churches and religious organisations. However, religious organisations were strongly discouraged from promoting the interests of a particular ethnic group (Ramet 1992: 54) and the Yugoslav authorities continued to actively intervene in religious affairs. We mentioned how the birth in 1967 of a Macedonian autocephalous church was sponsored by the Yugoslav regime. This was also done, as part of the Yugoslav nationalities policy, to reinforce the Macedonian national identity. The Yugoslav regime's involvement in the development of a Macedonian Orthodox church was the source of tensions with the Belgrade patriarchate, which at times found itself in opposition also to the Montenegrin communist leadership, given the refusal of the ecclesiastic authorities to fully recognise the existence of a separate Montenegrin nation.

In the case of the Muslim Slavic communities the distinction between ethnic and religious identity was blurred. Members of these communities became first able to declare themselves as "Muslims in the ethnic sense" and, since 1971, could identify themselves as members of a formally recognised Yugoslav nation. Even before 1971, the Islamic clergy were very active in promoting cultural institutions which strengthened the ethnic identity of the Muslim population (Ramet 1992: 185). While certain elements of the Yugoslav nationalities policy certainly contributed to the development of a Muslim ethnic identity the Yugoslav

[28] Official figures are higher, but local authorities subsequently admitted that the number of students had been inflated "as a result of bad evidence, boasting, and the need for greater economic aid from the federal budget" (Cohen 1989: 361).

leadership maintained an ambiguous and sometimes openly hostile attitude towards its religious component. As Sabrina Ramet points out, "The LCY, which feared the identification of religion and nationality, wanted to have it both ways: namely, to derive a new nationality from a religion, but yet to deny that derivation and suppress demands based on it" (1992: 186).

One of the reasons why the Yugoslav leadership was forced, somewhat contradictorily, to recognise the ethnic distinctiveness of the Muslim Slavs yet rejecting its religious basis, lay in some in-built characteristics of the Yugoslav system of ethnic management. As Bunce rightly argues, federalism in the Soviet bloc and in Yugoslavia institutionalised national distinctions making membership in a national group a key marker of individual and group identity (1999: 48). In a world of Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, etc. the Muslims were an anomaly difficult to be incorporated in the existing ethnic categories. Clearly, given the importance of the religious element in the definition of the Croatian and, even more, Serbian identities, it was impossible for the Muslims to perceive themselves as belonging to these national groups. Furthermore, Muslims were also in many cases clustered in regions which, although far from being ethnically homogeneous, still constituted areas where they were a majority. It became thus necessary, although this was fully done only in 1971, to create an *ad hoc* ethnic category for Muslim Slavs. But this was possible using the only element which defined them as a group and distinguished them from the other ethnic groups, i.e. their Islamic origins.

It should by now be clear why and how the Yugoslav nationalities policy helped the development and the reinforcement of national identities. National federalism in Yugoslavia (and to a different degree also in the other socialist federations) "constructed nations at the republican level" or, at the very least, reinforced "a national identity already well established by the time socialism made its entrance" (Bunce 1999: 48, 84). Despite the official Yugoslavist program, *en vogue* particularly during the early history of socialist Yugoslavia, the institutionalisation of ethnicity, the creation of political, cultural, academic and sometimes even religious institutions at the republican/provincial level, the development of local educational systems strengthened existing national identities and, almost certainly,

promoted the development of new ones. Applying to the Yugoslav case Billig's analysis of "banal nationalism", we can note how through the institutionalisation of ethnicity Yugoslav citizens were constantly reminded of the "nation" or "nationality" they belonged to, in a way that contributed to the reinforcement of national feeling.

Scholars of nationalism have underlined the importance of modernisation, "social communication", linguistic assimilation, cultural standardisation (Deutsch 1966; Gellner 1983) in the nation-building process. The Yugoslav nationalities policy, where national identities were still not (or not fully) developed, produced from above an "official nationalism" creating for example a Macedonian language, history and culture. Macedonia in fact provides the best, but not the only example of how a nation and a national identity were purposefully strengthened by the Yugoslav regime. Also the ethnic/national category introduced for Yugoslavia's Muslims laid the foundations for the development of a Muslim, or Bosniak, national identity. The very creation of a separate republic of Montenegro contributed to the development of a Montenegrin national identity. In Kosovo, the Yugoslav regime initiated that process of modernisation, urbanisation, (incomplete) industrialisation, which, together with the establishment of Albanian schools and universities, reinforced Albanian national feelings, particularly among members of the new Albanian intellectual elite.

Where a consolidated national identity already existed, the Yugoslavs recognised it and, generally speaking, allowed its development. As we know, this does not mean that nationalism was in any way tolerated. National rights were respected, a certain freedom was granted, decentralisation was implemented, provided that no nationalist and/or separatist claims were laid. "Separatism and unitarism were considered two forms of the same perilous deviation" (Ramet 1992: 54) and the Yugoslav regime had what Ramet calls a "terror of nationalism" (1992: 54).

Given the central role played by political elites in my analysis of the Yugoslav disintegration, I end this chapter with a few words on the effects of the Yugoslav nationality policies in promoting the development of local ethnic political elites.

What has just been said about the emergence of national identities can be partly applied also to the development of national (political) elites, which is in itself an important component of the nation-building process. The principle of "ethnic key" implemented almost everywhere in the Yugoslav society had to be necessarily implemented also at the political level. Even if the Serbs and Montenegrins continued to be overrepresented in the political elite up to the early seventies (Cohen 1989: 301, 307), the doctrine of equal ethnic representation started to be consistently implemented from the late sixties. As a result, increasingly autonomous local political leaderships, thanks to the Yugoslav nationalities policies and to the institutional resources at their disposal, became more and more able to play the role of national elites. In the next chapter we will see how the action of these elites was influenced both by the Yugoslav ethnofederal institutional system and by the transformation of the Yugoslav political environment which began with the death of Tito.

4. Constraints (and incentives): institutional framework and liberalisation by decay

After having looked at the development of national identities and elites in Tito's Yugoslavia, this chapter will be devoted to two very important factors, which shaped the action of elites at the centre and in the peripheries, i.e. the institutional framework and the path followed by the Yugoslav regime in its liberalisation. In the first section I will analyse the key characteristics of the Yugoslav institutions as they were defined in the 1974 constitution, focusing in particular on mechanisms designed to regulate interethnic and centre-periphery relations. The following part will present a short historical account of the transformation of the Yugoslav regime and of the debates on reforms and decentralisation that developed throughout the eighties, up to the collapse of Yugoslavia. In the third section I will assess the effects of both institutions and regime transformation and analyse the specific characteristics of what I have labelled a process of "liberalisation by decay".

The 1974 constitution and beyond

In the previous chapter I have already mentioned that institutions and their effects on ethnic dynamics can be studied from two slightly different perspectives. The Yugoslav federal framework in particular, and nationalities policy in a broader sense, over the years strengthened and institutionalised national identities and promoted the development of local ethnic cadres. Ethnofederal institutions had a second effect produced, more directly, by the way constitutional and legal

constraints shaped the action of political elites. In this section I will analyse Yugoslav federal institutions as they were designed in the 1974 constitution and as they remained throughout the eighties, up to the breakdown of the country.[1] The purpose of this analysis is precisely to identify the institutional framework's main features, which determined the rules of the game, and the optimal strategies, for central and peripheral elites involved in the process of regime transformation and in the renegotiation of centre-periphery relations.

The 1974 constitution, which ended up being the longest constitution in the world, was the final outcome of the previous decade's constitutional debates and served both as a basic law and as a programmatic document dealing with what is usually outside the scope of a constitution, outlining in detail the way self-management was supposed to work (Rusinow 1977: 327). The constitution continued to grant to the League of Communists a central role (*Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Law)*, 25 February 1974), redefined by "adding a few but significant words which constituted a more explicit confession of the Party's ultimate power than could be found in any earlier Yugoslav Constitution or in those of other Communist-ruled States" (Rusinow 1977: 327). The new constitution was in general designed to prevent, through very complex mechanisms of "checks and balances", economic and political power from accumulating in any institutional centre (Rusinow 1977: 327). Apart from the control they exerted in certain narrow areas, central institutions were chiefly the arena where agreements between federal subjects could be negotiated. In addition, the federal administrative apparatus had limited competencies and the implementation of the little that was decided at the centre was left to republican and provincial apparatuses which had the discretionary power of blocking or delaying it (Dimitrijević 2000: 417).

The federal centre retained only very limited powers mainly in the spheres of defence, foreign policy, protection of individual and national rights and, in some limited cases, in implementing economic policies. The federal centre was left with

[1] The 1974 constitution was later amended in 1981 (with only marginal constitutional alterations) and in 1988. We will see how these constitutional reforms did not radically modify the balance of power between federal units and the centre.

the only economic functions of determining the money supply, preserving a unified Yugoslav market, coordinating economic relations with international organisations and foreign countries, and supervising the Federal Fund for the Accelerated Development of Underdeveloped Republics and the Province of Kosovo (Ramet 1992: 73). Moreover, a law on hard currency was passed in 1977 which substantially allowed federal units to retain foreign currency earnings, thus making republics and provinces largely autonomous also in their fiscal policy.

In 1974 direct elections of the citizens' representatives were substituted by a new, very complicated, electoral mechanism based on the principle of delegation (*Radio Free Europe Report (Yugoslavia: Party)*, 13 May 1974). Yugoslavs had the right to elect their representatives in local communities and in the Basic Organisations of Associated Labour.[2] These representatives elected the members of the communal assemblies who then elected the delegates in the republican and provincial assemblies, and finally the same mechanism governed the appointment of the delegates in the federal parliament (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 30 December 1983). In other words, a delegation system governed the designation of the members of the legislative assemblies, so that the delegates in each of them were chosen by the members of the bodies at the lower level. Municipal, provincial and republican assemblies had a tricameral structure and were composed by a Chamber of Associated Labour, a Chamber of Local Communities and a Socio-Political Chamber. The members of the first chamber were (directly or indirectly) elected by representatives of the Basic Associations of Organised Labour while the members of the second chamber were elected by delegates of the local communities. The members of the Socio-Political Chamber were delegates representing "socio-political organisations", such as the LCY, trade unions, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People (the front organisation dominated by the communists), and the youth federation (Rusinow 1977: 331). The federal parliament was composed by only two chambers, the Federal Chamber and a Chamber of Republics and Provinces. The upper chamber, as it is customary in federations, was based on the principle of equal, or close to equal representation of federal units (republics and

[2] Which elected representatives to workers' councils. They were later abolished in 1989.

provinces appointed 12 and 8 delegates, respectively). The same principle was applied also to the composition of the lower chamber, where every republic was represented by 30 delegates and every province by 20. The members of the Chamber of Republics and Provinces were chosen by republican and provincial assemblies among their own ranks and retained, during their term in the federal parliament, their seats in the assembly of their republic or province (Ramet 1992: 67). This meant that parliamentarians in the upper chamber were directly representing their republican or provincial constituency and enjoyed little autonomy from the assemblies of their federal unit.

The complex delegate system gave to the electorate the possibility to influence decision-making only in a very indirect way, consolidating and to a certain extent strengthening the power of the LCY. Firstly, the delegation system clearly made the assemblies at the higher levels much more subject to the control of the party than of the electorate, which chose its representatives only at the lowest level of the institutional hierarchy. Secondly, the presence of a third Socio-Political Chamber at the communal, provincial and republican level, which was under the direct control of the party and of its mass organisations, provided the LCY with an important leverage to influence the political process. Moreover, also the election of the representatives in the other self-management communities passed through candidatures decided within a conference held by the Socialist Alliance of Working People in each republic and province. Finally, provisions aimed at "democratising" the Yugoslav political system, ensuring that no chamber (except the socio-political ones) was dominated by professional politicians or by the "managerial-technological elite", in fact made it easier for the party to exert its control on assemblies composed by inexperienced part-time parliamentarians (Rusinow 1977: 332).

The upper chamber was formally given the main role in the legislative process as most laws had to be discussed, or at least ratified in it. The Yugoslav parliamentary system granted to each federal unit a veto power in most areas (and particularly in economic policy decisions) (Šuvar, interview 2002). According to the constitution, the Chamber of Republics and Provinces could not deliberate if

the majority of the delegates were not present and in any case, only in the presence of all republican and provincial delegations (article 295). This gave to each delegation the power to paralyse parliamentary activity. Moreover, voting in this chamber was often by delegation and, when deciding on the adoption of social plans, monetary policy, total budgetary expenditure, the ratification of international treaties and the chamber's own rules and procedures, also republican and provincial assemblies had to be involved in the process, making it lengthy and cumbersome (Dimitrijević 2000: 409). In sum, unanimity was required when deciding on most issues, particularly on those of interregional and/or economic interest. Regardless of the actual number of parliamentarians composing each delegation,[3] republics and provinces came to be the real centres of power in the federal parliament, each of them having the power to prevent a draft bill from being passed. As a result, after the initial drafting stages, the Chamber of Republics and Provinces ceased to play a significant role in the law-making process. The delegations acted as a bloc and adhered to the policy decided in consultation with republican and provincial authorities, voting only when an agreement between all federal sub-units was reached (Dimitrijević 2000: 409; Ramet 1992: 67).

In the Yugoslav parliamentary system the lower chamber played a comparatively minor role. Leaving aside its vaguely defined task of determining the general orientation in foreign and internal politics, it performed an important function only in decisions regarding amendments to the federal constitution, war and peace, changes in the external borders of Yugoslavia and the federal budget. At any rate, also the lower chamber was composed by republican and provincial delegations, which took part in the parliamentary activity in representation of their federal sub-unit. An important difference between the upper and the lower chamber was that, in the latter, decisions were taken by majority vote. Nevertheless, matters regarding a particular federal sub-unit, or the "equality of nations and nationalities", if the majority of one provincial or republican delegation requested

[3] The fact that republics were represented by 12 delegates and the provinces by 8 was of no actual consequence since any delegation, regardless of its size, could exert veto power (Ramet 1992: 77).

it, had to be discussed following a special procedure which was once again aimed at reaching the consensus of the different federal units (Dimitrijević 2000: 410).

If the unanimity of all republics and provinces was necessary for most of day-to-day decisions, even more so it was needed to modify the constitution. The agreement of all federal sub-units was necessary both when accepting the proposal for a change in the constitution and when changes were actually agreed, with the approval of a two-thirds majority in the Federal Executive Council (the federal government) (Čavoški 1997: 30). This made the constitution virtually unchangeable, particularly when attempting to reduce the power of federal sub-units, or to make decision-making easier. While republics and provinces played an active role in the procedure for the modification of the federal constitution, the federal constitution did not explicitly regulate republican and provincial constitutions, and only stated the principle that the basic laws of republics and provinces could not "be contrary" to the federal constitution.[4] In case of controversy over the constitutionality of provincial and republican acts, these continued to be applied pending a decision of the Federal Constitutional Court. More interestingly, when court ruled that the law was unconstitutional, the assembly of the republic or province had one year to change or remove what was in contrast with the constitution. Only after this period had elapsed, the Federal Constitutional Court could declare the act invalid (Dimitrijević 2000: 416).

The Federal Executive Council, i.e. the federal executive, had 19 members: one prime minister and two deputy prime ministers, nominated by the presidency (with the approval of the Federal Assembly), twelve secretaries, whose appointment by the prime minister had to be ratified by the parliament and, finally, four ministers without portfolio, chosen from those republics underrepresented in the rest of the government. Although in the Federal Executive Council no equalising mechanism

[4] The principle of "*Bundesrecht bricht Landesrecht*", came to be a matter of controversy since the acts of federal authorities, as well as of socio-political communities and basic organisations of associated labour, had to be "in conformity" with the federal constitution, while republican and provincial constitutions and laws had to be simply "not contrary" to the federal constitution (Dimitrijević 2000: 416).

was formally defined, the principle of ethnic balance between its member was in general respected. One of the main functions of this organ was to formulate legislation to be approved by the Federal Assembly. Moreover, the federal executive if necessary could propose to the presidency to pass temporary decrees (which had to be approved by a two-thirds majority of all delegates in the upper chamber). More in general, this body came to be an important arena where agreements and compromises were reached in issues opposing republics and provinces.

The Yugoslav presidency was again organised as a collective body, now composed by nine members: eight elected by the assemblies of each republic and province with one extra seat (until 1988) reserved for the president of the LCY. The head of the presidency, in principle, had to be appointed every year among its members, according to a rotation system. However, until his death, Tito was given the post of head of the presidency "without limitation of mandate", i.e. for life (Rusinow 1977: 333-334). Also in the presidency delegates representing federal units were directly responsible to their republic or province. On the one hand Article 324 of the constitution defined a very easy procedure for the assemblies of federal sub-units to withdraw their representatives and stated that, in case of incapacity, the member of the presidency had to be substituted by the head of the republican or provincial collective presidency. On the other hand the federation could not exert any control over the composition of the presidency, nor could it impeach any of its members (Dimitrijević 2000: 412).

The 1974 constitution further increased the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, which came to be, for all practical purposes, the same as the one enjoyed by the republics[5] (although in the basic law provinces were still labelled as "socio-political communities" rather than "states", as it was the case with the Yugoslav republics). We have discussed the role the two provinces could play in federal institutions; Kosovo and Vojvodina also had considerable influence in the Serbian parliament and in other all-Serbian institutions (this while all-Serbian institutions

[5] This was confirmed in interviews with Nandor Major and Boško Krunić, former members of Vojvodina's communist elite (Krunić, interview 2002; Major, interview 2002).

had little control over policies implemented at the provincial level). For example, Kosovo and Vojvodina could amend their constitutions without any recommendation, or review on the part of Serbian organs (Ramet 1992: 76). Although article 301 of the Serbian constitution stated that legislation could be enacted directly on the entire territory of Serbia, with the mutual agreement of the three parliaments, this provision was never implemented until in 1987 Milošević came to power in Serbia. Serbia proper (i.e. Serbia without the two provinces) came to be in the anomalous condition of not having any self-government institutions of its own, being governed by all-Serbian institutions where the two autonomous provinces were granted influential representation (Dimitrijević 2000: 415).

In article 239 the constitution reaffirmed the right of republics, provinces and other local communities, to organise their own system of territorial defence. The army's role as the "ninth member of the federation" was formally recognised with the new 166-member central committee of the LCY, where seats were reserved to delegates of the JNA party organisation (Gow 1992: 60) and to delegates appointed by, and directly representing republican and provincial parties (Major, interview 2002; Šuvar, interview 2002). The Yugoslav army differed from other federal institutions since attempts to apply in it a strict principle of proportional ethnic representation were, on the whole, unsuccessful.[6] Although the 1974 constitution promised equal representation of ethnic groups within the officer corps of the army, Serbian and Montenegrin officers continued to be overrepresented in the armed forces. Due to the role it played as an "all-Yugoslav" federal institution, the Yugoslav army was in general independent from the direct control of the federal sub-units[7] and, at the same time, worked as an important

[6] In 1974 a new law on defence partially modified the dual nature of the Yugoslav General People's Defence, since 1969 composed by the JNA and the territorial defence, bringing the latter to a subordinate position. The territorial defence remained however an important institution and this implied the widespread availability of light weapons throughout the territory of Yugoslavia and the training of locally based militias.

[7] It is important to emphasise, however, that the recruiting of JNA conscripts was done at the local level and this meant that the lists of potential conscripts were controlled by local authorities. This gave the possibility to the Macedonian authorities to "hide" these lists from the JNA when the war

cohesive element within the Yugoslav political system (Gow 1992: 60). Partly as a result of this, the JNA continued to be involved in the political process in all cases when a major political or social problem was at stake (Gow 1992: 60) and remained one of the ideological strongholds of old-style Yugoslavism.

The constitution recognised the right of nations and nationalities[8] to economic, cultural and political development (art. 244) and specifically protected the linguistic rights of the national groups (arts. 171 and 245). The rights to self-determination and secession were mentioned in the constitution (and in the republican constitutions) in a somewhat vague way and without envisaging any procedure to enact them. Moreover, it was unclear whether its subjects were ethnic groups, as the Serbian leadership would maintain, or simply the federal sub-units (also, it was not clear whether this right could be applied only to the Yugoslav "nations", or also to "nationalities") (Dimitrijević 2000: 407).

So far I have described the Yugoslav institutional framework as it was defined by the 1974 constitution. In 1981 some amendments to the basic law were passed which affected the rotation mechanisms governing the functioning of the Yugoslav collective bodies and which, after Tito's death, removed him from office (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 15 July 1981). In November 1988 the last constitutional reform of socialist Yugoslavia changed 135 articles of the 1974 constitution. The amendments did not alter the basic structure of the Yugoslav federation; however, they modified a substantial part of the constitution and changed some of the rules of the political game in the years immediately preceding the collapse of the country.

One of the most significant changes introduced by the 1988 constitutional reform was the abolition of the seat in the Yugoslav presidency reserved to the president

in Croatia started.

[8] In the previous chapter I have already mentioned the distinction the Yugoslavs made between nations and nationalities. To put it very simply, nations were the "titular" ethnic groups of the six Yugoslav republics: the Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians and the Muslims. "Nationalities" were other recognised ethnic minorities, including Albanians and Hungarians (who enjoyed a considerable autonomy in Kosovo and Vojvodina, respectively).

of the LCY.[9] Moreover, some of the most convoluted articles dealing with the self-management system were changed or eliminated (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 2 December 1988: 3-6; Hayden 1999: 32). Some attempts were also made to strengthen the federation increasing for example the emergency powers of the presidency. The amendments stated the principle that provisional financing for federal bodies could be provided on the basis of the previous year's budget (in case no agreement on the new budget was reached). However, this provision proved to be of almost no effect, given the very high inflation rate of that time, which made nominal figures of the previous year irrelevant (Čavoški 1997: 30). In general, most of the efforts to bring power back to the centre were made ineffective by the disagreement on this issue among republics (Slovenia was usually the fiercest opponent of any centralising reform) (Potrč, interview 2002; Kocijančič, interview 2002).[10] Thus, the new amendments failed to strengthen the federal centre significantly, and did not eliminate the most important source of political impasses, i.e. the veto power granted to federal sub-units on most decisions. The 1988 constitutional amendments nevertheless created the basis for economic reforms, allowing market forces to play a greater role in the Yugoslav economy in principle and promoting and strengthening a more integrated Yugoslav market. Direct taxation of natural and legal persons was introduced and the constitution of private enterprises was allowed. The right to take part in the management of the enterprises not only on the basis of labour, but also according to the money invested, was granted (Favaretto 1990: 10).

[9] Much of the power and the prestige attached to the presidency was connected to the role of Tito. After his death, this institution lost part of its influence as it lacked the power to impose compromises (although it remained an important arena for political negotiates).

[10] Miran Potrč is former president of the Slovenian republican assembly and Janez Kocijančič is a former member of the central committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia.

My history of Yugoslavia's regime transformation begins with the death of Tito, in 1980. This is, to a certain extent, an arbitrary choice. An opening of the Yugoslav regime had already started in the sixties and these reforms had their roots in earlier events, such as the Tito-Stalin split and the development of the self-management doctrine.[11] On the other hand, it could be argued that real and significant reforms were introduced in Yugoslavia only in the late eighties/early nineties, with the collapse of the communist party's monopoly and the economic reforms implemented at the centre by federal prime minister Marković. I suggest that already in the early eighties, but not before, the Yugoslav regime was sufficiently open for it to be called a liberalising regime. Indeed Tito was not only the final arbiter in settling controversies between political actors and federal subjects, but also the single most important source of authoritarian power within the Yugoslav regime. His death marked the beginning of the regime's decay, which went on while reforms and reform attempts continued to be carried out, considerably reducing the regime's ability to exert authoritarian power.

Tito died on the 4th of May 1980, and already at the end of Tito's illness and shortly before his death, the difficult international situation (the USSR had recently invaded Afghanistan) prompted the Yugoslav leadership to take a number of "preventive" steps (Dizdarevic 2001: 35 and ff.).[12] Subsequently, the army was partially mobilised, security measures were strengthened and in May 1980 a Territorial Defence Council was constituted, with the aim of further increasing the control the JNA exerted over the various republican and provincial territorial defence forces. "After Tito - Tito" was the slogan that, throughout the country,

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[11] This is the opinion for example of the former head of the Croatian Party Jure Bilić, who told me in an interview that he believes the process of political opening began immediately after 1948 (Bilić, interview 2002).

[12] Here, and elsewhere, spelling of proper names in bibliographic references is retained as in the original bibliographic source.

reminded the Yugoslavs that the communist leadership was determined to keep Yugoslavia on the same path of the past.

One of the most serious problems Yugoslavia was facing was its difficult economic situation (Burg 1986: 173-174). The big deficit of the balance of payments, the burden of foreign debt, the high inflation rate and the international markets' negative reaction led to a situation of true economic emergency to the extent that, in the less developed regions of the south, it became necessary to introduce rationing for basic goods (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 14 August 1980). Moreover, ethnic equilibria in Yugoslavia were already proving to be fragile. In 1981 the Yugoslav leadership had to cope with episodes of heavy ethnic unrest, which started in Priština and spread throughout the Kosovo province. Rioters demanded the status of republic for Kosovo, or outright secession (*Borba*, 7 April 1981: 3; *Nin*, 12 April 1981: 8-18; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 28 April 1981; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Albania)*, 6 May 1981; Ramet 1992: 196). The Yugoslav regime accused "counterrevolutionary" forces inside and outside the country (*Borba*, 8 May 1981: 1 and ff.; *Borba*, 15 May 1981: 1, 7), reacted violently against the Albanian nationalist movement and purged the League of Communists of Kosovo, some of whose members had taken part in the riots (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 16 July 1981; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 13 August 1981; Ramet 1992: 197).

These events opened a new debate on the federal structure of Yugoslavia which saw the Serbian leadership supporting constitutional change, or at least a more restrictive interpretation of the constitution, that would limit the autonomy of the two provinces. In general, from various sectors of the Serbian society and of its

elite came proposals aimed at the recentralisation of Yugoslavia.[13] Conservatives in Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro also demanded a strengthening of the party power at the centre (Ramet 1992: 216). Confederalists, chiefly in Slovenia, were advocating a further decentralisation of the party structure and the abandonment of the principle of democratic centralism in the LCY, retaining it only within regional party organisations (Potrč, interview 2002; Ramet 1992: 215). At this stage the greatest resistance against attempts to reduce the provinces' autonomy came from Vojvodina (Burg 1986: 181), the Kosovo leadership being too weak to oppose centralising pressures.

Liberal mass media (linked chiefly to the liberal circles of Belgrade and Ljubljana) could now work in a quite permissive climate (Woodward 1995: 70) and report rather freely on ethnic tensions in Kosovo (Meier 1999: 23) and Yugoslavia's difficult economic situation. The first books which dared to analyse Tito's figure from a critical perspective were published, ending the era of personality cult. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav regime in many cases kept answering to democratic (or nationalist) demands with repressive measures, and several Yugoslav dissidents were imprisoned during the early eighties. In 1981 several trials were organised against Croatian nationalists and former participants in the "Croatian Spring" with, among the accused, the future president of Croatia Franjo Tuđman (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 26 February 1981), the novelist Vlado Gotovac and Dobroslav Paraga, the future leader of the ultranationalist Croatian Party of Rights (Meier 1999: 19).

Between the 26th and the 29th of June 1982 the twelfth congress of the LCY was held in Belgrade. Significantly, it was defined as the "continuity" congress (Dizdarevic 2001: 129 and ff.) in tune with the conservative line that prevailed in these years (*Borba*, 30 June 1982: 1 and ff.; *Oslobođenje*, 30 June 1982: 1 and ff.). The communist leadership continued to be divided between centralists and those

[13] In some cases Serbia enjoyed the support of Bosnian centralisers (Ramet 1992: 215). Starting from the early eighties, the Serbian Orthodox Church returned to the political scene (Radić 2000) often employing a nationalist rhetoric and proclaiming itself the defender of the holy Serbian sites in Kosovo.

who defended, or wanted to see increased, republican and provincial autonomies. Economic and political liberalisation was the other issue which divided sectors of the communist elite. It is important to stress that it was not seen as contradictory advocating economic reforms and, in some cases, a liberalisation of the regime while at the same time, demanding a strengthening of the federal centre (Potrč, interview 2002). As Sabrina Ramet points out, throughout the first half of the eighties "liberal recentralizers were dominant in the Serbian party, conservative recentralizers were dominant in the Bosnian and Montenegrin party, liberal decentralists in the Slovenian and Vojvodinan parties, and conservative decentralists in the Croatian, Macedonian, and Kosovar parties"[14] (1992: 217). In Belgrade, among the Serbian communists, it became common to advocate the transformation of a "fragile confederation" into a more integrate system, in particular in the economic sphere. At this stage, the communist elite was still trying to reform the system within the existing institutional/constitutional framework (Ramet 1992: 218) and the congress ended with a vague compromise that did not define any precise policy in respect to the issues of decentralisation and political reform. Perhaps the most significant event took place at the end of the congress, when the Serb Draža Marković, who was supposed to be elected to the presidency of the party in accordance with the rotation mechanism, initially did not obtain the necessary votes. This unprecedented situation was a sign of the deep divisions within the Yugoslav political elite (Dizdarevic 2001: 130-131).

The Croatian party (still under the effect of the purges of the early seventies) was to be dominated by the conservatives until 1987 (Ramet 1992: 207) and in this phase was a stronghold of ideological orthodoxy. The LCY leadership in Croatia prudently favoured decentralisation and economic reform (only if this did not mean a strengthening of the federal centre) and was very cautious on the issue of political pluralism and democratisation (Woodward 1995: 66). For most of the eighties, it was especially Slovenia that launched the fiercest attacks against the Yugoslav system. The criticism that came from some sectors of the Slovenian elite had as its target both the authoritarian characteristics of the Yugoslav regime and the allegedly insufficient autonomy granted to the peripheries (and in particular to

[14] See also Burg 1986: 187.

Slovenia). In this republic open dissent started to be tolerated and radical reforms were advocated in many of the Slovene periodicals (often linked to the Slovene Socialist Alliance and to the party's youth movement). Ljubljana's demands for national recognition were manifested also in the constitution of a "Linguistic Tribunal" aimed at defending the Slovene language. The constitution of environmentalist and pacifist groups (which formed the so-called "Alternative Movement"), cultural organisations and artistic groups (such as the Neue Slowenische Kunst) created the opportunity, for the Slovene civil society, to express its opposition against the regime.

In 1983 in Bosnia-Herzegovina a massive propaganda campaign against "fundamentalist tendencies", seen as particularly dangerous after the establishment of a theocratic regime in Iran was initiated. The campaign culminated in a trial against an "Islamic organisation" which had, among its members, Alija Izetbegović, condemned to spend 14 years in jail for the publication (13 years before) of an "Islamic Declaration" (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 2 September 1983; Meier 1999: 22). In Serbia the funeral (August 1983) of Aleksandar Ranković, the communist hard-liner and centraliser who had fallen into disgrace between 1963 and 1964, became an opportunity for nationalist mobilisation when tens of thousands of people took part in the ceremony (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 16 September 1983; Bilić, interview 2002; Ramet 1992: 227). Repressive measures were enacted and trials were organised in this period against a group of intellectuals who organised in Belgrade an "open university" on the model of similar initiatives in the rest of Eastern Europe. In 1984 Vojislav Šešelj, at that time university professor in Sarajevo, was tried (*Nin*, 1 July 1984: 18-20; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 22 August 1984) and condemned after the police found an unpublished manuscript in his flat which criticised the communist regime and envisaged the constitution of a Great Serbia which included parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the same year a Committee for the Defence of Freedom of Thought and Expression was established in Belgrade (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 20 December 1984: 15-18). The Committee was "virtually an

offshot" of the Serbian Academy (Pavlowitch 1988: 146) and Dobrica Ćosić, the Serbian writer accused of being a nationalist and expelled from the party in 1968, became one of its leading figures. Its activities were in support of Serbian prisoners of conscience, as well as of other prominent dissidents such as Tuđman, Izetbegović and, in 1987, the Croatian ultranationalist Dobroslav Paraga (Judah 1997: 158).

The economic situation continued to worsen during the early eighties. The devaluation of the dinar negatively affected in particular those republics, like Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which were greatly dependent on imports and less competitive in foreign markets. Slovenia, on the other hand, was penalised by the bad economic situation since its relatively dynamic economy continued to be part of a highly inefficient economic system and was burdened by the substantial contributions it had to make to the federal budget.[15] In 1982 the basic principles of a long-term plan of economic stabilisation were issued by the so-called "Krajger Commission" and were adopted as the official program for the economic reform of Yugoslavia. The plan, and the 15 reports issued by the commission in the following year, endorsed the development of the private sector, particularly of private farmlands and small enterprises, the introduction of a realistic exchange rate (Burg 1986: 175; Meier 1999: 13), a better coordination of the investments, a diversification of energy resources, and in general a rationalisation of various economic activities. Jure Bilić recalled in an interview how Vladimir Bakarić, one of the leading figures of the communist leadership of the time, was personally in favour of a "return to the NEP" (Bilić, interview 2002). The implementation of the plan, in most of its parts, was obstructed by political disagreements, interrepublican differences and by the pressure conservatives could exert at various levels. Reform being impossible, the Yugoslav authorities continued to

[15] In the context of the economic recession of the eighties the different positions of the six republics need to be understood in light of their different economic condition. The economic situation in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro was considerably worse than in Slovenia and Croatia. This was reflected in the latter two republics' reluctance to contribute to the federal budget and in particular to transfer financial resources to the less developed republics and to the army.

rely on administrative measures and, occasionally, on the expansion of money supply (Lydall 1989: 69-70).

The Serbian League of Communists, which continued to be dominated by "liberal centralisers", officially asked in 1984 the reduction of the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, together with the liberalisation of the economy and of the political system. The draft reform program presented by the Serbian party resulted in a serious squabble at the fourteenth plenum of the LCY central committee, when Slovenia and Croatia defended the autonomy of the two provinces (Ramet 1992: 217). A first phase of the debate on political reform ended in March 1985 with the final report of the "Commission for the Political System", constituted three years before. The work of the commission had been focused on the problems of Yugoslav federalism and on the position of Kosovo and Vojvodina provinces *vis à vis* Serbia. According to Jure Bilić, the discussion was over the "in or and" issue, on the alternative between "provinces in Serbia" and "provinces and Serbia". The majority in the commission favoured the *status quo*, that is to say, the existing "and" solution which saw Kosovo and Vojvodina as constituent parts of the federation as well as of Serbia. In its final report, however, the Commission substantially considered the autonomy of federal sub-units, and their veto power, as a given (Ramet 1992: 217).

In 1986 Branko Mikulić became the federal prime minister. Although in the past he had been a conservative, Mikulić presented himself as an advocate of economic reform and as a defender of the autonomy of federal sub-units. Even if, according to the rotation principle, the post of federal prime minister had to be offered to a Slovene, Slovenia accepted the appointment of Mikulić (a Bosnian), in exchange for concessions on economic reform (Woodward 1995: 73). In reality, the inconsistent program Mikulić presented and subsequently implemented did not include any effective measure to halt economic decline and, at best, constituted a patchwork of incomplete reform attempts.

In 1986 also the last ordinary congress of the LCY was held, which saw the emergence of a "new guard" within the party leadership.[16] The old proposals of the long-term economic stabilisation program were substantially repeated and, once again, it was stated necessary to stimulate the growth of the private sector and to eliminate major sources of economic inefficiency such as the massive foreign debt. In different degrees, all delegations, apart from the Slovenian one, supported the strengthening of the federal centre (Ramet 1992: 218). Despite the communist leadership's recognition of the fact that the Yugoslav system was in crisis, the political consequences of the congress were not many. Some concessions on Kosovo were made to the Serbian leadership and a partial recentralisation of the party structure was decided (*Borba*, 29 June 1986: 2). A coordinating group for the constitutional reform was also formed, which initiated the debate that led to the approval of the 1988 constitutional amendments. In the following years the collective party presidency tried to prevent both conservative backlashes and too rapid change, supporting a cautious and gradualist approach to reform (Woodward 1995: 81).

The ever increasing polarisation of the Yugoslav system was reflected in the publication, in the autumn of 1986, of some excerpts of the now famous memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 20 November 1986: 7-12). In the document part of the Serbian *intelligentsia* criticised the party for its failure to implement economic reforms and, at the same time, effectively demanded the redefinition of the inner borders of Yugoslavia and a recentralisation of the federation (purportedly to eliminate the most important obstacles on the way to economic integration). Most importantly, the memorandum complained about the situation of Serbs in Kosovo and Croatia and spoke about "physical, political, juridical, cultural genocide of the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija". This document subsequently contributed to create the ideological foundations of the Great Serbian nationalist program of the late eighties. In Ljubljana, in 1987, one entire issue of the review Nova Revija was dedicated to the "contributions to the Slovene national program". Slovenian

[16] 127 of the 165-member central committee were under the age of 40 (Woodward 1995: 71).

intellectuals protested against the second-class status of the Slovenian language (Ramet 1992: 209) and, once again. demanded further pluralism threatening Slovenia's exercise of its right of self-determination, in the absence of a democratic reform of Yugoslavia.

In May 1986 Milošević became the chair of the central committee of the League of Communists of Serbia and in late 1987, with a "political coup". ousted Ivan Stambolić from the presidency of Serbia and gained the control of the republican league of communists. Milošević exploited a demagogic and nationalist rhetoric to gain popularity and subsequently the same nationalist discourse came to be employed during mass mobilisation events (taking the form of Serbian nationalist "meetings") which were used to put pressure on local and federal institutions. While Milošević's Great Serbian nationalism was not always disapproved in military circles,[17] in Slovenia liberal and openly critical views were now increasingly common also within the party leadership. Precisely the army, seen as the ultimate defender of conservatism, began to be the object of heavy criticism in the local press.

In March 1988 the Military Council, an advisory board to the presidency, issued a report on the situation in Slovenia denouncing "counterrevolution" and "war" against the achievements of socialism (Ramet 1992: 209). Despite the Slovenian leadership's attempts to defend itself, a plan for a military intervention in the republic started to be set out. The Slovenian party leader Kučan succeeded only with effort in blocking the LCY presidium resolution which would have legitimised the intervention (Meier 1999: 65). In May rumours started to circulate in Ljubljana about a possible JNA intervention in Slovenia. This was eventually made impracticable chiefly because Janez Janša, a journalist of *Mladina* (the Slovenian official youth organisation's magazine) decided to publish the

[17] It is probably more correct saying that Milošević exploited the conflict between Slovenia and the army (over decentralisation, as well as over Ljubljana's contributions to the military budget) in order to obtain the support of the JNA (Krunić, interview 2002). Although the Serbian elite and the military had goals that were only partly overlapping with Milošević's ones, the army and Serbian nationalists in the end became natural allies.

transcripts of a closed meeting of the LCY central committee, which confirmed the existence of plans for a military intervention. The issue of the magazine was censored and Janša, with three other *Mladina* journalists, was arrested and eventually condemned for possession or classified documents,[18] despite the mass mobilisation in defence of the journalists. The effect the trial had on the republican communist elite and its outcome in terms of mobilisation of civil society, of moral legitimisation of dissent, exacerbated Slovenia's feeling of separateness. Although the republican leadership initially maintained a cautious stance on the Janša *affaire*, the pressure of civil society led the Slovenian communists to an increasingly hostile position towards the centre and its military apparatus. In an article written for the party weekly *Komunist*, Kučan reminded the rest of Yugoslavia that Slovenia retained the right of secession (Ramet 1992: 211).

In the late eighties the crisis of federal institutions was so deep that Susan Woodward claims that "by 1987-88, the only uncontested federal power left to force a choice and obtain compliance was the government's access to foreign credits and its role as intermediary with foreign capital for the republics" (1995: 85).[19] In May 1988 a committee, established by Milošević in order to make Serbia's proposals for "social reform", presented the Serbian leadership's view on how Yugoslavia could overcome economic and political difficulties. Serbia demanded, as usual, a change in the status of the autonomous provinces. Moreover, it proposed a reform entailing the establishment of a tricameral federal parliament, composed by a Chamber of Republics and Provinces, a Chamber of Citizens (where the representatives would be elected according to the principle "one person, one vote") and a Chamber of Associated Labour (Ramet 1992: 221-222). To overcome the economic crisis the "Milošević commission", presented

[18] After a trial conducted in Serbo-Croat, with little regard for the linguistic rights of the Slovenian-speaking defendants.

[19] Woodward blames in particular Slovenia's efforts to increase its autonomy which were "systematically depriving the federal government of the means to enforce any decision" (1995: 1985).

proposals for economic liberalisation (Woodward 1995: 107) accompanied by greater central powers, in the sphere of economic policy.

Only Montenegro supported Serbia in its proposed restructuring of the federal parliament. Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia opposed it, while Macedonia took a more prudent stance (Ramet 1992: 222). In the debates that preceded the 1988 constitutional reform Slovenia proposed reforming Yugoslavia as an "asymmetric federation" (Potrč, interview 2002). This solution entailed greater autonomy for certain federal units and stronger integration for others (Ramet 1992: 222). Also in this case, the reform proposal put forward by Slovenia did not gain sufficient support from other republics. As we have seen, the federal constitutional amendments, eventually passed in November 1988, made only a few and limited concessions to the centralists, without substantially changing the existing structure of the Yugoslav state.

The only victory the Serbian leadership was able to score was on the issue of the autonomous provinces. Eventually all republics, Slovenia apart, agreed that this was an "internal problem" of Serbia and substantially gave their endorsement to the reduction of their autonomy (Ramet 1992: 221-222). Between 1987 and 1988 the Kosovo issue had remained one of the most serious problems in Yugoslavia, both because of episodes of ethnic unrest, and because of the heated debates on the future of the province, of its Albanian population and its Serbian minority. At the end of 1988, after the LCY central committee had approved the revisions to the Serbian constitution which reduced the autonomy of the provinces (Woodward 1995: 94), the Kosovo party presidium was forced to remove Azem Vllasi and Kaqusha Jashari, the most important figures in the Kosovar party leadership (Meier 1999: 80-81). Even before these events in Kosovo, the leadership of Vojvodina had been forced to resign. Between the end of 1988 and 1989 Milošević gained control also of Montenegro, succeeding in placing at the top of the Montenegrin party his close ally Momir Bulatović. In all these cases Milošević imposed his influence using the strategy of combining actions at various levels

within the party and state institution with the instrument of nationalist meetings and mass mobilisation organised "from above".[20]

Mikulić resigned from the post of prime minister at the end of 1988, after the Federal Assembly failed to approve the budget for the following year and under the pressure of the continuing economic crisis[21] (*Borba*, 31 December 1988: 1, 7). In March 1989 Ante Marković became the new head of the federal executive, with an ambitious program of structural economic reforms aimed at increasing the role of market forces in the Yugoslav economy and at developing a system of "market socialism" within a federal system based on "functional integration", rather than on territorial autonomy (Woodward 1995: 84). In 1989 the party apparatus started to disintegrate: "citizens stopped going to meetings, local committees stopped functioning and closed up, party members returned their party cards, and the party's 'reach' steadily shrank" (Ramet 1992: 239). In Slovenia, in January 1989, the LCY formally renounced its political monopoly and converted to pluralism. In Croatia, starting from 1989, civil society movements began to make their first steps, becoming the promoters of democratic reforms and national emancipation. In Serbia nationalism remained the most important instrument of political mobilisation and, in March 1989, the Kosovo assembly was forced to vote in favour of the elimination of the province's autonomy. While federal institutions were incapable of opposing any resistance to Milošević's hegemonic policies,[22] in

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[20] Milošević's strategy of the "meetings" in Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro is dealt with very superficially in this chapter. The sixth chapter will be devoted specifically to these issues.

[21] In the LCY some important figures were still opposing economic reform. Susan Woodward (1995: 76) quotes Stipe Šuvar, the head of the LCY presidency, stating in October 1988 that the last thing Yugoslavia needed was an "efficiency-oriented" reform. However, Woodward points out that "the economic reform was policy, and the party was constitutionally separate from the government. This was confirmed by Šuvar himself, in an interview with me, when he explained how the party could only decide on the general political strategy but then had to abide by the vote of the parliament (Šuvar, interview 2002). Throughout the eighties the conservative response to Yugoslavia's multiple crisis which had been coming from at least some sectors of the party leadership had had the opposite effect of making the party "irrelevant to the needs of the day, weakening it further" (Woodward 1995: 77).

[22] In his programmatic speech Marković had stated that "the acceptance of the Serbian constitutional amendments [constitutes] the precondition for the stabilisation of relations in

Kosovo the situation further deteriorated and eventually the federal presidency ordered to establish martial law in the province, which resulted in mass arrests and violent clashes between Albanian demonstrators and the JNA (Dizdarevic 2001. 430 and ff.; Woodward 1995: 116).

In May the Macedonian constitution was amended and the republic was now proclaimed the "national state of the Macedonian people" in article 1, without references to the Albanian and Turkish minorities (Ramet 1992: 243). Although major incidents were avoided, also in this republic the Albanian population came to be under the threat of Macedonian extremists (Woodward 1995: 107). In Slovenia, in September 1989, several amendments to the republican constitution were adopted, which introduced political pluralism and increased the autonomy of the republic (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 23 October 1989: 3-20). The Slovenian constitutional reform was enacted despite the opposition, at the federal level, of the state presidency, the Federal Executive Council and the party presidium (*Borba*, 27 September 1989: 1, 3-4; Hayden 1999: 41). The amendments presented a very broad interpretation of Slovenia's right to self-determination, were in contrast to the federal constitution[23] (Hayden 1999: 35) and were approved on the basis of the "new doctrine of republican supremacy" (Hayden 1999: 38). The Slovenian position was that only the Slovenian parliament had the right to amend the republican constitution and that only once the amendment had been adopted the Federal Constitutional Court could give its opinion on it. When later, in February 1990, the Constitutional Court ruled unconstitutional some of the most important Slovenian amendments, the republic finally rejected the court's jurisdiction to decide on the amendments and the issue remained unresolved (Hayden 1999: 42-46).

In December 1989, the Serbian leadership unsuccessfully attempted to play in Slovenia the mass mobilisation card (Jović B. 1996: 78-80; Potrč, interview 2002). The Slovenian authorities failed to persuade the federal presidency to ban the pro-Serbian meetings which were being organised in Ljubljana. The

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Kosovo" (Meier 1999: 108).

[23] More precisely, they exploited the ambiguities in the federal constitution.

demonstrations were eventually directly forbidden by the Slovenian authorities, helped by the Slovenian and Croatian railway unions, which stopped the trains carrying the protesters (Ramet 1992: 242). Serbia reacted with a boycott of cultural and economic relations with Slovenia.

Prime minister Marković, although weak and isolated, succeeded in obtaining some positive results for the Yugoslav economy. Despite the hostility of republican leaderships (and sometimes the adoption, in the federal sub-units, of policies which went in the opposite direction) Marković managed to reduce the inflation, crack down on the black market and improve the foreign trade balance (Woodward 1995: 86). In December 1989 the federal prime minister presented his "shock therapy" economic program to the parliament and, a few days later, proposed the adoption of new constitutional amendments which rationalised the distribution of powers and competencies and increased powers for the centre in economic and fiscal policies (*Borba*, 19 December 1989: 1, 4-6). However, Marković's proposal for constitutional reform was shortly afterwards rejected by the constitutional commission of the Yugoslav parliament (Meier 1999: 121).

The fourteenth extraordinary congress of the LCY was held in January 1990. Milošević, now controlling the votes of Serbia, Montenegro, Vojvodina and Kosovo, was able to block the new Slovenian proposals for the democratisation of Yugoslavia and for its transformation into an "asymmetric federation". Despite the attempts of other republican leagues to mediate between the two positions (Serbia was instead insisting on the introduction of the principle "one person, one vote"),[24] the Slovenian delegation abandoned the congress. Although the bloc led by Milošević insisted that the congress was to continue without the Slovenes, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and the army party representatives voted for an adjournment (*Borba*, 24 January 1990: 1-5; Woodward 1995: 115). The

[24] Both former Macedonian president Kiro Gligorov and former high rank member of the League of Communists of Vojvodina Živan Berisavljević, stated in interviews with me that Milošević's position was clear and that he openly maintained that Yugoslavia could exist in no other form than as a centralised federation and that, for Milošević, the only alternative to this was the end of Yugoslavia (Berisavljević, interview 2002; Gligorov, interview 2002).

LCY at this point ceased to be the confederation of all the republican communist leagues and collapsed (Kocijančič, interview 2002). A few days later, the Slovenian party withdrew from the LCY and renamed itself Party for Democratic Renewal (Ramet 1992: 247).

The full reappearance of Croatia in the Yugoslav political arena was marked, between 1989 and 1990, by the birth of political movements and parties (often characterised by a nationalist orientation) which presented themselves as an alternative to the communist party and power structure. Within the Croatian party reformers and confederalists were encouraged by the internal developments in Yugoslavia and by the new international context to be more assertive and to form an alliance with Slovenia (Woodward 1995: 101-103). In December 1989 the League of Communists of Croatia agreed to organise the first multiparty elections the following April (approximately when the Slovenian elections were already scheduled). While the emancipation of Croatia was becoming another target for the attacks of Serbian nationalists, 1990 was the year when the first multiparty elections were held in all Yugoslav republics. To quote Laslo Sekelj, "[i]nstead of representative democracy, ethnodemocracy was established in all Yugoslav federal units" (1993: 248).

Despite Marković's attempts to call for federal elections before the elections in the federal sub-units,[25] the veto of Slovenia prevented an all-Yugoslav vote from taking place, as well as the proposed referenda on constitutional amendments and on the "fate of the country" (Woodward 1995: 118). Slovenia and Croatia were the first republics where elections were organised. Even before the vote, being clear that parties supporting independence were likely to win, the federal minister of defence Kadijević found it necessary to warn that the army was going to defend the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia using all necessary means. After the April

[25] For both Woodward (1995: 118) and Linz and Stepan (1996: 381-385) this had destabilising effects and paved the way for the collapse of the country. The elections at the republican level also had a negative influence on the economic reforms Marković was trying to implement since the authorities in the various federal sub-units ignored austerity measures in order to gain votes (Woodward 1995: 129).

1990 elections Kučan, the former communist leader, became the new president of Slovenia while in the parliament DEMOS, a coalition of opposition parties, advocating a rapid democratisation of the republic and its progressive integration with Western Europe, obtained the absolute majority.

In Croatia, a new electoral law based on the majority system was quickly approved before the elections, in the hope that it could help the League of Communists to stay in power. The elections, which were held between April and May 1990, were marked instead by a victory of the HDZ, a hard-line nationalist party whose leader, Franjo Tuđman, employed a nationalist and anti-Serbian discourse. Thanks precisely to the "winner-take-all" electoral law, the HDZ gained the absolute majority of seats in the Croatian parliament. Nevertheless, Tuđman (who became the president of the republic) decided to form a grand coalition of all parties with the exclusion of the Serbian Democratic Party, which eventually left the parliament (Woodward 1995: 119).

Slovenia and Croatia proceeded to declare themselves "sovereign", while ethnic tension between the Serbian and Croatian communities in Croatia escalated and, by summer 1990, the first clashes between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina were reported. The ethnic equilibrium in Croatia had been precarious since 1989 also thanks to the republican authorities' tolerance of an atmosphere of "intolerant speech, extremist attacks and instances of very real discrimination" (Woodward 1995: 107). The situation worsened after the HDZ victory, when Croatia adopted national symbols used by the Croatian *ustaša* state and ethnic Serbs were dismissed from the public administration and the police (particularly in ethnically mixed areas) and were victims of other similar discriminatory provisions. Milošević continued on his part to use a Serbian nationalist rhetoric calling for all Serbs to be united in one nation-state. Meanwhile in June 1990, Croatian Serbs elected their own national assembly in Knin and organised (despite the opposition of the Croatian authorities) a referendum on autonomy (*Mladina*, 8 August 1990: 46). Serbia also severed its ties with Croatia and clashes between Serbs and Croats erupted (Jović B. 1996: 178 and ff.; *Mladina*, 22 August 1990: 18-20). The Yugoslav army, between 1990 and 1991, repeatedly intervened in the

republic while the Croatian authorities were accusing it of backing Serbian militias and of violating the sovereignty of the republic. The dispute between the JNA and Croatia was in fact strictly related to the contest over sovereignty: while the Croatian authorities believed it was legitimate to use force against Serbian rebels "to others, [...] Serbs had a right to remain within a Yugoslavia and were in need of protection" (Woodward 1995: 137).

In 1990, Milošević increased his pressure on Kosovo suspending the activities of the Priština assembly. For all practical purposes, the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina completely lost their autonomous status. In October 1990 Slovenia and Croatia presented a common proposal for the confederal reorganisation of Yugoslavia (Antonić 1997: 471; Jović B. 1996: 203) on the model of the European Community, involving the creation of independent states each retaining its full sovereignty (*Borba*, 8 October 1990: 4). The Yugoslav union was supposed to ensure the existence of a common market and to promote economic integration among the republics. The Serbian leadership replied with a proposal aimed at restructuring Yugoslavia as a federation with strong powers remaining at the centre: the model in this case was allegedly the United States of America. The two positions remained irreconcilable and the Slovene leadership called for a referendum on autonomy and independence to be held at the end of the year. Although the federal presidency (headed now by Milošević's ally Borisav Jović) declared the referendum illegitimate, the voting took place and almost 90% of the voters chose independence (Woodward 1995: 138-139). Slovenia and Croatia were now buying arms abroad and trying to gain the control of the territorial defence (and JNA) assets in the two republics. The federal minister of defence ordered the intervention of the Yugoslav army which successfully seized almost all territorial defence equipment and weapons in Croatia, but only 40% of them in Slovenia (Janša, interview 2002; Woodward 1995: 137).[26]

At the end of 1990 multiparty elections were also held in Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. In all cases, the elections saw the victory of nationalist parties and votes were predominantly cast according to the voters'

[26] Janez Janša had served as Slovenia's defence minister when the republic gained its independence.

ethnic belonging. In Macedonia no party emerged as a clear winner although the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation, the political heir of the pre-war Macedonian nationalist movement, obtained the greatest number of seats (but not a majority) in the Macedonian parliament. Ethnic Albanians in Macedonia mostly voted for their ethnic party, i.e. the Party for Democratic Prosperity. Ultimately the reformed communist Kiro Gligorov came to be the new president of the republic, backed by a multiparty coalition. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the elections were "more like a census" (Sekelj 1993: 250) and ethnic parties obtained the votes of most of the members of their respective ethnic constituencies and the parliament ended being dominated by the three main Bosnian Muslim, Croatian and Serbian nationalist parties, which formed a fragile coalition. A Bosnian Muslim, Alija Izetbegović, became the president of the republic, while other important positions were filled by Croats and Serbs, following the already consolidated practice of the "ethnic key". In Montenegro the communist party won the elections and Momir Bulatović, Milošević's close ally, became the new republican leader.

The elections that took place in Serbia in December 1990 were multiparty elections in the sense that several parties took part in the electoral competition. However, they were far from being free and fair. Milošević maintained the control of the media and of the old communist apparatus, which he used to distribute pre-electoral gifts and favours. Milošević created a mass party (the Serbian Socialist Party) merging his faction of the Serbian League of Communists with the Serbian mass party organisation (the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Serbia). He easily became the president of Serbia and his party won an overwhelming majority in the parliament (194 seats out of 250) (*Borba,* 26 December 1990: 1). The main opposition party, headed by the nationalist and monarchist Vuk Drašković, obtained only 19 seats, the Albanian population boycotted the elections, and other minorities, such as the Muslisms in Sandžak and Hungarians in Vojvodina, mostly voted for their ethnic parties.

Prime minister Marković also tried to take part in the electoral competition in 1990 with the party he founded in July, the all-Yugoslav Alliance of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia. In mid-1990, however, his popularity started to decline after

the first successes of economic stabilisation were followed by a new rise in prices. At a time when parties (often headed by charismatic leaders) organised themselves at the republican level and employed nationalism as the easiest way to gain consensus, the liberals and antinationalists addressed by Marković found little space in the republican assemblies (Woodward 1995: 125 and ff.). As Susan Woodward points out, the very fact that Yugoslavia had for decades moved back and forth on the path of economic reform, deprived Marković of part of his legitimacy and of the possibility to form a broad reform-oriented coalition. In other words, for Marković it was much more difficult to justify harsh austerity measures than for his colleagues in other transition countries who, at least initially, could implement such policies because popular support was based on the promise of future prosperity and integration in Europe (Woodward 1995: 130).

At the end of 1990 both Slovenia and Croatia were effectively separating from the federation. In December a new Croatian constitution was approved, which proclaimed the sovereignty of the republic. Croatian Serbs replied unilaterally proclaiming their own autonomous region. In January 1991 the federal presidency ordered the disarmament of all paramilitary groups (B. Jović 1996: 241 and ff.; *Borba*, 10 January 1991: 1). Slovenia and Croatia refused to comply, claiming that disbanding their forces would have implied the right of the JNA to interfere in their internal security. In the same month it became known that Milošević, a few days before, had secretly and illegally managed to obtain from the Yugoslav National Bank Serbia a huge "loan", which he used to buy hard currency and to pump money into the Serbian economy. In response the Slovenian authorities interrupted the transfer of hard currency to Belgrade (Meier 1999: 161-162). In February 1991 the Croatian parliament declared federal laws inapplicable in the territory of the republic, without the previous approval of the republican authorities.

During the first half of 1991 the presidency organised several meetings between the presidents of the republics. Their purpose was to discuss the future of Yugoslavia, issues of economic policy, procedures for secession (Woodward 1995: 139), in what were the last attempts to save what was remaining of the

federation and to find a solution acceptable to all parties involved. However, the presidency had no real power to impose an agreement, which continued to depend on the mutual agreement of republican leaderships (Woodward 139-140). In March 1991 a coalition was formed in the Macedonian parliament and Macedonia (which had declared its sovereignty in January) demanded that the federal army leave the republic; Slovenia started to refuse to send its recruits to the army (Woodward 1995: 141). The political situation in the country became increasingly chaotic and the army, on the orders of the head of the presidency Jović, intervened in Belgrade when student demonstrations organised by Drašković against Milošević's regime provoked the violent reaction of the Serbian police (Jović B. 1996: 283; Woodward 1995: 141).

A few days later the military asked the presidency to proclaim the state of emergency in the entire territory of Yugoslavia, in order to make possible the army's intervention in the northern republics, which refused to bring back the territorial defence units under the army control (Jović B. 1996: 286 and ff.; Kadijević 1993: 112 and ff.). The head of the presidency Jović was personally in favour of the intervention and the army attempted to sequester the presidency members in the building in what was widely seen as "a legal attempt at a coup d'etat" (Woodward 1995: 141). Nevertheless, the proposal was not approved thanks to the opposition of the federal sub-units not under Milošević's control and of the Kosovo representative (whose authority was shortly afterwards withdrawn by the Serbian parliament) (Jović B. 1996: 288 and ff.; Woodward 1995: 141; *Borba*, 14 March 1991: 16-17). Milošević subsequently declared that he did not recognise the federal authority in Serbia any more, if the army was not allowed to re-establish the constitutional order[27] (Jović B. 1996: 306; Woodward 1995: 141). The minister of defence General Kadijević subsequently declared that, after the March presidency meeting, "it was definitely clear [that from then on] it would be hard to preserve Yugoslavia in her existing borders, and those who wanted Yugoslavia in those borders were not making the decisions" (Judah 1997: 175).

[27] See also the testimony at the Hague trial against Milošević of Stipe Mesić, then Croatia's representative in the federal presidency.

The situation of institutional deadlock reached its climax in May 1991 when the representatives of Serbia, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro refused to vote in favour of the election at the head of the federal presidency of Stipe Mesić, a Croat (and a member of Tuđman's party), who was supposed to become the new president according to the ethnic rotation mechanism (B. Jović 1996: 324 and ff.). As a result, the country remained *de facto* without a president for a few weeks. In general the federal centre was quickly collapsing, also because of the refusal of the republics to contribute to the federal budget (Ramet 1992: 256). Gligorov, Macedonia's president, and Izetbegović tried to save Yugoslavia putting forward a last minute proposal for a federal framework in which the republics would have become sovereign subjects loosely associated in a Yugoslav commonwealth with a common currency and joint confederal units of the armed forces (Antonić 1997: 471; Gligorov, interview 2002; Meier 1999: 174). The intransigence of the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian leaderships made this and other possible compromises impracticable. The only federal institution which continued to function, and was prepared to defend Yugoslav unity using force, was the army.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina the situation continued to worsen as ethnic tension between the Bosnian Muslim, Serbian and Croatian communities was rapidly increasing. The Croats voted in a referendum (in May 1991) in favour of independence and Zagreb and Ljubljana prepared themselves to jointly declare their independence on the 25th of June. When independence was proclaimed Prime Minister Marković signed a resolution, which authorised the army to "protect the state border, both at border crossings, as well as in the regions in the border zone" (*Borba*, 27 June 1991: 1-8; Zimmermann 1999: 143). The JNA intervened in Slovenia, hoping to intimidate the Slovenian leadership and to encounter only a limited resistance. Instead, the republican authorities, better prepared than the JNA generals had expected, had immediately taken control of the territory (Janša, interview 2002; Kocijančič, interview 2002) giving thus a real and concrete meaning to the declaration which, in Croatia initially remained only on paper. After ten days of fighting Slovenia became independent. The federal army did not counterattack thanks to the unexpected support the Slovenes obtained from

Milošević.[28] The federal presidency voted, on the 18th of July, in favour of the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army with the opposition of only one of its members, Stipe Mesić (the Croatian representative). Zagreb feared a military intervention against Croatia once the army left Slovenia and, indeed, the JNA withdrawal from Slovenia marked the beginning of the war in Croatia, while in Bosnia-Herzegovina a precarious equilibrium was still maintained.

In September a referendum on independence and sovereignty was organised in Macedonia. The overwhelming majority of the voters voted in favour of independence (which did not exclude the possibility that Macedonia could join a Yugoslav union of sovereign states); the Albanian and Serbian population of the republic chose in general to boycott the plebiscite (Woodward 1995: 179n). In Bosnia-Herzegovina the coalition between the three nationalist parties was increasingly unstable as the Serbian component became more and more isolated and on many issues decisions started to be taken by a Croat-Muslim majority. At the beginning of 1992 also the Croat-Muslim coalition broke up after Tuđman was able to put under his direct control the main Bosnian Croat ethnic party (the Bosnian wing of the HDZ). The violent disintegration of Yugoslavia was at this point well underway.

Institutions and regime transformation as preconditions for the collapse of Yugoslavia

In the second chapter I looked at some of the reasons why I suggest that Yugoslavia's transition was a case of early (compared to the processes which occurred in the rest of Eastern Europe) liberalisation or, better, a process of regime change which led to the transformation of the Yugoslav political environment into a liberalised political environment. Given its peculiar characteristics, I have labelled this process a liberalisation by decay.

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[28] The then American ambassador to Yugoslavia suggests that Milošević made a deal with Kučan allowing Slovenia to secede in order to deal with Croatia, deprived of its most important ally (Zimmermann 1999: 145-146).

The conclusions that can be drawn from the first section of this chapter are quite simple. Indeed, as we saw in the first chapter, scholars who have analysed socialist federations and Yugoslavia have already identified a number of institutional weaknesses of these systems (Roeder 1991; Crawford 1998; Bunce 1999). In Yugoslavia decision-making at the federal level was made very difficult by the veto power granted, in almost all cases, to each of the federal units. Unanimity between all republics and provinces was necessary for the day-to-day functioning of the Yugoslav state and this usually meant endless negotiations between republican and provincial leaderships and, sometimes, it also meant that policies and decisions could not be adopted because any compromise was simply impossible to reach. Furthermore, the fact that the agreement of all federal sub-units was necessary to modify the constitution made the Yugoslav system virtually unreformable. Finally, in the Yugoslav system the federal centre was so weak that often it lacked the power to implement those policies decided at the federal level. This happened in particular when federal subjects refused to comply with decisions taken at the federal level. The federation could not force federal subjects to do so and, as it became clear in the late eighties, the centre in practice did not have the ability to intervene when federal subjects passed laws or constitutional acts contrary to the federal law or constitution

As a result of years and decades of ethnofederal nationalities policy, the Yugoslav system had promoted the constitution of local ethnic elites. The institutional environment defined by the 1974 constitution gave to each of these local elites the power to block the political process and make decision-making virtually impossible. Local elites had strong incentives to increase their power in interrepublican negotiations and in their relations towards the centre. The republican veto became one of the chief instruments at the disposal of local leaderships to pursue this goal. While Yugoslavia continued, although badly, to function as a system, exerting the republican veto (or the credible threat to exert it) meant an increase in the bargaining power during interrepublican negotiations. At a later stage, it simply prevented federal institutions from working. For local elites a powerless federation had the obvious advantage of making federal sub-units the

only real power centres. At the end of the decay process, preventing federal institutions from functioning became a common practice for those elites that simply wanted their republic to separate from Yugoslavia and for the Serbian leadership, whose hegemonic project could be carried out better in the context of a very weak federation.

Especially after Tito's death, Yugoslav federalism gave full power to local political leaderships. It has become commonplace to say that "Tito was holding Yugoslavia together" and, although things are far from being this simple, Tito's authority and role of arbiter at the top of the Yugoslav political hierarchy had meant that local elites could not employ an utterly nationalist discourse and that institutional deadlocks threatening the very existence of Yugoslavia could be avoided. Post-Tito Yugoslavia became instead a favourable environment for the transformation of republican elites into nationalist elites.

The legitimacy crisis of communism and the pressure of alternative movements of an emerging civil society induced local ethnic elites to transform themselves into national elites trying to gain consensus mobilising nationalism in their republic and sometimes among all members of a particular ethnic group throughout Yugoslavia. It is very interesting to note how virulent nationalism in Belgrade and "confederalism", which later became separatism, in Ljubljana emerged in the two republics where civil society (thanks to a relatively liberalised regime) had been traditionally more developed and active challenging the communist monopoly more than elsewhere. This does not suggest that, as a rule, the development of civil society produces nationalism and separatism. However, it points to the fact that, until the Yugoslav self-management and communist system continued to exist,[29] the competition of an emerging civil society compelled republican elites to

[29] This did not happen only during the eighties. The emergence of nationalism in Croatia in the early seventies and the sympathetic attitude of the republican communist elites towards the nationalist movement could be looked through the same prism. In this case however the centre was still strong enough to order a purge of Croatia's leadership. The reemergence of nationalism in Croatia in the late eighties, when the communist regime was already effectively collapsing and pluralism in the political sphere had already been accepted, was a partly different phenomenon, given that the Croatian communists, after two decades of political stagnation, were abruptly forced

respond using nationalism to maintain support in their constituency. This competition in some cases turned into a form of "synergy" between political actors who decided to employ a nationalist discourse and sectors of the civil society and particularly of the *intelligentsia*, which created or rediscovered the ideological foundations of ethnic nationalisms (and which at times were co-opted in the power structure).

After prolonged and in most cases useless debates on democratisation which continued for the last years and indeed decades of Yugoslavia's history, political actors could not use the rhetoric of democracy and pluralism as their only new source of legitimacy. Pluralism, democratic reforms in the political sphere and a liberalisation of the economy had not been a taboo in Yugoslavia since the late sixties and, although socialist Yugoslavia never fully democratised itself, were part of its leadership's day-to-day political discourse. Thus political actors, including the communist elites in power, could not present themselves as a "new alternative" simply advocating democracy and pluralism. The real taboo in Yugoslavia, which continued to be banished from the political discourse as long as the Yugoslav regime maintained a sufficient degree of authority and legitimacy was nationalism, and its corollary in the peripheries, separatism. This made it extremely efficient for local leaderships, and particular for those who suffered from the competition of emerging movements within civil society to use a nationalist discourse. The rise of Milošević, with his Great Serbian nationalism and the "anti-bureaucratic revolution" he promoted in Serbia, its two provinces and Montenegro(which will be analysed in the sixth chapter), was a real critical juncture in the political history of Yugoslavia. Hence, for Milošević it was possible to gain support presenting himself as the "new" leader of Serbia and of the Serbs. Although what happened in Slovenia was different from political developments in Serbia, also in Ljubljana the local political leadership, in an effort to survive the political transition (Fink-Hafner 1997: 138-139) advocated greater pluralism, but similarly had to demand greater autonomy, and later independence, for Slovenia.[30] In sum, using nationalism was almost a necessity, or certainly a

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to accept multiparty competition.

very useful shortcut, for political actors willing to maintain or acquire legitimacy and gain consensus.

It remains to be explained in more detail why and to what extent the transformation of the Yugoslav regime during the eighties can be distinguished from other liberalisation processes and can be labelled a liberalisation by decay. In the second chapter we have categorised the Yugoslav political environment as a liberalised political environment defining liberalisation as a set of policies and measures which are introduced "from above" and are aimed at reducing the authoritarian pressure of the regime without being intended to transform it into a democracy. But what is assumed in this, and in other definitions of liberalisation is that the decrease in the authoritarian pressure is an *elite-driven* process. In Yugoslavia, instead, we had liberalisation, or better, a liberalised political environment, which was produced in part by the very decay of state institutions and in part by decisions taken by "liberalisers" within the elite. Yugoslavia during the eighties was a system where the authoritarian pressure exerted by the centre was steadily diminishing thanks, among other factors, to the progressive disintegration of federal institutions.

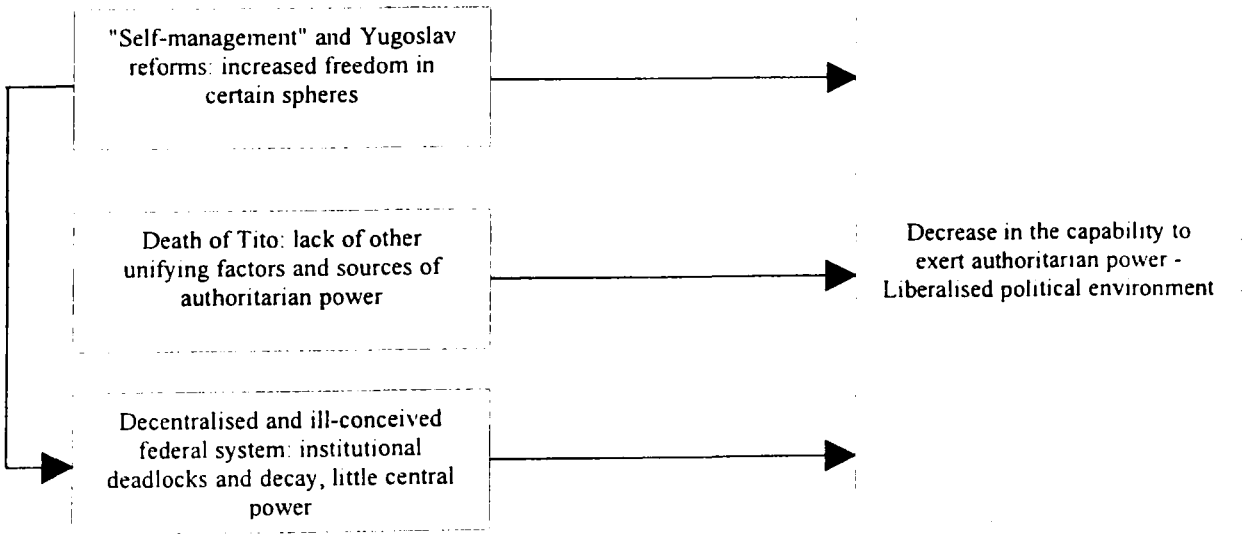
I have dated the beginning of this process from the death of Tito since the previous Yugoslav reforms (and particularly the reforms of the sixties) were necessary but not sufficient conditions, for the Yugoslav political environment to be labelled a liberalising one. Despite the economic and political relaxation, Tito, the party, and the state under his leadership, constantly retained the power of using authoritarian means to "restore order", when necessary. In fact, the mere threat that the regime could use repressive instruments at its discretion was usually enough to limit the freedom of movement for local elites. This was for example the situation in post-1971 Croatia. The disappearance of Tito from the political

[30] A second, less important factor that favoured the emergence of nationalism in Yugoslavia relates to the economic crisis of the eighties which, as we have repeatedly pointed out, increased the competition for economic resources between peripheries and between the centre and the rest of Yugoslavia. This not only increased the redistributive burden for the richest republics (Roeder 1991) but also made less resources available to the underdeveloped south, making it possible for local political actors to use the "exploitation and backwardness" discourse.

arena was, as noted above, the disappearance of the single most important source of authoritarian power within the Yugoslav regime and opened considerable spaces for autonomy for different actors within the Yugoslav political system.

From the early eighties the Yugoslav regime started to decay. It lacked the possibility to exert power effectively, both because its authority had been eroded by the past reforms, and because after Tito it lacked any other institutional, or non-institutional unifying factor which could directly exert authoritarian power or make its exertion legitimate. If these were the two most important factors that led to a decrease in the authoritarian pressure exerted by the regime, the reason why we can label this process a liberalisation by decay lies in the fact that not only past reforms had increased economic and political liberties but had also created an unviable quasi-confederal system. From the early eighties, this system was less and less capable of deciding and implementing policies and of using coercive means in order to limit the autonomy of actors within and outside the regime. Local elites had the power to prevent the state at the centre from working, thus further decreasing its capability to exert power.

Figure 4.1 Regime transformation in Yugoslavia



The historical account I have given of political developments in the Yugoslav political scene illustrates why the transformation of the Yugoslav regime was a

mixture of liberalising efforts[31] and of the decay of the regime. In figure 4.1 I have tried to summarise what has just been said highlighting the direct effect of Tito's death and the direct (through the increased freedom) and indirect (through the establishment of an unviable federal system) effects of the Yugoslav reforms which, together, produced a decaying and liberalising political environment. Thus, the decrease in authoritarian pressure was only partly the result of a conscious effort of the Yugoslav elites. It was also caused by the incapability of the regime to exert power which, in turn, was only an indirect by-product of the leadership's choices.

The problem of the deep economic crisis of the eighties remained unresolved because, in the absence of an agreement of all republics and provinces no centre of power was able to impose any coherent and structural reform of the economy.[32] Throughout the decade attempts to make policy-making in the economic sphere more effective encountered great resistance on the part of the federal subjects. In 1986 all republics and provinces, except Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, refused to contribute to the federal budget. In November it was agreed that the federal budget should rely only on federal revenues making federal sub-units fiscally sovereign. In 1987, Slovenia refused to implement wage restrictions decided at the federal level (Woodward 1995: 74). Raif Dizdarević, former head of the Yugoslav collective presidency, reminds us that on the whole of the 322 decisions adopted by the presidency between June 1986 and June 1988 only a handful were actually implemented and this happened only in those cases when

[31] The Yugoslav one was certainly a more "liberal" variant of socialist regime and part of the regime transformation was due to a conscious reform effort, which had started in the previous decades and continued with the reform attempts discussed in the chapter, which in 1990 culminated with what could have been the beginning of a democratisation phase. The collapse of the LCY and the attempts to organise all-Yugoslav multiparty elections were not enough, however, to start a democratising transformation. At this point the leaderships of the republics, or at least some of them, were more interested in the final collapse of the federation or, as it was the case with the Serbian elite, possibly in the refoundation of Yugoslavia on a centralist and possibly authoritarian basis. Having the power to do so, they prevented the democratisation at the federal level and rather concentrated on legitimising themselves in elections at the republic level.

[32] Economic reforms began to be only partly successful at the end of the decade, during the first period of Marković's government.

they did not involve any conflicting interests between federal units (Dizdarevic 2001: 229). The federal centre, facing an economic crisis dramatically affecting the economic growth and welfare of the country, was only left with short-term expedients such as *ad hoc* administrative measures.

Also the capability of the centre to employ coercive means was progressively eroded during the eighties. Although the regime, even during the second half of the eighties, occasionally used force and repression against various manifestations of dissent, the use of coercion against (increasingly assertive) national elites became less and less viable. Purges like the ones that were ordered against the Croatian leadership in the early seventies became simply impossible during the eighties, not only because the political atmosphere had changed, but also because no institution or personality had the power and the legitimacy to adopt authoritarian measures of that kind. This became increasingly clear in the late eighties, when Slovenia and later Croatia took steps which were undermining the very basis on which Yugoslavia was founded, prepared themselves to secede, passed laws and constitutional amendments which were contrary to the federal constitution, established local militias, and so on. Any non-democratic regime (and indeed also a few democratic regimes) which had the power to react, would have responded using force. The Yugoslav regime did not act because, for the reasons I have previously outlined it, lacked the authority to react.

Leaving aside the peripheries' efforts to gain autonomy and independence, the Serbian leadership's attempt to create a Serb-centred Yugoslavia became possible only because a weak federal regime could not oppose it. Yugoslavia's internal borders, which had been drawn after World War II, already reflected the concern of the Titoist regime about the possible (re)emergence of Great Serbian nationalism. In the following decades the Yugoslav regime continued to leave very little space for Serbian national claims to be laid. The situation changed during the eighties and when Milošević's nationalist program became the first, really significant outcome of the Yugoslav decay. Milošević's nationalist agenda constituted an attempt to establish a new and antagonistic power centre in Belgrade which was meant to make possible a Serbian hegemony in Yugoslavia.

The federal centre did not react against a new, nationalist, and antagonistic centre because it was simply unable to exert its authority. Indeed, the antagonistic centre created by Milošević in Belgrade, as well as his alliance with the JNA, effectively resulted in a situation of "multiple sovereignty" whereby the presence of more than one bloc effectively exercised control over a significant part of the Yugoslav state apparatus (Tilly 1978: 190).

The federal centre thus lacked the instruments and the capability to employ coercive measures to prevent the collapse of the country. It reacted in Kosovo, simply because of the pressure exerted by the Serbian leadership. It eventually ordered a military intervention in Slovenia which, without the genuine support of the Serbian elite, was soon brought to an end. The independence of Slovenia came to be accepted as a *fait accompli* after Milošević (and not the federal centre) had decided not to waste military and other resources to prevent Slovenia from gaining independence. The wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were no longer conflicts between a federal centre and Yugoslav peripheries but rather conflicts in which Milošević and his allies in Belgrade had substituted the collapsed federal centre with a new hegemonic centre.[33] The centre effectively reacted using coercive means only when it was forced to do so by the Serbian leadership or when the Serbian leadership had gained the control of key central institutions.

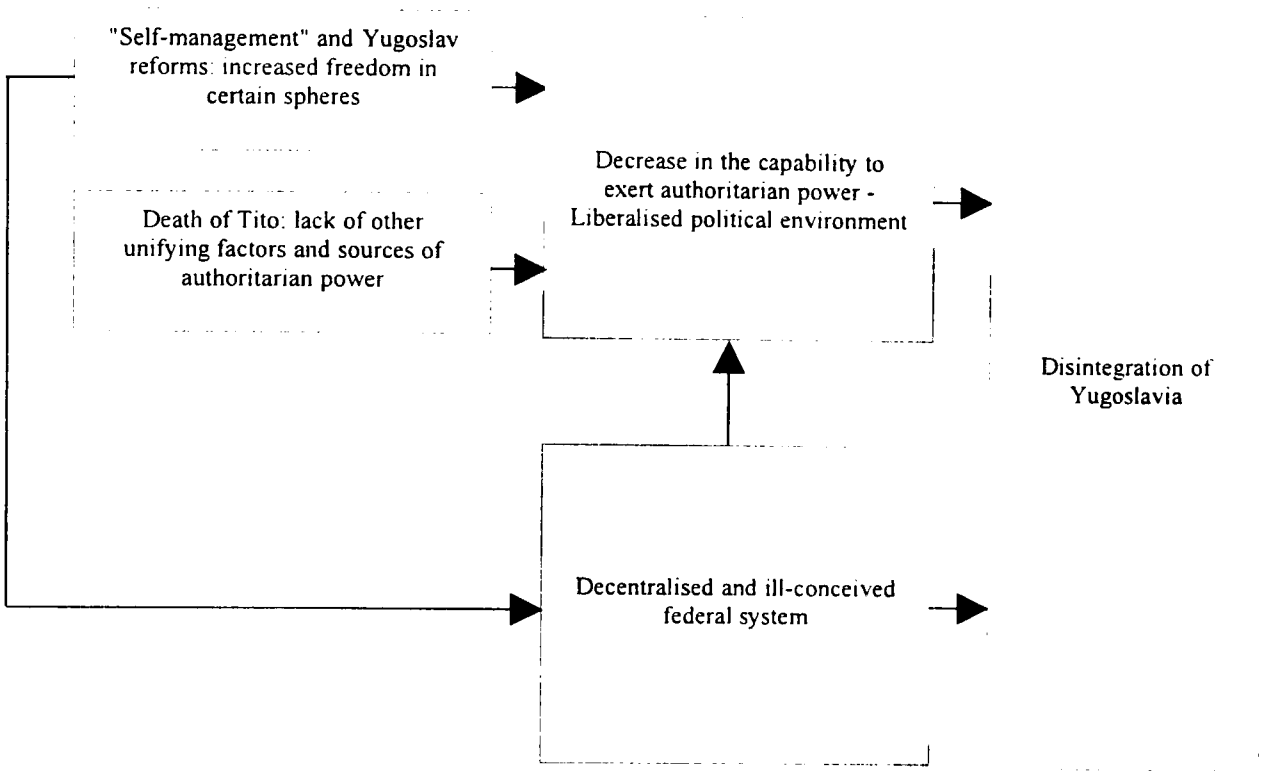
In conclusion, what are the implications of calling Yugoslavia a liberalised political environment? Huntington underlines how "the emergence of liberalizers and democratizers within an authoritarian system creates a first-order force for political change" (1991: 129) and suggests that "liberalized authoritarianism is not a stable equilibrium, the halfway house does not stand" (1991: 137). Przeworski

[33] Federal civil institution, at the time of the Croatian and, even more so, Bosnian war, had already effectively disintegrated. We will see in the following chapters how their absolute powerlessness marked the final stage of their lengthy process of decay and was reflected, for example, in the federal centre's complete incapability to put an end to the hostilities at the beginning of the war in Croatia. The process ended when Slovenia, Croatia and the other republics not under Milošević's control ceased to be represented in the Yugoslav federal centre. From October 1991 only the representatives of Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Vojvodina continued to attend the presidency's meetings (Jović 1999: 392 and ff.; Meier 1999: 229).

similarly states that liberalisation is "inherently unstable" (1991: 58) since "once repression lessens, for whatever reason, the first reaction is an outburst of autonomous organisations in the civil society" (Przeworski, 1991: 58). When civil society "resurrects" and turns into one of the protagonists of liberalisation processes (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 49 and ff.) the old non-democratic regime ceases to be sustainable. Eventually the liberalisation phase ends either with a transition to democracy or with repression (Huntington 1991: 131 and ff.; Przeworski 1991: 66). To a certain extent, a liberalised political environment in Yugoslavia produced effects similar to those described in classic studies on transition and liberalisation. In particular, the progressive decompression resulted in an increased instability of the Yugoslav system which ended with the breakdown of the federation.

We have already discussed the effects on the strategies of local political actors, particularly in Slovenia and Serbia, of a relatively independent civil society which was the by-product of a liberalised political environment. Now it is important to stress that Yugoslavia, as a federation, saw a reduction in the authoritarian pressure exerted at the federal level by all-Yugoslav institutions, while political elites in the different federal sub-units continued to have different orientations towards reforms and liberalisation. A liberalising federal centre did not always mean that civil society could organise and develop in all republics. Even before that, it meant that local leaderships at the republican level had more freedom to choose whether to allow civil society to organise in their own federal sub-unit. It also meant, more in general, that local political elites could select the best strategy, including the mobilisation of ethnicity, to pursue their goals. The Serbian political elite employed nationalism to consolidate its power often using the crowd and mass mobilisation "from above" as a way to gain consensus and to put pressure on other republics and provinces. A weak federal centre allowed the Slovenes (partly in reaction to Serbia's increasing nationalism) to pursue a strategy which comprised also a progressive detachment of the republic from the federation.

Figure 4.2 Institutions, regime transformation and the collapse of Yugoslavia



The Yugoslav liberalised political environment came to be a major source of instability because it allowed political elites at the republican level to act pursuing antagonistic goals in the vacuum created by decaying federal institutions. To summarise this, figure 4.2 presents a new and more complete version of figure 4.1.

Both the institutional framework *per se* and the Yugoslav decaying/liberalised political environment produced favourable conditions for the emergence and development of increasingly more assertive peripheral elites. At the same time, they allowed a Serbian nationalist elite to emerge and to carry out a hegemonic project at the centre. The federal framework was the most obvious factor which shaped the incentives and constraints that made national elites become nationalist elites. We have described how the Yugoslav federal machinery worked, how federal sub-units and their leaderships enjoyed great autonomous power and how competition from an emerging civil society created the incentives for the emergence of nationalist political leaderships. The liberalisation and the decay of the regime (which was partly a by-product of the ill-conceived federal system) further increased the autonomy of national elites and progressively "softened" the

already loose institutional constraints defined by the 1974 constitution. This produced a situation in which peripheral republics could prepare themselves to secede while an antagonistic elite at the centre could undermine federal power in Belgrade at the same time trying to establish a centralist and Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

In sum, Yugoslavia's liberalisation and later the incomplete democratisation at the republican level created the necessary incentives for local elites to become the political entrepreneurs of ethnicity. O'Leary (without distinguishing between democratisation and liberalisation) claims that democratisation "increases the likelihood that political agents will pursue secessionist self-determination for their ethno-national or ethno-religious community, and thereby destabilize the borders of existing multinational and multi-ethnic states" (2001: 61). This is indeed what appears to have led to the collapse of Yugoslavia. However, what I have discussed in this chapter does not explain why the collapse was violent. This question will be addressed in the following chapters of the thesis.

5. The games of secession

In this chapter I will look at patterns of strategic interaction between the federal centre, the Serbian leadership and those republican leaderships that could act independently in the political games of a decentralised Yugoslavia. My central assumption, which is made explicit in this chapter, is that before and during the collapse of Yugoslavia political leaderships acted rationally in pursuit of their goals. In the first section I will outline the main reasons why I have chosen to use a rational choice approach to analyse the interaction between sectors of the Yugoslav political leadership. The following two parts of this chapter will be devoted to patterns of strategic interaction in Tito's Yugoslavia and later, during the eighties, in the process that culminated in the war in Slovenia. In the fourth section I will briefly conclude with a discussion of the results of the analysis conducted in this chapter which will also serve as a link to the final parts of this thesis.

Why rational choice?

The Yugoslav disintegration and its violent outcome have often been traced back to a history of ethnic hatred[1] which led to an irrational outburst of violence. If not in scholarly analyses at least in mass-media accounts of the Yugoslav wars, political figures who played a significant role in the recent history of Yugoslavia are sometimes depicted as insane politicians who have ignited a bloody civil war

[1] Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* (1993) is one of the most influential among these analyses.

(Slobodan Milošević is usually the first one to be quoted). At first glance rationality appears to be an almost useless analytical tool if we want to understand, interpret and perhaps explain an ethnic war that produced hundreds of thousands of casualties and millions of refugees and displaced persons. Why, then, have I chosen a rational choice framework to analyse the Yugoslav collapse? And who were the main players in the political games of the Yugoslav disintegration process?

To answer the first of these questions it is necessary to clarify the assumption which is made when using a rational choice approach, that is, the assumption of rationality of the agents' decision-making procedures. What do we mean by rational behaviour in this context? Much less is meant than is normally included in current, everyday definitions of "rational". To put it simply, for our purposes political actors behave rationally if they maximise their rewards given the information they have and the constraints they face. Assuming that political actors in Yugoslavia were behaving rationally does not involve an ethical judgement of their action. Rational actors choose the best strategy to pursue their goals but goals can differ greatly from actor to actor. This means that rational behaviour can be used to attain altruistic, selfish, or even monstrous goals depending on the agent's preferences. Slobodan Milošević's behaviour (as well as that of other nationalist leaders in the former Yugoslavia) might not fit in the common definition of rationality but can be studied analysing it as his optimal strategy *given* the nationalist leader's preferences.[2] As Jeremy Bentham aptly remarked, even madmen calculate (1970: 28).

Hence, for us to be able to use a rational choice approach we do not have to assume that agents behave "reasonably" but simply that they behave rationally in the sense, familiar to economists, I have just specified. When using rational choice models to explain the behaviour of political actors we need to make other, specific assumptions about the agents' preferences. In this, as well as in following parts of this analysis, my first assumption is that political actors, in general, acted to remain in power. In other words, my assumption is that a political actor P prefers

[2] Morrow in his game theory textbook uses the example of Hitler's behaviour (1994: 21).

S_1 over S_2 where S_1 denotes a situation where P is in power and S_2 is a situation where, *ceteris paribus*, P is not in power. This assumption is (only slightly) more problematic than the rationality assumption *per se* as it implies that one of the reasons why individuals choose to become members of a political leadership is to obtain power. However, given the *ceteris paribus* clause, it is far from being a narrow assumption and indeed, it follows almost necessarily from the fact that an individual is part of the political elite of his/her own free will. The only serious problem which this, or similar assumptions entail relates to the possibility that individual preferences may change over time. The fact that, for simplicity's sake, I assume that preferences are fixed, fails to take into account the possibility that a member of the Yugoslav political elite may modify his/her preferences. This however does not appear to be a serious limitation.

The above assumption about the political elites' preferences does not say much about the ethical reasons which may be behind an individual's choice to become involved in politics as it does not exclude the possibility that a political leader may step down from power, for example, to avoid a war or for other "altruistic" reasons.[3] However, when constructing the payoffs in the political games of secession in Yugoslavia, I construe the behaviour of members of the Yugoslav political elites as self-interested behaviour not significantly constrained by moral values or "metapreferences" (Sen 1987). This is a much stronger assumption than the previous ones which, moreover, is not necessarily in agreement with existing evidence showing that individuals do not always act in pursuit of purely selfish goals. However, in the case I am studying, the heavy human costs of the Yugoslav disintegration would make it counter-intuitive to assume that the breakup of Yugoslavia was the result of the action of altruistic political elites.[4] For this reason

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[3] Being in power is preferred to not being in power all other things being equal. An "ethical" member of the political leadership may prefer not being in power to being in power causing a war. When I say that an individual is "altruistic", or acts "ethically" I do not mean that he or she is not maximising his/her utility. I simply intend that his/her individual preferences are constructed in a way that moral values in them play a significant role.

[4] I am aware that the justification I provided for this assumption is in fact a *post-hoc* rationalisation based on the outcome of the process of Yugoslav collapse. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to enter the debate on economics, ethics, and altruistic behaviour.

I am not incorporating into my analysis possible "altruistic" motives behind the political elites' action, without fear of losing too much in terms of accuracy.[5]

Despite the advantages of analysing human behaviour through simplified models of strategic interaction, problems may arise when we look at very complex phenomena such as the collapse of Yugoslavia. Describing everything that happened in Yugoslavia before and during the disintegration in terms of preferences, payoffs and models may seem overly simplistic. Such an approach could be criticised for neglecting several other variables that played a very important role in the breakdown of the Yugoslav state and, ultimately, for reducing history in the Balkans to the simple patterns of strategic interaction of rational political actors. Certainly the approach I adopt entails a simplification or, perhaps, an extreme simplification of reality; however, to simplify reality can be useful even when looking at such a complex and intricate puzzles like the recent history of the Yugoslav breakdown.

In fact, in this analysis I do not claim to explain "everything" that happened in the Balkan country between the eighties and the early nineties in all its complexity. I use rational choice simply to look at how Yugoslav political elites interacted since this is a rigorous and precise way to do it. And I am looking at how Yugoslav political elites interacted because the interaction of political leaderships is of extreme importance if we want to understand how and why Yugoslavia collapsed. As it is well known, in the social sciences it is often necessary to give a simplified

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[5] Whenever we analyse the interaction between two or more agents, we make assumptions about their preferences, which, together with risk aversion, are reflected in the payoffs we use to specify strategic interaction games. Other important assumptions we make are related to the players' information set, i.e. to the information they possess, which is relevant to the choice of their strategy. Needless to say, all these assumptions need to be realistic for rational choice models to be of any use to understand how agents interacted. I will discuss more in detail my assumptions on the Yugoslav political elites' preferences and payoffs later in this chapter. In this introductory part I would like to point out simply that I will try, as much as possible, to base them on research conducted in the field, on interviews I carried out with some of the political actors involved in the interaction processes I am analysing and on those secondary sources I have already referred to in the previous chapters.

account of social reality in order to identify the relevant variables and the role they play in what is being studied. Inevitably the extreme complexity of the Yugoslav conflict will only be dimly reflected in my analysis, which I hope will at least be useful in shedding some light on the role played by political elites in the process of violent disintegration.[6]

This analysis is thus based on simplifying assumptions on the agents' preferences and behaviour. Although I am employing a rational choice approach, I do not make extensive and full use of game theoretical models. I merely borrow from game theory the approach and methodology used to look at the interaction between rational "players" to construct illustrative models of patterns of strategic interaction. Under the assumption that political actors are acting rationally, game theory provides the best way to study their interaction in a formalistic, "ahistorical" way (Przeworski 1991: 97). More specifically, this approach has the benefits of forcing us to specify assumptions, to render our argument explicit and to ascertain whether the conclusions we draw follow logically from our assumptions (Morrow 1994: 6-7).

Having discussed the reasons behind my decision to employ a rational choice approach to look at the Yugoslav disintegration, let us briefly discuss the question of who are the actors (or the "players") we should focus our attention on. In fact, I have already implicitly given an answer to this question in the previous chapters when I have discussed some institutional and other factors that were crucial in determining the set of possible strategies (and the outcomes of these strategies) available to the Yugoslav political leaderships. Here, for the sake of rigour, we should spend a few more words to identify the most important political actors, or those sectors of the Yugoslav political elite which will be the primary focus of our attention.

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[6] In the previous chapters I discussed the setting where Yugoslav political elites were acting and presented an account of the recent political history of Yugoslavia, in a way that is functional to the analysis in this chapter. I also hope that the information I provided in the previous parts will add to the depth and complexity of my study and will make it less abstract.

We saw that ethnofederal institutions divided political elites along the lines of ethnic affiliation effectively creating ethnic political elites in the republics and provinces which constituted Yugoslavia. Ultimately, the very way in which Yugoslav institutions were designed defines the sectors of the Yugoslav political elites we should take into consideration when analysing the disintegration process. This, in other words, means that, for the purpose of this analysis, the relevant actors were first and foremost the leaderships of republics and provinces. We have mentioned, and we will discuss more in detail in the next chapter, how the Serbian leadership successfully took control of Vojvodina, Montenegro and Kosovo. From the late eighties up to the collapse of Yugoslavia only the leaderships of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia remained truly autonomous players in the Yugoslav political arena.

We have seen how, throughout the eighties, the federal centre was incapable of imposing any agreement between republics and provinces and how its powers were greatly reduced by the veto power granted by the 1974 constitution to each of the federal subjects. Although Yugoslavia had a weak federal centre, at least in the initial phase of the disintegration process the federation was not left completely powerless and excluded from the political game. The federal centre still played a (limited) role in issues relating to the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and when its authorisation was required for possible military interventions to "restore order" in the peripheries. The centre's legitimacy and capability to exert power through coercion in its basic task of defending the very existence of Yugoslavia were questioned in the eighties and nineties but not completely eroded. In other words, between the end of the eighties and 1991, the federal centre could still use the army in an attempt to put down the peripheries' aspirations to autonomy or, at least, could use a (partially) credible threat to act in such a way.

The centre's ability to use or threaten to use a military response was linked to the fact that the federal army was one of the last power centres at the federal level to collapse or to stop functioning. In fact the transformation of the federal army did

not involve decay or disintegration[7] but passed through an alliance between the military and hard-liners at different levels in the Yugoslav power structure through increasingly close ties with the Serbian leadership in particular and ended with the federal army's transformation into a Serbo-Montenegrin army. The military apparatus thus did not cease to function but, when the process of violent disintegration had started, eventually lost its multiethnic and "Yugoslav" character and came to be under the control of the Serbian political leadership. And the very fact that Serbia's leaders carried out their hegemonic project through actions conducted at the level of federal state institutions, suggests that the federal centre was not an absolutely "empty box" before Yugoslavia had completely disintegrated.

Thus, if we focus on political elites to make sense of violent conflict we should analyse the strategies of the leaderships of republics (and provinces) as well as the *federal* centre's role in the attempts to keep Yugoslavia together through coercion.[8] In this respect institutions not only defined the way in which we can "divide" the Yugoslav political leadership to analyse how its different sectors interacted but also provided constraints and incentives which shaped the actions of political actors. In addition, we have discussed in chapter four how some characteristics of the Yugoslav regime and its transformation of "liberalisation by decay" were also of great importance in influencing the action of political elites. Yugoslavia's liberalised political environment increased the autonomy of political elites in the Yugoslav peripheries, as well as in Serbia where the local political leadership became the main centripetal factor of the system. In sum, to link this chapter to the

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[7] An interesting question is why did the army followed this different path. Such an issue would deserve a more extensive discussion and here I will just remind that in the army federal subjects were not directly involved in decision-making. Consequently, they had no power to paralyse the military apparatus, particularly when its forces were already deployed. Furthermore, in the army the principle of "ethnic key" was not applied in full and in the officer corps Serbs and Montenegrins remained overrepresented. This made easier for the Serbian leadership first to form an alliance with hard-liners in military circles and later to put the army under its control.

[8] The war in Slovenia is the most significant, or the only significant case of centre-periphery full-scale conflict, where the federal centre played a fundamental role (the JNA intervention in the northern republic was ordered, in a somewhat confused way, by federal prime minister Marković).

analysis conducted in the previous parts of this thesis, two factors have emerged as particularly relevant in shaping the political elites' action and interaction: the Yugoslav institutional framework (and in particular the Yugoslav constitution of 1974) and the liberalised political environment of post-Tito Yugoslavia. These factors are taken into account in this chapter when constructing models of strategic interaction between sectors of the Yugoslav political elites.

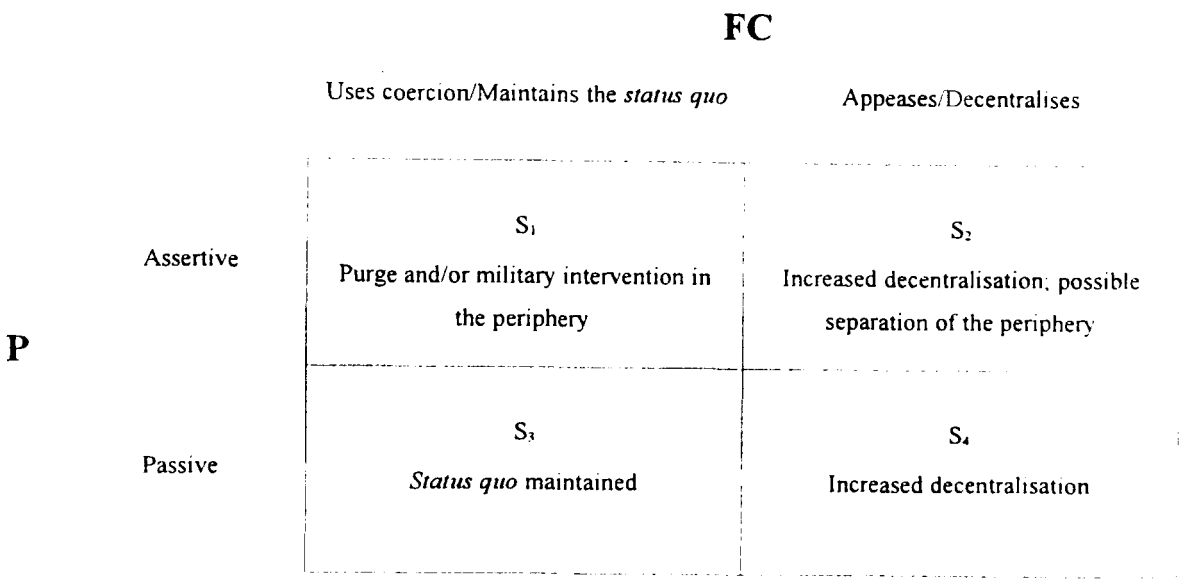
Back to Tito, brotherhood and unity

Before analysing how Yugoslavia collapsed, we should look at how Yugoslav republics and provinces remained together for a few decades in Tito's socialist Yugoslavia. What occurred in post-war Yugoslavia, and throughout the fifties, is not going to be discussed here in detail. For the first two decades of its existence Yugoslavia remained a rather centralised political system despite the fact that a Yugoslav way to socialism started to be defined shortly after the Tito-Stalin split. Although it had a formally federal structure, Yugoslavia at that time was firmly kept together by an integrated power structure with a strong centre. It is more important for our purposes to understand what happened later, in particular during the sixties and seventies, when the Yugoslav political system became increasingly decentralised and Yugoslavia still managed to survive for several years.

The political dynamics of this period could be summarised in a rather simple way. No matter how strongly decentralised Yugoslavia was, no matter how significant the powers devolved to the federal sub-units were, local political elites could not go beyond a certain point in asking for further decentralisation and (even more so) in advocating full autonomy or secession for their republic or province. At the top of the federal hierarchy, power centres were still functioning and could use coercion to prevent peripheries from becoming too assertive. For illustrative

purposes, let us look at this situation in the form of a two-person game[9] presented in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Tito's Yugoslavia holding together I



In this model P is the political elite of a generic Yugoslav periphery, facing the choice between accepting the *status quo* or advocating greater autonomy. FC, the political elite at the centre, can decide between maintaining the *status quo*, also at the cost of repression, or of further devolving power to the peripheries. The federal centre could be seen as having a third option, that of (re)centralising.[10] For now, we will not include this strategy in this very simple model since by the late sixties and throughout the seventies it was quite difficult for the Yugoslav political elites at the federal level to impose a recentralisation of Yugoslavia. Federal elites could use repressive measures against dissidents or "nationalists" and could certainly move towards a further decentralisation of Yugoslavia but given the "consociational" mechanisms that were governing decision-making at the federal centre (particularly when it came to amending the constitution), it was very difficult (albeit possible in theory) for the federal centre to compel all Yugoslav republics and provinces to agree to give more powers back to the centre.

[9] In game theory the term "person" is used in a generic sense and may be referred to any actor in a political game.

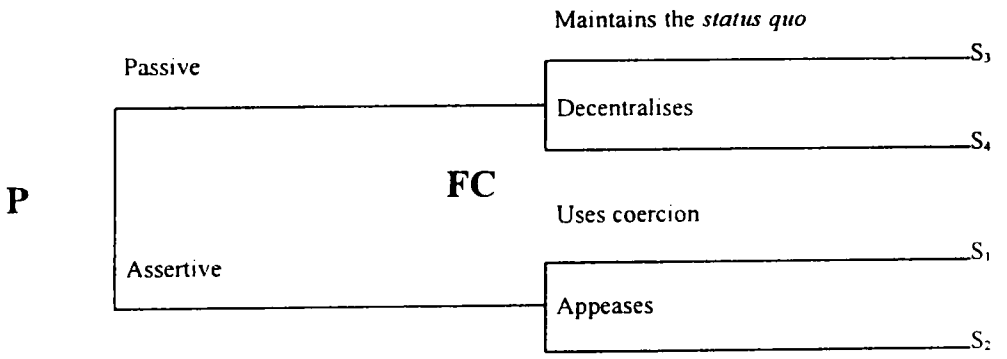
[10] Alternatively, even if we defined the centre's strategies in terms of a simple dichotomy, what I have called the "uses coercion/maintains the *status quo*" strategy could be substituted with a recentralising decision.

Indeed, our previous discussion of the functioning of Yugoslav institutions and of the debates on the transformation of Yugoslavia into a more integrated federation show that, in practice, a recentralisation of Yugoslavia was a very unlikely possibility.

Looking at the interaction patterns between central and peripheral political elites is simplifies things since the federal centre was not a single monolithic actor. However, we have seen that Tito and the power structure he controlled had a significant role as a very important source of authoritarian power in the Yugoslav system and the model I am presenting is concerned with how Yugoslavia was "kept together" and this (at least until Tito was alive) was not so much the outcome of a game between different peripheries but rather the outcome of a game between peripheries that were often attempting to increase their autonomy and the federal centre.

Figure 5.1 simply presents a matrix of possible strategies for the federal centre and a generic periphery. The same game should probably be represented more appropriately in extended form, as in figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 Tito's Yugoslavia holding together I (extensive form)



The game represented in expended form is more suitable to describe political games in post-Tito Yugoslavia as my assumption is that the periphery made the first move and the federation reacted to it. This assumption is again based on the limited role of Yugoslavia's federal centre as a promoter of political change. Given that peripheries were the main power centres in the Yugoslav balance of power system the federation could at best respond to their strategies.

The equilibrium in a simple game like this clearly depends on our assumptions on the players' preferences. We can safely hypothesise that, in general, peripheral leaderships in Yugoslavia were ready to ask for greater peripheral autonomy which meant greater power for them as long as this did not produce a coercive reaction from the centre i.e. a purge, a military intervention or both.[11] We can also assume that central elites did not want to see the centre weakened and that, in all circumstances, they preferred using coercion against a periphery than seeing the powers at the centre being reduced.[12] The latter is a strong assumption linked to the propensity of the centre to use coercion and sustain its costs. This implies that central elites in Yugoslavia had an "authoritarian" orientation and/or did not have to sustain too big a cost when ordering a purge in the periphery and possibly a military intervention.

A very simple model like this one explains stability. Its final equilibrium is in S_3, i.e. where the *status quo* is maintained. In fact Yugoslav peripheries, in general, did not choose to be "assertive" in order to avoid the costs associated with a repressive central response.[13] But this is true only up to a point. Peripheral elites, or some of them, before the final crisis of Yugoslavia began, had already been continuously engaged in debates on further decentralisation and in some cases displayed support for ethnic nationalisms. The problem with the model outlined in figure 5.1 is that it is probably overly simplistic and fails to account for demands for greater autonomy coming from republics and provinces. In the political climate which followed the confederalisation of Yugoslavia political elites in the peripheries had a wide spectrum of choices at their disposal that cannot be reduced

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[11] In particular, we can assume that the periphery's preferences are $S_1<S_3<S_4<S_2$.

[12] In particular, we can assume that the federal centre's preferences are $S_2<S_4<S_1<S_3$.

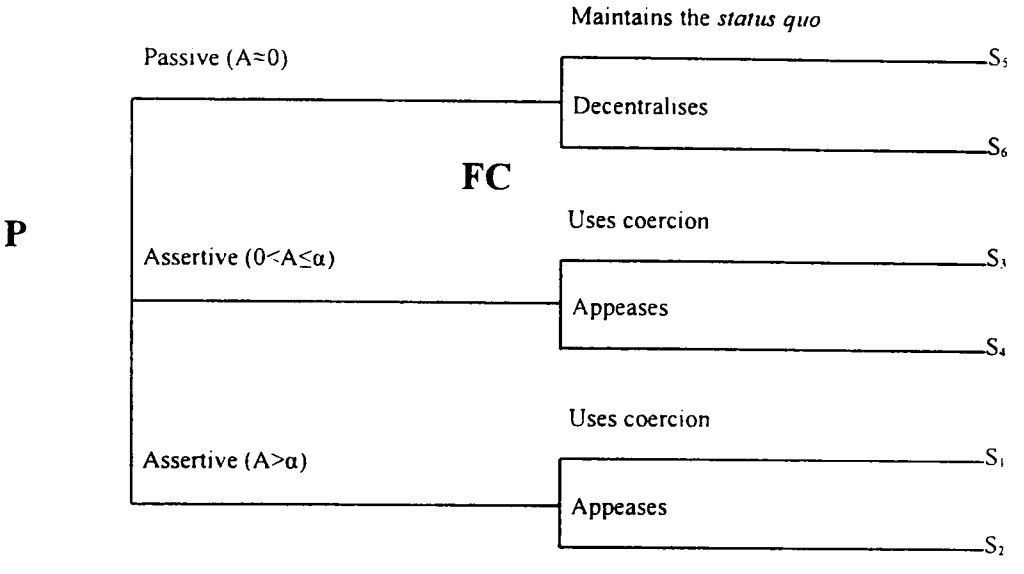
[13] Let us now assume that for the centre preferences are: $S_2<S_1<S_4<S_3$. In this case for the centre to use coercion is only preferable to appeasing when the periphery is assertive. In other words in this case central elites have more "liberal" preferences and choose to use repression only when peripheries act to further reduce central powers. A decentralisation controlled by the centre is preferred, by central players, to resorting to coercion. Also in this case the equilibrium is reached in S_3. Even assuming that central elites are less willing, or capable, to employ coercion against the peripheries, this simple model still proves to have some explanatory power in accounting for the stability of Yugoslavia.

to the simple alternative of being "passive" or "assertive". One option, for peripheral leaderships, was to take part in the bargaining game with the centre within the limits fixed by the Yugoslav institutional framework and the degree of freedom allowed by the Yugoslav regime. Alternatively, they could be "assertive" demanding autonomy for the periphery with actions incompatible with the existing institutional arrangements and/or with the "political climate" of the time running the risk of being purged. To construct a second and more complex model of strategic interaction between centre and peripheries, we can call A the degree to which the leadership of P can be "assertive" in asking for greater powers devolved to the periphery. If $A \approx 0$ the peripheral leadership is "passive" and with $A > 0$ the peripheral is "assertive". Let us now define three possible strategies for the player P. The first one is to remain "passive" ($A \approx 0$); the second one is to be "assertive", without going beyond a certain threshold α ($0 < A \leq \alpha$); the third one is to be "assertive" beyond the limit set by α ($A > \alpha$). The game's matrix is presented in figure 5.3, and its extensive form in figure 5.4.

Figure 5.3 Tito's Yugoslavia holding together II

		FC	
		Uses coercion/Maintains the *status quo*	Appeases/Decentralises
P	Assertive ($A > \alpha$)	S_1 Purge and/or military intervention in the periphery	S_2 Increased decentralisation, possible separation of the periphery
	Assertive ($0 < A \leq \alpha$)	S_3 Purge and/or military intervention in the periphery	S_4 Increased decentralisation
	Passive ($A \approx 0$)	S_5 *Status quo* maintained	S_6 Increased decentralisation

Figure 5.4 Tito's Yugoslavia holding together II (extensive form)



We can now assume that for the peripheral leadership the preferred outcome is a significant increase in the periphery's autonomy with a possible secession of the periphery and the worst outcome is a central military intervention and/or a purge in the local power structure.[14] As in the previous simpler model, I also assume that the peripheral elites' payoff is a positive function of the periphery's autonomy. For the centre maintaining the *status quo* without resorting to repression is the best outcome and the worst one is a possible separation of the periphery.[15] In addition, we can hypothesise that the central political elite prefers to accommodate, up to a certain point, the peripheral requests for autonomy, rather than to use force. For the federal centre, using force in case the periphery is not "too assertive" is more costly than doing so in those cases when the periphery goes beyond a certain threshold (A is greater than α).

These assumptions, I am referring in particular to the ones on the preferences of the federal centre's leadership, depict the options available to political actors in Yugoslavia sufficiently realistically. We saw that even with Tito at the top of the state and party hierarchy using repression against the peripheries entailed significant costs. The Titoist regime always had to strike a balance between the need to maintain the unity and integration of a common Yugoslav system and the

[14] For example, the periphery's preferences can be $S_1=S_3<S_5<S_4=S_6<S_2$.

[15] The federal centre's preferences can be assumed to be $S_2<S_5<S_1<S_4=S_6<S_3$.

need to appease local ethnic elites it had created over the years. Precisely because the use of repression (i.e. purges) we are discussing here did not affect dissidents outside the ruling elite but rather sectors of the communist leadership, it could be used only when no other alternative was available. Consensus between different sectors of the political elite was quite important to secure the functioning of the Yugoslav system. Moreover, the Yugoslav regime was not a highly centralised totalitarian regime and functioned thanks also to its ability to co-opt a numerically large political leadership acting at all levels of the institutional hierarchy.[16] Its survival depended on the support coming from all sectors of the Yugoslav political elite whose members could not be removed from office unless this was strictly necessary.

If the costs of using repression are sufficiently high for the centre, the equilibrium of this game is reached in S_4, that is in a situation in which the centre appeases the peripheral leadership's request for greater autonomy. Thus, this type of game might help us understand what was happening between a "liberally"[17] oriented centre and the peripheries and how at least in some cases, Yugoslav peripheral leaderships were able to win significant concessions on peripheral autonomy. This framework can be used to understand how the political games of interaction between centre and periphery developed in Yugoslavia in a trend that produced increasing decentralisation and a progressively powerless centre. However, missing from the picture are episodes such as the 1971 "Croatian Spring", or ethnic unrest in Kosovo in the early eighties and the subsequent progressive

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[16] The Yugoslav political leadership was large not only thanks to the multi-level structure of the Yugoslav state (and party), but also thanks to the ethnic quotas and rotation mechanisms in force.

[17] The same game would not work in the same way if we change some of the assumptions on the central leadership's preferences. Let us assume now that the preferences of the centre are constructed in this way: $S_2<S_4=S_6<S_3<S_1<S_5$. The centre now prefers using force to seeing its powers reduced. Both when players act simultaneously and when the game is sequential the game ends in S_5. Assuming that the centre had a more "liberal" orientation, however, seems to be more realistic. As repeatedly pointed out in the previous chapters, the many reforms implemented starting from the sixties relaxed the authoritarian pressure exerted by the Yugoslav regime and opened spaces of freedom for local ethnic elites. This even before the beginning of what I have called a "liberalisation by decay" phase during the eighties.

emancipation of Slovenia which produced tensions and then a conflict, with the centre. I will leave the discussion of the relations between Slovenia and the centre to the next section, where it will be analysed in detail in an attempt to understand how the confrontation between Belgrade and Ljubljana ended with a war. Here I will just discuss why in Tito's Yugoslavia the final equilibrium between federal centre and peripheries did not always entail the maintenance of the *status quo* or further decentralisation but in some cases involved a repressive response from the centre.

To explain these kinds of phenomena it is worth noting that for the game in figure 5.4 to end with further decentralisation, the peripheral elite has to know α, the threshold it could not cross without having to face a repressive response from the centre. If the peripheral political elite overestimates α, it is possible that the game ends with a repressive response from the centre. Until the second half of the eighties the employment of an utterly nationalist rhetoric and questioning the Yugoslav principle of "brotherhood and unity" was unacceptable. Openly referring, for instance, to the possibility that a federal sub-unit could secede from Yugoslavia was impossible for republican and (even less so) provincial leaders. For the provincial leadership of Kosovo it was dangerous also to ask for an upgrade of the status of the province and its transformation into one of Yugoslavia's constituent republics. However, in the climate of relative freedom granted within the Yugoslav political system there were many grey areas and the borders between what was acceptable and what was unacceptable in the heated debates on centre-periphery relations were not always perfectly clear. In this respect this was a game under asymmetric information, where only one player, at any one time, knew α.

One of the reasons for this was the fact that Tito performed the role of arbiter in conflicts opposing centre and periphery and it was ultimately at his discretion that repressive measures could be ordered by the centre. This clearly made things less predictable for Yugoslav political actors.[18] In general, α changed over time and

[18] Episodes in which repressive measures against the periphery were ordered by the centre were indeed opportunities for peripheral leadership to "learn" the real limits of the debate on

heavily depended on the overall political climate. There were historical moments when more freedom of movement was allowed and other periods when the Yugoslav regime posed greater constraints to the debate on centre-periphery relations. α, for the leadership of a periphery P, could change as a result of the outcome of a previous game between the centre and another periphery P', particularly in those cases when this game produced a repressive response from the centre and/or an authoritarian reversal in the Yugoslav political system as a whole.[19] An example will make things clearer. The 1971 "Croatian Spring", discussed in the third chapter, is probably a case illustrating a peripheral leadership crossing the threshold and becoming too assertive in its autonomy demands. The central leadership employed a repressive response, banned cultural organisations with a "nationalist" orientation, ordered the arrest of some of the leaders of the *Maspok* and a massive purge of the League of Communists of Croatia. This resulted in a radical change in the political climate in Croatia but had as its corollary similar coercive measures employed elsewhere in Yugoslavia. In 1972 a great number of liberals in the League of Communists of Serbia were forced to resign (Perović, interview 2002)[20] and other purges were ordered in the party organisations of Slovenia, Macedonia and Vojvodina.

Not only the relative unpredictability of α might explain departures from the equilibrium usually reached. We have discussed in chapter four how local political leaderships, not only in the eighties, but to a certain extent also in Tito's Yugoslavia, had to face competition from autonomous or semi-autonomus civil society groups or of emerging nationalist counterelites. For local political leaderships, asking for an increase in the autonomy of the periphery was a way to increase their bargaining power in negotiations with the centre and at times also the only tactic they could employ to maintain support in their republic or province. This dynamic could easily degenerate into a vicious circle whereby republican

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decentralisation.

[19] The fluctuations of α over time meant also that local leaderships could become the victims of a purge for actions committed or a stance taken earlier (when the threshold α was higher).

[20] Latinka Perović was one of the officials purged from the League of Communists of Serbia.

political elites, demanding greater autonomy from the centre allowed the development of groups employing a more clearly nationalist discourse going farther in their national claims than the local communist leadership and in some cases developing as quasi political groups threatening the monopoly of the single party. A case in point is again the situation in Croatia between 1970 and 1971, when *Matica Hrvatska*, the most prestigious cultural organisation in the republic, became active in the political scene with a clearly nationalist program.

At this point the leaders of the Croatian communist party were caught in a no win situation where they could choose to either tolerate the emergence of nationalist groups[21] and other forms of mobilisation within the civil society or use repression to restore order before a similar decision was taken at the centre. It should be clear, both these decisions were very difficult to take. On the one hand, choosing to appease and to tolerate the emergence of nationalist groups entailed the considerable risk of seeing the centre directly intervening in the periphery to restore order (and this, for the local elite, meant almost certainly a purge). On the other hand, choosing to use coercion to stop civil society from organising was a problematic decision since for the local political elite it involved a quick U-turn (and, as such, it did not eliminate the possibility of being purged since the fact that a local communist leadership had to resort to repression to curb nationalist feelings was already a good reason for the centre to order a purge at the local level). During the "Croatian Spring" the local League of Communists tolerated and at times encouraged the development of a Croatian national movement. The result was a harsh response from the centre which continued to have effects on the position of the Croatian communist leadership for more than fifteen years.

What happened in 1981 in Kosovo was partly different. Although in some cases local communist leaders were directly involved in the protests (initiated by students of the university of Priština) most local high rank communist officials ultimately sided with the federal centre and supported the repressive measures introduced in the province (Dizdarevic 2001: 94; Meier 1999: 31). Nevertheless, following the episodes of ethnic unrest, the secretary of the Kosovo party was

[21] Perhaps even co-opting some of the nationalist leaders.

dismissed and in the early eighties purges and trials of Albanian "nationalists" were organised in the province. These were events that took place after the death of Tito[22] but that can still be looked at using "old" models because, although Tito was now absent from the scene, his death was still recent enough to make it possible for hard-liners in the Yugoslav power structure to impose the use of force successfully in case of heavy episodes of ethnic unrest in a Yugoslav periphery.[23]

Decay and collapse: the end of Tito's Yugoslavia and the war in Slovenia

After having discussed how Yugoslavia functioned under Tito's rule, in this section I will deal with political dynamics in the eighties and in the early nineties and analyse the conflict in Slovenia in terms of centre-periphery interaction. The eighties were a period of important transformations in the Yugoslav political system which saw a reduction of the authoritarian pressure exerted by the regime in a process of "liberalisation by decay". This, in terms of the models I employed in the previous section meant, among other things, that α started to increase progressively and peripheral leaderships could go further in asking for greater decentralisation without provoking a reaction from the centre. The death of Tito and the lack of other unifying factors that could function as cohesive elements made the threat of a central intervention in the peripheries (in general) less credible and this in turn meant that peripheral elites could become more assertive in advocating a further decentralisation of Yugoslavia. At least in those republics that did not fall under Serbia's influence the instrument of purges partly lost its importance as a disincentive for local leaderships to ask for greater autonomy for their federal sub-unit.

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[22] And are viewed by many as the beginning of the final crisis of Yugoslavia

[23] This was reflected in the generally conservative atmosphere that pervaded the political climate in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the fact that the Kosovo issue was becoming an increasingly sensitive one for the Serbian elite (and public), made it easier to legitimise the use of repression even without having Tito directly backing it.

Before analysing what happened in the peripheries, it is interesting to discuss events taking place in Belgrade which were perhaps among the first truly significant results of the transformation and decay of the Yugoslav regime. The emergence in 1987 of a nationalist leadership in the League of Communists of Serbia and the prominent role played by Slobodan Milošević would have been inconceivable a decade before in Tito's Yugoslavia. For its very position within Yugoslavia, Serbia cannot be considered as a periphery and, for this reason, Serbian nationalists had demands which were very different from what nationalists or simply "decentralisers" elsewhere in Yugoslavia were asking for. The new Serbian political elite did not call for greater powers being "devolved" to Serbia but rather for the transformation of Yugoslavia into a considerably more centralised federation and for the significant reduction (or abolition) of the autonomy of the Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. In doing so Milošević and his allies went much further than it would have been possible for them a few years before and employed an utterly nationalist discourse which would not have been acceptable in Tito's Yugoslavia (for the very same reasons why peripheral nationalism was not acceptable).[24] In the last phase of the Yugoslav crisis the Serbian leadership went so far as attempting to establish a new, antagonistic centre in Belgrade. At the end of the eighties the federal centre was already incapable of exerting power effectively and of adequately reacting to the hegemonic project of the Serbian leadership.

All this suggests that a variant of the models presented in the previous section could be viewed as a way to analyse how the Serbian leadership interacted with the federal centre and how it started to become the political entrepreneur of Serbian nationalism. The game presented in figure 5.5 defines the choices available to the federal centre in terms of "represses/maintains the *status quo*" vs. "appeases/centralises Yugoslavia".[25] For the Serbian leadership (player SR),

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[24] We have seen how, from the very beginning of the history of socialist Yugoslavia, the (re) emergence of Serbian nationalism was one of the main concerns of the new communist leadership.

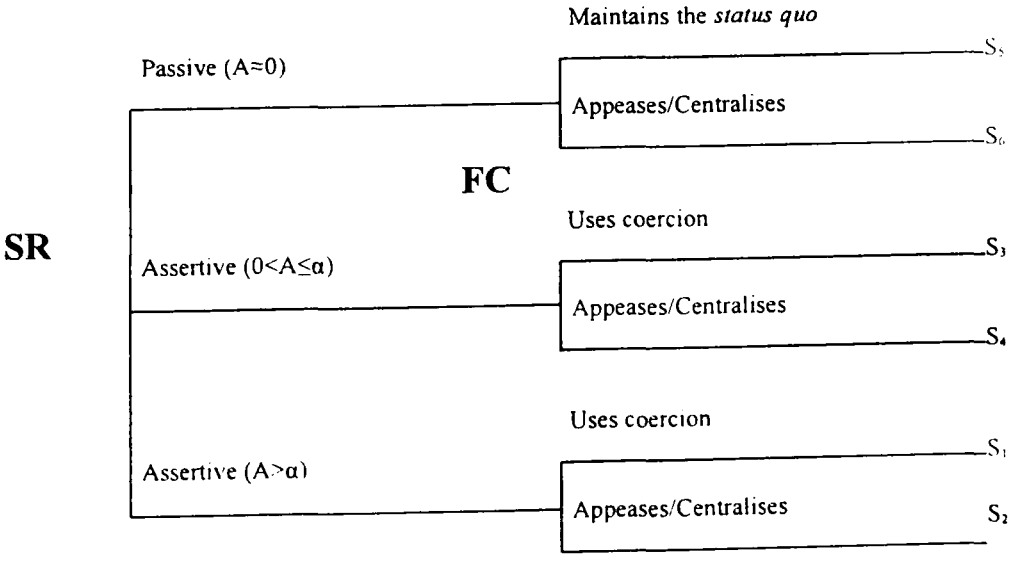
[25] Since the Serbian leadership was asking for a recentralisation of Yugoslavia, for the federal centre to appease meant to agree to these requests and to reduce the degree of decentralisation in Yugoslavia.

choices are the same as they were defined for the other Yugoslav republics and provinces but obviously with an opposite and symmetrical meaning. Here, being "assertive" means asking for a centralisation of Yugoslavia. Being "very assertive" means employing a clearly Great Serbian nationalist discourse, advocating a radical restructuring of the Yugoslav federation (A is again the degree to which the republican leadership is "assertive").

Figure 5.5 *The interaction between the federal centre and Serbia*

		FC	
		Uses coercion/Maintains the *status quo*	Appeases/Centralises
SR	Assertive (A>α)	S_1 Purge and possible military intervention in Serbia	S_2 Increased centralisation with possible constitution of a new centre and/or military intervention in the peripheries
	Assertive (0<A≤α)	S_3 Purge and possible military intervention in Serbia	S_4 Increased centralisation
	Passive (A≈0)	S_5 *Status quo* maintained	S_6 Increased centralisation

Figure 5.6 *The interaction between the federal centre and Serbia (extensive form)*



The way in which we look at this game must reflect the fact that, as noted above, recentralising Yugoslavia was practically not an option for the federal centre or, more precisely, was possible only through a *putsch*, or some other type of authoritarian reversal promoted by one or more sectors of the Yugoslav political elite.[26] This implies that, in any case, coercive measures are preferred to any form of recentralisation[27] but, as in the federal centre vs. periphery model, using coercion in those cases in which A does not go beyond a certain threshold α is more costly than doing so when A is greater than α.[28] If we assume for the Serbian leadership that the preferences are constructed exactly in the same way as for the peripheries[29] with the only difference being that its goal is centralisation and not decentralisation, then the game ends in an equilibrium in S_5. In other words, in the games between Serbia and the federal centre it was very difficult for the leadership of the former to successfully achieve its centralising goals given the impossibility for the federal centre to agree on such policies.

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[26] The costs of a recentralisation for the federation were very high. Imposing a centralist solution could have produced a collapse of the delicate equilibrium between the centre and the other federal sub-units and, ultimately, could have made necessary the extensive use of coercive measures and the possible use of military intervention in the Yugoslav peripheries. As we saw, the JNA leadership, with Milošević's support, attempted to and almost succeeded in March 1991 in imposing the state of emergency. However, these measures were not authorised by a sufficient number of votes in the collective federal presidency and when Yugoslavia's political leadership refused to provide political cover to the army, it remained too risky to restore order in an utterly unconstitutional *putsch*. The JNA, despite its leadership's alliance with Milošević, continued to remain formally accountable to the federal centre thanks to what was still its multiethnic character and to the "Yugoslavist" orientation of many of its officers. Kadijević notes in his memoirs that at that point a *putsch* was not a viable option because it would have implied an immediate attack against Slovenia and Croatia, which would have put Serbia in the "aggressor's position" (1993: 115). Moreover, Kadijević mentions the dangers of sanctions and of a foreign military intervention among the reasons which made a coup particularly risky (1993: 115). A formally legal and "legitimate" army intervention, for Kadijević, was the only possibility (1993: 149-150).

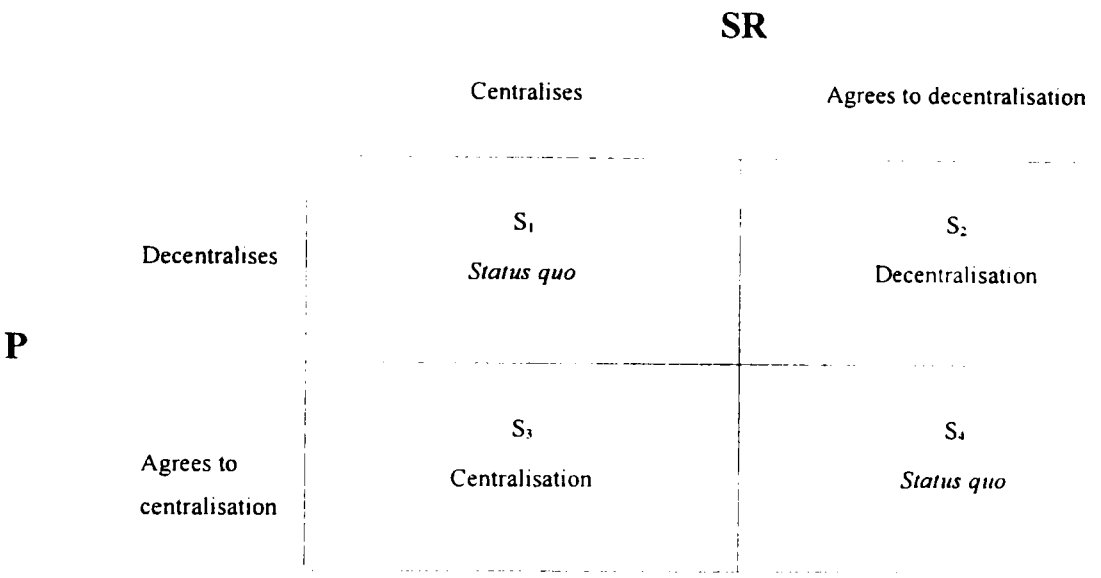
[27] This should not confuse the reader. Given our assumptions on the behaviour of political leaderships, at least for some sectors of the political leadership at the federal level recentralisation, *ceteris paribus*, was preferred to the *status quo*. However, given the high costs associated to recentralisation, the *status quo* remained in practice the preferred option.

[28] Preferences can be assumed as being $S_2<S_4=S_6<S_3<S_1<S_5$.

[29] Payoffs are thus constructed in this way: $S_1=S_3<S_5<S_4=S_6<S_2$.

This continued to be true throughout the first half of the eighties when the problem in reaching a consensus at the federal level on a recentralisation of Yugoslavia made it in fact an almost impossible choice even facing the demands of the Serbian republican leadership. The dynamics between centralisers (i.e. Serbia) and other peripheries can be summarised in a very simple 2x2 matrix, like the one presented in figure 5.7, where it is obvious that, given the unanimity requirement at the federal level the equilibrium is always the *status quo*.

Figure 5.7 Interrepublican negotiations (on centre-periphery relations)



The relations between Serbia and the federal centre, however, partly changed towards the end of the eighties. As a result of the decay of the regime and of the loosening of authoritarian pressure, α increased for both Serbia and the peripheries. Republican elites, and as we saw this was true also for the Serbian elite, had now greater freedom of movement in promoting their own agendas. In the relations between Serbia and the federal centre, this was not the only important change. The centre, after Milošević came to power, lost its ability to use coercive measures of any kind against the Serbian elite. The fact that an alliance was formed between the Serbian leadership and important sectors of the federal army and in general of the Yugoslav repressive apparatus, made it more difficult and ultimately impossible for the federal centre to use force directly to put down manifestations of Serbian nationalism. Moreover, changes in intra-party dynamics, with the progressive emancipation of Slovenia and with the recentralisation of the

party structure of Serbia (with its two provinces) made it impossible for the federal centre to order any purge against the Serbian leadership. The situation hence remained fluid with a federal centre absolutely incapable to use coercion against Serbia (and in general absolutely incapable of imposing the Serbian centralising plans to the Yugoslav peripheries). As we will see in the following chapter, the Serbian leadership only managed to impose a recentralisation in one case on other republics and this happened between the end of 1988 and the beginning of 1989, when the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina was abolished. At that time other federal units, as well as the federal leadership, both at the party and at the state level, opted for an "appeasing" stance,[30] hoping that sacrificing the autonomy of the two Serbian provinces would have given them "some rest" (Meier 1999: 79).

Leaving aside the debates on the Yugoslav constitutional framework, political changes in Serbia and Yugoslavia resulted in the development of an atmosphere of vocal nationalism in Serbia with the direct involvement of the local communist leadership. Milošević and his allies could not, in most cases, impose changes in the 1974 federal constitution but were relatively free, within Serbia, to mobilise ethnicity to their advantage. Here it is important to underline once again that the organisation (for example) of the Serbian nationalist "meetings" would not have been possible in the different political climate of only a few years before. In other words, the impossibility, for the federal centre, to credibly threaten and order coercive measures against the Serbian leaders made them free to mobilise support employing a nationalist discourse.[31]

Moreover, the changing and in some respects more fragmented structure of the Yugoslav party also made the instrument of purges against peripheral leaderships unviable. The only remaining coercive instrument the federal centre could use against the periphery was military action. The choice of using repression became,

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[30] Ultimately deciding not to "interfere" in the "internal matters" of Serbia, i.e. in the relations between Serbia proper and its two provinces (Major, interview 2002).

[31] A saying circulating in Belgrade in the late eighties was "if Tito were alive, heads would be rolling".

even more so, the *extrema ratio* given the ramifications and the costs of using the military apparatus. Moreover, the alliance between the Serbian nationalist leadership and the army made the use of military repression highly dependent on the attitude of the Serbian leadership towards military intervention. In other words, at the end of the eighties the use of force could be ordered and successfully carried out only when this was consistent with the plans of the Serbian political elite. Later, this had very important consequences in the conflict that erupted between the centre and Slovenia.

Slovenia, as we saw when giving a historical account of political events in Yugoslavia, was the first and most assertive of the republics that were asking for a further decentralisation of Yugoslavia and its transformation into a loose confederation. In fact, in 1988-1989 the leadership of the republic took several steps in the direction of a complete separation from the rest of Yugoslavia. A very important development in the late eighties/early nineties was the creation of what became the embryo of a Slovenian army. The republican territorial defence, in the words of Janez Janša[32] grew into the "real armed force of the Slovenian people"[33] (Janša 1994: 69 and ff.). For the first time the leadership of a Yugoslav periphery became able to fully react militarily to repressive measures ordered by the centre. In the same period, the Yugoslav army started to define plans for a military intervention in Slovenia and we saw how already in 1988 the military supported if necessary using force the introduction of emergency measures in the republic. The threat of a military intervention in the republic remained very real and the confrontation between the centre, its military apparatus, and Slovenia ended with a short war which marked the beginning of the violent collapse of Yugoslavia.

To analyse how the conflict between Belgrade and Ljubljana developed it is impossible to look at it merely as a game between a federal centre and a periphery.

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[32] Who in 1990 became the Slovenian minister of defence.

[33] This was also discussed in an interview with Janez Janša (Janša, interview 2002). See also *Mladina*, 3 October 1990: 5-11 and 9 April 1991: 10.

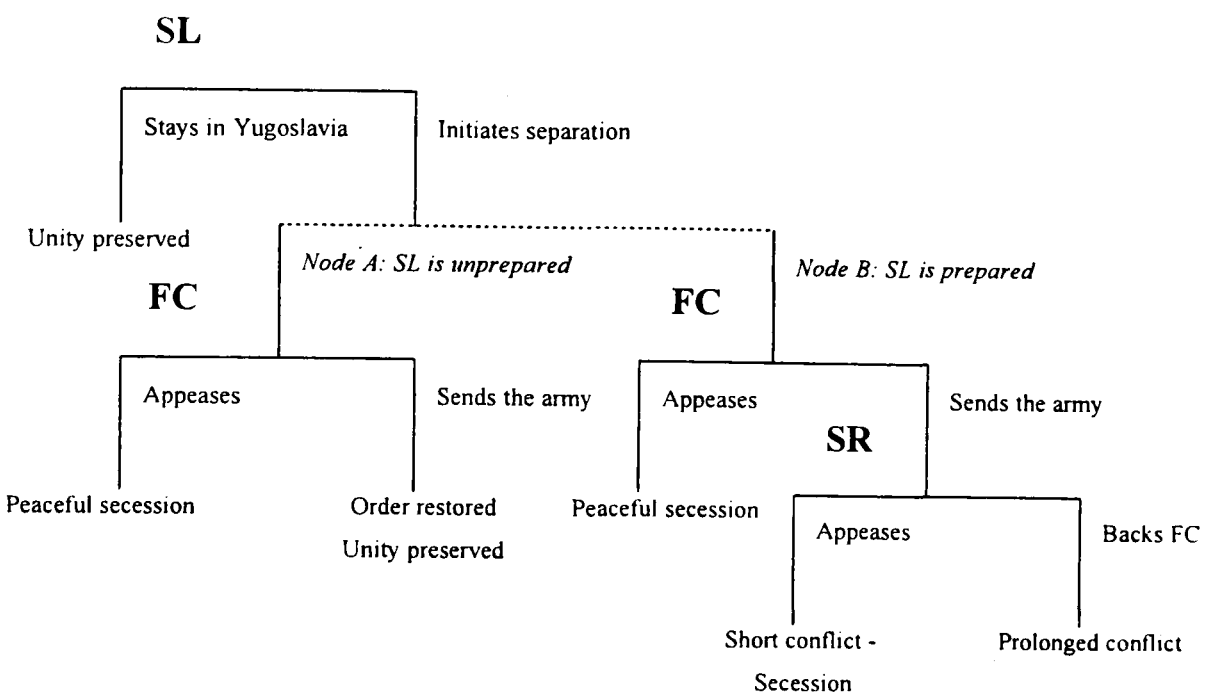
The three relevant actors at this point were Slovenia, Serbia and a federal centre, whose role was still significant. Even at this late stage of the Yugoslav crisis the JNA still needed an order from the federal leadership to act using force in Slovenia. But, as we saw, the army needed also the support of the Serbian republican leadership, at least to become involved in a prolonged military confrontation. An order from the centre was perhaps a necessary but not any longer a sufficient condition for the sustained involvement of the federal army in a Yugoslav periphery. A war could begin by orders of the federal centre, but could not continue without the commitment of both the federal and the Serbian leaderships.

It appears that when Slovenia declared its independence and the war started the federal centre and the army leadership did not fully understand the extent to which the Slovenian leadership was capable and ready to use the military instruments at its disposal (Kocijančič, interview 2002) and that a significant resistance on the part of the Slovenian territorial defence was not contemplated (Grizold 1997: 50-51). One indication of this is the fact the Yugoslav army intervened in Slovenia without being properly prepared for a real war using "conscripts in light summer uniforms only two weeks after they had completed training exercises" (Woodward 1995: 166). In fact, the situation for the JNA troops became quickly "tragic" (Jović B. 1996: 349) with the Slovenian territorial defence forces very effectively reacting against an army that seemed to be almost caught by surprise.[34] It is true that after the first days of war, a growing confusion about what was constitutional and legal played a role in making unsuccessful the intervention of what still considered itself a Yugoslav federal army. However, the very fact that the JNA came to Slovenia completely unprepared in the first place, suggests that for those who ordered a military intervention, and for those who were carrying out these orders, the Slovenian reaction was unexpected. The military operation in Slovenia was conceived to be a quick showdown to prove to the Slovenian "amateur

[34] In his testimony at the Hague Tribunal during Milošević's trial, former prime minister Ante Marković recalled how, when he arrived in Slovenia, he found out that "a large number of tank units comprising young men had gone out completely unprepared, without supplies of water or food."

soldiers" that the federal centre was serious about restoring order in the republic[35] (Pirjevec 2002: 42).

Figure 5.8 The war in Slovenia



The game presented in figure 5.8 describes this situation.[36] The first move is made by the Slovenian leadership, that decided whether to opt for outright secession or to remain within Yugoslavia. When Slovenia declared its independence on the 25th of June 1991 the next move was left to the federal centre which could choose whether to use repression (i.e. the army) in an attempt to prevent the republic from separating or to allow the secession of the republic. Until the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia, the army "avoided acting without a political cover" (Meier 1999: 179), that is without orders from the legitimate federal authorities and the Serbian leadership was not yet in a position to initiate a conflict (outside Serbia) autonomously.

The federal centre, however, took the decision to use force lacking information on the extent to which Slovenia was militarily prepared and ready to defend itself.

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[35] Pirjevec reports that Marko Negovanović, the head of the Yugoslav military intelligence at the time of the Slovenian war, later recognised that he had underestimated the significance of the military preparations the Slovenians were carrying out.

[36] It is a sequential game with three players, Slovenia (SL), the federal centre (FC) and Serbia (SR).

Wrong information or wrong assumptions on Slovenia's capability to mobilise its territorial defence against the JNA led to an unexpected outcome for the federal centre. In terms of our game in figure 5.8, FC believed to be in node A, with SL militarily "unprepared" and acted consequently, since the "order restored" outcome for the leadership at the federal level was preferred to Slovenia's peaceful separation. However, FC was in fact in node B and the escalation of the conflict made Serbia the key actor to decide whether to back the military intervention of the federal army or to accept the separation of Slovenia.

Reading the memoirs of Borisav Jović, who at that time was Milošević's ally in the Yugoslav presidency, provides us with evidence on the importance of Serbia's role in determining whether the war was to be continued or not. Already on the 27th of June 1991, in a meeting between Milošević, Jović and Kadijević (the federal defence minister), Milošević insisted that the army had to defend only the "future borders of Yugoslavia" (Jović B. 1996: 343). On the 5th of July, when it was already clear that the army's intervention in Slovenia was a failure, Jović explained to Kadijević that it was the Serbian question that had to be resolved and not the question of preserving "this Yugoslavia" (Jović B. 1996: 350). The Serbian leadership, already at an early stage of the conflict, was not interested in forcibly keeping Slovenia in Yugoslavia. This was confirmed in the subsequent vote in the Yugoslav presidency on the withdrawal of the JNA from Slovenia, when Serbia and all other federal sub-units under its control expressed themselves in favour of the pullout.

In the last phase of the conflict between Slovenia and the centre, Milošević's strategy was rather to employ military resources in a war in Croatia (which declared its independence, together with Slovenia, on the 25th of June) than in a conflict with Ljubljana. For nationalists in Serbia Slovenia was not the priority and its separation might even have the advantage of making Croatia more isolated. It is sometimes argued that the whole Slovenian conflict was in fact not much more than a staged war, which was fought after Milošević and Kučan had already

previously agreed on the secession of Slovenia.[37] There is no evidence, however, to support this interpretation. What seems to be likely is that the Slovenian leadership was aware that Milošević was not willing to see the Yugoslav army involved in a prolonged conflict against Slovenia and considered the secession of the northern republic "acceptable" in the context of his plans to create a new, smaller Yugoslavia where Serbia had a hegemonic position. The Slovenes could then declare their independence knowing that the military was not in a position to put serious obstacles in the way of independence.

The collapse of the federal centre and the end of socialist Yugoslavia

In the previous two sections we have seen what, on the one hand, were the forces that were keeping socialist Yugoslavia together and, on the other hand, how conflict between centre and peripheries developed. We have also seen how changes in the Yugoslav political system throughout the eighties modified the relations between the federal centre, the peripheries and Serbia, an actor that started to play an increasingly important role. The last decade of socialist Yugoslavia's history saw the emergence of a Serbian nationalist leadership in Belgrade, the progressive emancipation, and eventually the secession of Slovenia to which the federal centre responded with an armed intervention. Contrary to the expectations, however, the Yugoslav army encountered a significant resistance on the part of the Slovenian side and soon had to withdraw from the seceding republic, its action lacking the necessary support of the Serbian leadership.

Before moving to the next chapter, where Serbia's strategy to gain control of Vojvodina, Montenegro and Macedonia will be analysed, I would add a very simple general observation on the patterns of strategic interaction we have just analysed. The employment of a rational choice approach does not exclude the possibility that rational actors may commit "mistakes". In some of the cases we

[37] Woodward relates this possible interpretation of the Slovenian war but substantially rejects it (1995: 167).

discussed, a central response was either the result of an error on the part of the peripheral leadership or of the political elite at the federal level. In the first case, peripheral leaderships overestimated the degree of peripheral assertiveness the Yugoslav regime tolerated and/or allowed the constitution of an increasingly independent civil society which they were not able to control. These "mistakes" were the direct consequence of the non-democratic nature of the Yugoslav regime. The Yugoslav system gave Tito ample discretionary powers to use repression in the peripheries. Moreover, the absence of true electoral competition limited the information available to peripheral elites on the preferences of their constituents and on the possibility of a more extreme nationalist response from civil society to an opening, accompanied by autonomy demands, initiated by the local leadership.

In the Slovenian war, the federal centre simply lacked information on Slovenia's ability to defend itself. Hence, lack of complete information and uncertainty about the expected payoffs led to outcomes which were unanticipated at least for some of the agents involved. The successful separation of Slovenia was the final blow to the federal centre which during the second half of 1991 completely collapsed (while some of the federal institutions at the centre were "occupied" by Milošević's allies). The subsequent wars in Croatia and Bosnia erupted in a different context with the two republics opposed to Serbia (and its allies), and not to a Yugoslav federal centre any more. Since they constitute a second, distinct phase of the process of violent disintegration of Yugoslavia they will be analysed in detail in the last chapter of this thesis.

6. Keeping (rump) Yugoslavia together

As already repeatedly mentioned, not all Yugoslav federal sub-units separated from the centre during the disintegration process. This chapter discusses why certain federal sub-units did not separate. After an introductory section, the second part of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of how the Serbian political elite gained control of Vojvodina and Montenegro. The third part will focus on Kosovo and on how the province lost its autonomy. The concluding section of the chapter will analyse the events in Montenegro and the two provinces and will be centred on the idea that Serbia's leadership acted chiefly at two levels to exert influence over those federal sub-units that did not separate. To prevent secession it made use of the party and of its organisations and, in Kosovo, it also employed the repressive and military apparatus to gain control over the province. At the end of the chapter some space in the discussion will be devoted to other intervening variables which played an important role in allowing Serbia to extend its influence over other federal sub-units.

The partial disintegration of Yugoslavia

We already saw that when explaining the collapse of Yugoslavia and, for that matter, the collapse of other "socialist federations" (the USSR and Czechoslovakia), those theories that identify some of the institutional features of Soviet-style ethnofederalism as important causes of the disintegration have proved to be rather powerful. The process of liberalisation by decay, which we analysed

in chapter four, and the dynamics of strategic interaction we have discussed in the previous chapter, may also help us understand some of the causes of the Yugoslav disintegration. It is necessary to highlight, however, that during the Yugoslav collapse a rump Yugoslavia composed by Serbia, its two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, and the small republic of Montenegro continued to exist for several years. It may be argued that the long process of Yugoslav disintegration is still unfolding. Today rump Yugoslavia (which had the official and internationally unrecognised name of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) no longer exists having been recently substituted by a loose union of Serbia and Montenegro. Moreover, the very survival of this union appears to be rather unlikely, given Montenegro's leadership ambitions to lead the republic to independence. Finally, after the NATO intervention in 1999, Kosovo remains only formally part of Serbia and is *de facto* a military protectorate administered by the international community. Having said all this, and bearing in mind that the situation is still fluid in the former Yugoslav region, it remains to be explained why Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Vojvodina have remained (at least officially) united in the same state for several years, while other republics have separated and achieved independence, usually after a war.

Two out of the three federal sub-units which did not separate were provinces and not republics. At first glance, this may seem to provide at least a partial explanation of why Kosovo and Vojvodina remained part of Serbia. Things, however, are slightly more complicated. When discussing how the Yugoslav federal system worked, we have seen that the level of autonomy of republics and provinces was, in almost all respects, practically the same. Provinces, like republics, were represented in the collective presidency and in the Federal Executive Council. Although the number of provincial representatives in the Yugoslav parliament was smaller than the number of parliamentarians appointed by the Yugoslav republics this had little practical effects. Republican, as well as provincial delegations, in most cases acted as a block and, as already noted, the Yugoslav federal system gave to each federal sub-unit a veto power on most decisions. In sum, although formally republics and provinces were called in a different way, this seems to be of little consequence, as it was recognised by

former members of Vojvodina's leadership I interviewed.[1] This means that our puzzle becomes even more interesting, as we need to understand why, although provinces had the same autonomous powers of the republics, both Kosovo and Vojvodina remained part of Serbia.

Also Montenegro, which had the status of a republic in socialist Yugoslavia, did not separate and became one of the two constituent republics of the new rump Yugoslavia. The fact that a Montenegrin identity separate from the Serbian one has not completely developed and that most, or many, Montenegrins see themselves as Serbs, at least in origin, does not completely explain why Milošević was able to put the Montenegrin political leadership under his control and prevent the emergence of a local nationalist political elite. On the one hand, political entrepreneurs of nationalism do not necessarily need a strongly rooted national feeling or, at least, what Hobsbawm calls "popular proto-nationalism". These preconditions certainly make the task of such political entrepreneurs easier, but are not necessary *per se*.[2] On the other hand, Kosovo was prevalently inhabited by Albanians and, even there, in a situation of deep ethnic antagonism between Serbs and Albanians, the Serbian leadership managed to take control of local institutions.

Focusing only on nationality policies, on the Yugoslav "federal skeleton", on institutions at the *state* level or on the peculiar path followed during the transformation of the Yugoslav regime does not help us explain one important aspect of the Yugoslav disintegration: why did certain peripheries *not* secede? Why was not the Kosovar communist leadership able to oppose a Serbian hegemonic project? Why did not the Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina play a role similar to that played by Slovenia given that in the Yugoslav federal system, for all practical purposes, they enjoyed virtually the same autonomy as the

[1] Nandor Major, in particular, was the former head of the province's presidency and the highest ranking communist official of Hungarian nationality, in the late eighties. He confirmed that, from his perspective, the differences between republics and provinces in their autonomy were very small (Major, interview 2002).

[2] In fact, more recent developments in this republic show how great the incentives can be, for the local elite, to play the nationalist/separatist card.

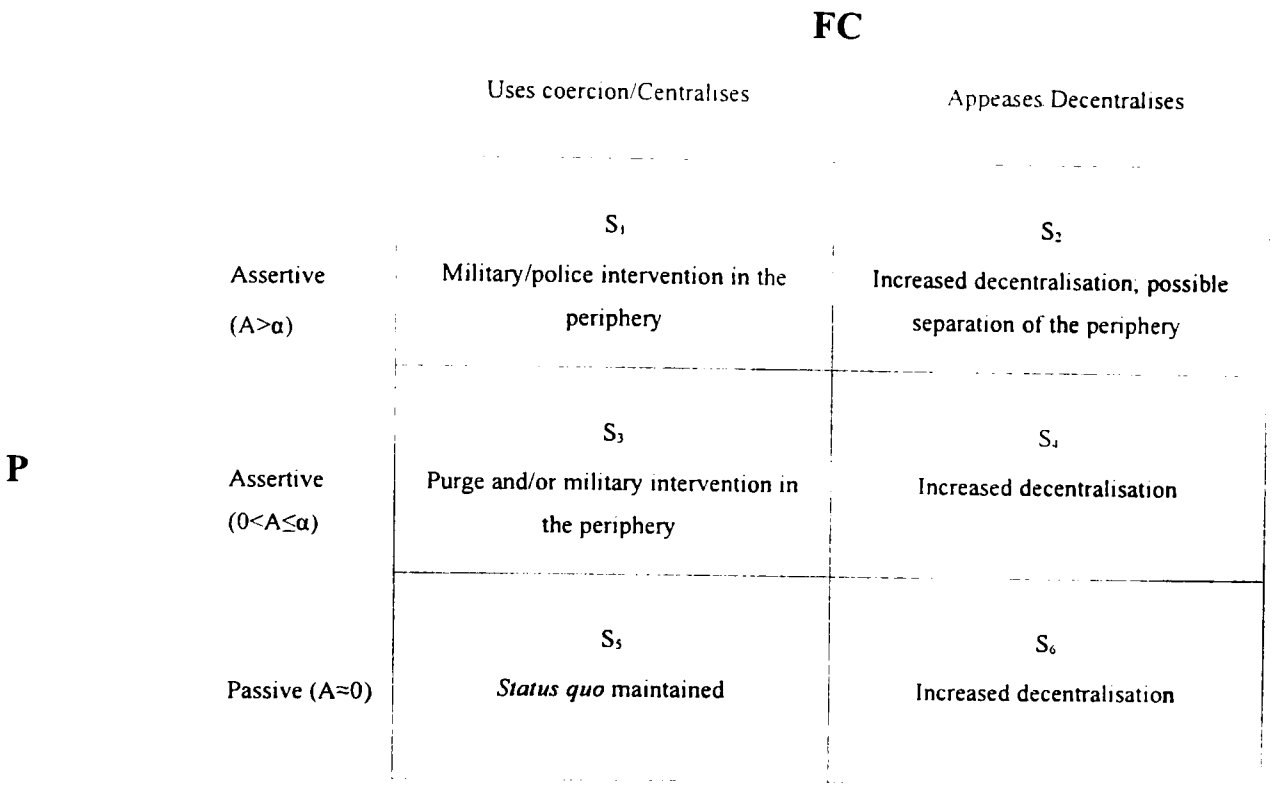
republics? Why was Milošević eventually able to place his men at the head of the two provinces and of the republic of Montenegro and how did he gain the control of these federal sub-units?

In this chapter, in other words, we will attempt to look at the reasons why the models we have presented in the previous chapter cannot be used to describe centre-periphery relations between Belgrade and Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro. For all other peripheries, in a process that continued throughout the eighties, the reduction in the authoritarian pressure exerted at the centre meant that α increased and that those peripheries (that were still part of the game) could afford to be more assertive without provoking a reaction from the centre.[3] However, the two Serbian provinces, having lost their autonomy, and Montenegro, having had its leadership substituted by Milošević's allies, were no longer independent actors in the Yugoslav political arena. The Serbian leadership managed to change the rules of the game in the relations between the centre and these three peripheries in a way that the game presented in figure 6.1, during the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, ended with an equilibrium in S_5, in the cases of Vojvodina and Montenegro[4] and in S_1 in the case of Kosovo.

[3] To avoid confusion, I underline that the process that ended with the ousting of the local leaderships in Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro was substantially different from the traditional purges of the past. The most important difference between the two phenomena stems from the fact that the main actor behind the replacement of the political elites of Montenegro and the two provinces was not the federal centre, but Serbia. In connection with this it is interesting to note how the Serbian leadership could not use the traditional institutional channels to force local leaderships to resign but rather resorted to mass mobilisation and nationalist meetings organised from above.

[4] In Montenegro, after the collapse of Yugoslavia and in the last years of Milošević's regime, the equilibrium progressively moved to S_4, with the emergence of a pro-independence leadership (mostly composed of former Milošević's allies) and the gradual separation of the republic from Serbia.

Figure 6.1 Rump Yugoslavia holding together



To answer the question of how Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro effectively lost their autonomy, it is necessary to shift our perspective from an analysis of the Yugoslav system as a whole to the federal sub-units we are concerned with. This chapter presents an account of the events surrounding the fall under Milošević's control of the two provinces and of the republic of Montenegro which focuses in particular on how the Serbian leadership put pressure on local political elites and imposed order using and manipulating the crowd and, where this was not enough (namely in Kosovo), directly employing the repressive apparatus. Although I will refrain from a detailed analysis of how party institutions (as opposed to state institutions) worked, greater attention in this chapter will be devoted to the political dynamics within the LCY and to the way in which the party provided some of the institutional channels Milošević used to gain and consolidate his control over what later became rump Yugoslavia.

Slobodan Milošević moved relatively quickly from being the head of the Belgrade party branch in 1984[5] to becoming, in 1986, the head of the Serbian League of Communists (*Nin*, 1 June 1986: 9-20) when Ivan Stambolić, his friend and political protector, left the post to become president of Serbia. In April 1987 Stambolić asked Milošević to go to Kosovo and discuss the grievances of the Kosovo Serbs with the leaders of the Serbian community of the province (Judah 1997: 162; *Nin*, 26 April 1987: 10-12; *Nin*, 3 May 1987: 9-11). The Serbs were complaining of being a discriminated minority in Kosovo and, already the year before, had organised several protests in Belgrade (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RAD Background Report (Yugoslavia)*, 15 April 1986). While in Kosovo Milošević was confronted by an angry crowd of Serbs, who had been clashing with the local (prevalently Albanian) police. After having addressed the protesters,[6] he remained in Kosovo Polje to listen, for hours, to the grievances of the Serbian protesters (Ramet 1992: 227). This event marked the beginning of Slobodan Milošević's transformation into a nationalist leader, which, in turn, paved the way for his rise to power. In the following months the protests of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo became more vocal, with frequent rallies near the Yugoslav parliament and a demonstration, in June 1987 which even forced a session of the central committee to end one day earlier (Meier 1999: 39). Milošević, meanwhile, started to increasingly employ an overtly nationalist discourse and, from his position at the head of the League of Communists of Serbia, worked to consolidate his influence over the most important Serbian mass media.

During the second half of 1987 a deep division developed within the Serbian party between Milošević's and Ivan Stambolić's faction. The more moderate Stambolić had become at this point Milošević's major political rival or, at least, the biggest

[5] Already at a relatively early stage of his political career he started to place his men in two of the most influential Belgrade papers, *Politika* and *Politika Ekspres* (Cvetićanin 1997: 73).

[6] With what later became the famous words: "no one should dare to beat you".

obstacle on Milošević's way to become Serbia's absolute leader. The final struggle began in September 1987, when Milošević demanded the resignation of Dragiša Pavlović, the liberally oriented Belgrade party secretary (Meier 1999: 40). When the city committee refused to overthrow Pavlović, who was accused of being too "soft" on the Kosovo problem, the issue was taken before the Serbian party central committee. Now Milošević had the backing of some of the most influential Belgrade printed media, as well as of the Serbian television (Cvetićanin 1997: 73). During an almost Stalinist showdown at the eighth plenum of the central committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, "telegrams of support" were displayed to prove that Milošević was backed by the Serbian people, the television reported how various branches of veterans associations, army and party mass organisations demanded a change in the Serbian party leadership and supported Milošević's "new course" (Milošević 1997: 52).

Milošević's opponents were defeated in the Serbian party plenum and Stambolić was eventually removed from the post of president of the Serbian presidency in December 1987 (*Nin*, 20 December 1987: 8-9). At the end of 1987, with a *putsch* at the party level, and with the help of the media under his control, Milošević came to quickly exert quasi-dictatorial powers in Serbia. He now needed to direct his attention to other federal units in order to exert his influence over other parts of Yugoslavia and with the goal of increasing the votes under his control in all those Yugoslav institutions where republics and provinces were equally represented.[7] Already in January 1988, the Serbian assembly began to debate amendments to the republican constitution which contemplated a reduction of the provinces' autonomy.

Most importantly, 1988 was the year in which nationalist "meetings" (i.e. rallies) began to be organised "from above" in a systematic way. Instrumental, in this respect, was the party and its mass organisations, now firmly controlled by Milošević's faction.[8] Serbian activists like Miroslav Šolević (who had already "prepared" the clashes between the Serbian crowd and the police during

[7] Controlling for example Serbia, Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro, meant, among other things, controlling four out of the eight seats in the Yugoslav presidency.

Milošević's visit to Kosovo in April 1987) were setting up groups of "professional protesters" (Krunić, interview 2002)[9] who were employed by the Serbian leadership to promote its nationalist agenda. Serbs in the Kosovo party and in other mass organisations and associations of the province started to organise themselves separately from the Albanian majority and, for example, in mid-1988 boycotted the official League of Communists of Kosovo conference and organised their own counter-manifestation (Meier 1999: 73). The Kosovo Polje party organisation, where Serbs and Montenegrins were the majority, separated *de facto* from the League of Communists of Kosovo and turned into a parallel political centre backed by the authorities in Belgrade (Dizdarevic 2001: 233). Its activists became very important in organising the meetings and the numerous petitions addressed to various organs in Kosovo, Serbia, and at the federal level (Meier 1999: 73).

In June 1988, the Serbian constitutional commission published a draft of the amendments to the republican constitution which provided that in several areas (security and defence included) the authority passed from the provinces to the republic. The following month, with the organisation of rallies in Novi Sad, nationalist meetings began to be used systematically to put pressure on political elites outside Serbia proper, forcing them to resign. Vojvodina, even before Kosovo, became the first target of the Serbian leadership's plans. Nandor Major, former head of Vojvodina's presidency, recalled in an interview the debates in the Yugoslav presidency which preceded the final showdown between Belgrade and Novi Sad. Major argues that Vojvodina's leadership had already given its consent to changes to the Serbian constitution reducing the autonomy of the provinces on condition of this being the last concession to Milošević's centralising plans (Major, interview 2002). Milošević's reply was that the Serbian leadership could not commit itself for the future and that further reductions in the provinces' autonomy could become necessary at a later stage. This for Major, was proof of

[8] Later on, a Committee for the Protection of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins was established (Ramet 1992: 231).

[9] Boško Krunić is a former high rank communist official in Vojvodina.

the fact that Milošević, in reality, was not interested in an agreement with Vojvodina but rather in creating a "crisis situation" in Yugoslavia.

On the 6th of July federal authorities were informed of the preparations carried out to bring a great number of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo to Novi Sad where a large rally was going to take place (Dizdarevic 2001: 234). According to Raif Dizdarević, at that time head of the Yugoslav presidency, federal authorities asked the Serbian presidency to intervene in order to prevent the meeting from taking place. Not surprisingly, the Serbian president did not react to the federal presidency's appeal.[10] In the following days the demonstrations saw the wide use of nationalist and anti-Albanian slogans as well as episodes of clashes with the police. For the moment, however, the mass meeting did not produce the desired result. Vojvodina's leadership held a closed session of the provincial party's central committee and refused to resign. On July the 11th the state presidency condemned the meetings (if not in very clear terms) (Dizdarevic 2001: 235) and on July the 18th the LCY presidium discussed recent events in Novi Sad. The party leaderships of Serbia and Vojvodina exchanged accusations with the latter asking that Milošević be fired (Ramet 1992: 231). On the 30th of July, the party presidium issued a declaration to the public where rallies were said to be avoided but where criticism was directed chiefly at Vojvodina's leadership for not having conducted a discussion with the demonstrators (Meier 1999: 75). Support was expressed for those changes of the Serbian constitution promoted by the Serbian leadership (Meier 1999: 75) and Stipe Šuvar, the conservative Croat at the time at the top of the party hierarchy, condemned Albanian nationalism in his speech [11] and said little about the Serbian "happenings of the people" (Šuvar 1989a: 25-32).

In July and August, despite some further attempts on the part of the federal presidency to put a stop to the meetings (attempts that again took chiefly the form of appeals to the Serbian leadership) (Dizdarevic 2001: 241 and ff.), the rallies

[10] For Nandor Major, it was clear that in reality the Yugoslav presidency had no real power to intervene.

[11] The next section of this chapter is devoted to a detailed account of the relations between Kosovo, Serbia, and the federal centre and of how Priština lost its autonomy.

continued in Kosovo, Vojvodina, central Serbia and now also in Montenegro. The small republic was perceived as a possible objective for the Serbian nationalists' ambitions, given its traditionally close ties with Serbia which could justify slogans such as "Montenegro is Serbia" (Dizdarevic 2001: 245). The Serbian media continued to be directly used to promote the demonstrations with some of the journalists acting as organisers of the events[12] (Dizdarevic 2001: 255).

The leaderships of all republics and provinces with the exception of Serbia (obviously) and of Macedonia (at this stage Serbia's closest ally) were now feeling increasingly threatened by the nationalist rallies and issued their condemnations of the use the Serbian leadership was making of the crowd[13] (Dizdarevic 2001: 249; Šuvar 1989b: 39-48). At the meeting of the party presidium on the 30th of August 1988 Stipe Šuvar criticised, this time in clearer terms, the mass protests. Alluding to Milošević's claim that the meetings were spontaneous, Šuvar responded that the rallies where the product of forces "acting outside the socialist self-management system" (Šuvar 1989a: 36) and felt it necessary to note how problems had to be solved within the party still governed by the principle of democratic centralism. However, the party presidium reiterated its endorsement of the proposed recentralising amendments to the Serbian constitution and, a few days later Suvar explained in a television interview that the planned constitutional changes were in line with what was decided in 1986 at the thirteenth congress of the LCY (Šuvar 1989b: 133).

On the 5th of October, a new meeting was organised in Novi Sad and approximately 100,000 Serbs and Montenegrins gathered to protest in front of the building where a session of the provincial party's central committee was taking place (Meier 1999: 78). Tension became so high that the provincial authorities lost control of the situation and in an emergency meeting the federal authorities

[12] See also Boško Krunić's interview with *Nin* (Bogdanovic 1999), in which the high rank official in pre-Milošević Vojvodina discusses the direct role played by the Serbian media in the organisation of the meetings in Novi Sad.

[13] Preparations were made to organise a similar meeting in Jajce, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian leadership successfully prevented it from taking place (Dizdarevic 2001: 255; Šuvar 1989b: 40).

decided to send the federal police to Novi Sad in an attempt to restore order (Dizdarevic 2001: 263). On the 6th Vojvodina's leadership resigned and, in the following period, in practically all institutions of the province local leaderships were purged and substituted by Milošević's men (Dizdarevic 2001: 264; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 11 October 1988: 9-14). The head of the collective presidency Dizdarević appealed to the Serbian leadership against the further prosecution of the meetings (Dizdarevic 2001: 265). Various measures to increase security were adopted by federal organs and, in a televised address, Dizdarević hinted at the possible declaration of a state of emergency in the whole country[14] (Meier 1999: 79). Stipe Šuvar, at a joint meeting of the LCY presidium and the Kosovo party leadership, in a long speech harshly condemned Albanian nationalism (Šuvar 1989a: 46-63), attacked the Kosovo provincial leadership, and orchestrated a vote which condemned the Kosovo leadership holding it responsible for the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations (Meier 1999: 78-79).

Having Vojvodina under his control, the next target for Milošević was Montenegro. A few days after the meeting in Novi Sad a crowd of Serbs and Montenegrins assembled in Titograd vocally asking for the resignation of the local republican leadership. Fearing that what had recently occurred in Vojvodina could happen in Montenegro, the local leadership asked and obtained permission from the federal presidency to disperse the demonstrators (Dizdarevic 2001: 269-270). The meeting ended with an intervention of the Montenegrin police and, at least for the moment, the Montenegrin leadership remained in power resorting to the use of force (Meier 1999: 78; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 11 October 1988: 3-8). In late October debates at the seventeenth session of the LCY central committee were once again dominated by the issues of Serbia, its relations with the provinces, and its leaderships' attempts to use the

[14] Dizdarević however denies, in his memoirs, that there was any intention on the part of the presidency to use emergency measures in the entire territory of Yugoslavia. He claims that he was misinterpreted when he warned that Yugoslavia could end up in an "emergency situation", after the events in Novi Sad. Dizdarević admits, however, that there were serious talks about imposing emergency measures in Kosovo (2001: 273-274).

meetings to extend their control to other parts of Yugoslavia (*Borba*, 19 October 1988: 1-6; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 11 November 1988: 3-22). The relations between Stipe Šuvar and Slobodan Milošević were now extremely strained, after a clash between the two at a meeting of the party presidium and the beginning in Serbia of a media campaign against the president of the federal party. Tensions within the Yugoslav party were aggravated by the fact that Dušan Čkrebić, Serbia's representative in the party presidium and an associate of Milošević, was forced to resign by a no-confidence vote (*Borba*, 20 October 1988: 1; Dizdarevic 2001: 278-279; Magaš 1993: 208; Ramet 1992: 232). Despite all this, Šuvar continued to openly support the Serbian constitutional amendments and the central committee ended its seventeenth session voting a resolution backing the proposed constitutional changes in Serbia (Šuvar 1989b: 134).

The first failed attempt to overthrow the Montenegrin leadership was followed by difficult months in the republic, with large meetings,[15] increasingly bad relations between the Serbian and the Montenegrin leadership. The latter also had to cope with a very bad economic situation causing a steady fall in the Montenegrin population's living standards. The League of Communists of Montenegro was deeply divided between the moderates, still a majority in the central committee, and the pro-Milošević faction, led by Momir Bulatović, the head of the Montenegrin party's student organisation.[16] (Dizdarevic 2001: 348). On the 10th of January 1989, a large meeting was organised in Titograd which saw, once again, a crowd demanding the resignation of all those in power in Montenegro's institutions and of the Montenegrin representatives in the federation's organs (*Borba*, 11 January 1989: 1, 3; Dizdarevic 2001: 349). Radio Titograd was already controlled by Milošević's men and was broadcasting propaganda against the Montenegrin leadership helped, of course, by Belgrade media (Dizdarevic 2001:

[15] Not only in Montenegro. On the 19th of November Milošević organised in Belgrade the largest ever Serbian meeting (managing to gather a crowd of one million people).

[16] The deep economic problems affecting Montenegro and the unpopularity of its leadership created an important basis of consensus for the organisers of the meetings, who presented themselves as the young "new guard" attempting to overthrow an inept republican leadership.

349). The federal presidency asked the Montenegrin leadership not to resign. The protest continued on the 11th, when demonstrators gathered in Titograd reached 50,000. Buses from all over Montenegro were heading for the republican capital bringing thousands of protesters to the streets.[17] The government of Montenegro informed the presidency of the republic that it was incapable of maintaining order while the two presidencies of Montenegro, the party and the republican, were now divided on the issue of a mass resignation in all organs of the republic demanded by the protesters. While the republican presidency was still determined not to surrender to the crowd, the members of the League of Communists of Montenegro's presidency showed less determination and eventually informed Stipe Šuvar of their resignation. This, in turn, forced the republican leadership to step down as well (Dizdarevic 2001: 351; *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 17 January 1989: 9-14).

The resignation of Montenegro's leadership was a traumatic event for the rest of Yugoslavia. After Vojvodina had already come under the control of Serbia, and while Kosovo was being subjected to a similar pressure, for the first time Serbia's leadership managed to extend its influence to another republic (Meier 1999: 82-83). Now the possibility that Milošević could gain the control of Yugoslav federal institutions was perceived as ever more concrete (Dizdarevic 2001: 351 and ff.; Meier 1999: 83). On the 13th of January Dizdarević reacted with strong words condemning recent events in Montenegro at a joint meeting of the federal presidency, the leadership of republics and provinces, and other high rank state officials (Dizdarevic 2001: 354). Subsequently, at the following session of party presidium, Dizdarević questioned the legitimacy of the Montenegrin party and claimed, in fact, that the resignation of the Montenegrin leadership had brought about the collapse of the LCY (Meier 1999: 83). Šuvar, in a speech on the 12th of January, prudently declared that in Montenegro, "at least formally", the legality of the system had been maintained but he also (rather contradictorily) added that the meetings could not be used as a way to change the party leadership (Šuvar 1989a: 178). A few days later he asked that a delegation be sent to Montenegro and then

[17] Apparently, this became possible thanks also to the support Milošević enjoyed among many of the Montenegrin party officials at the local level (Dizdarevic 2001: 350).

report to the LCY central committee. Milošević, arguing that the situation in Montenegro could only be judged by the Montenegrins, vehemently opposed sending federal party representatives to Titograd and eventually the new composition of the Montenegrin party leadership, now dominated by Milošević's allies, came to be accepted as a *fait accompli.*

Stipe Šuvar was now constantly and violently attacked in the media controlled by Milošević and his allies. The extraordinary conference of the League of Communists of Vojvodina, which took place between the 19th and the 20th of January 1989, was the opportunity used by Serbia to formally ask for Šuvar's resignation to be discussed at the next plenum of the LCY central committee scheduled for the 30th of January (*Politika,* 21 January 1989: 1; Dizdarevic 2001: 358; Šuvar 1989b 184 and ff.). Meanwhile, the Yugoslav presidency was working to prevent protests from taking place in Belgrade during the party plenum. Measures were taken to increase the security in the capital and in the rest of the country and Dizdarević made it clear that the imposition of a state of emergency was among the options in case of a repetition of the events of Novi Sad and Titograd (Dizdarevic 2001: 358 and ff.). When the federal party's central committee meeting took place, Milošević refrained from using the crowd in the same fashion he did in Novi Sad and Titograd but his attacks, while not enough to force Šuvar to resign, made him defend himself in what was now a difficult and hostile environment given that Serbia could already control a significant part of the votes in the LCY (*Borba*, 2 February 1989: 5; Meier 1999: 85; Šuvar 1989a: 208 and ff.).

In April, in what the Belgrade daily *Politika* presented as a "great victory of democracy", at the extraordinary congress of the League of Communists of Montenegro Momir Bulatović was elected head of the republican party presidium (*Politika*, 29 April 1989: 1, 8). Milošević's allies were now in full control of Montenegro's party apparatus and both Titograd and Novi Sad were completely within Serbia's "sphere of influence".

The meetings are not enough: the end of Kosovo's autonomy

As we saw in the previous section, the issue of Kosovo was the first and most important one to be exploited by Milošević, both to gain popularity in a broad sense, and to begin organising nationalist meetings which originated from the previous years' protests of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins. We mentioned already how Serbs and Montenegrins constituted their parallel party organisation within the Kosovo League of Communists and how in Kosovo Polje, in particular, local Serbs were active in the organisation of the "happenings of the people". The situation in the province between 1988 and 1990 is dealt with separately in this section, not only because Kosovo was the last federal sub-unit, after Vojvodina and Montenegro, whose leadership succumbed to Milošević's pressure, but also because Serbian nationalists employed a partly different strategy to gain control of Kosovo. For Milošević in this case organising mass rallies of Serbs and Montenegrins was not enough to force the provincial leadership to resign. In Kosovo Serbian rule had to be imposed directly by force and we will see how Kosovo lost its autonomy, not only as a result of an action conducted at the level of civil institutions, but also thanks to the support the Serbian leadership obtained from the police and the army.

Interethnic tensions in October 1987 had made necessary the deployment of federal police in Kosovo and relations between Priština and Belgrade began to deteriorate in 1988 when it became clear that Milošević planned to impose his rule over the Kosovo province. Kaqusha Jashari, the leader of the League of Communists of Kosovo, was at this point already complaining about the effective separation of the Serbs and Montenegrins from the rest of the prevalently Albanian party and about the role played in the persisting protests by the Kosovo Polje party organisation (Meier 1999: 73, 76). In August 1988 more than 15,000 Serbs and Montenegrins took part in a mass demonstration in Priština (Ramet 1992: 231-232), protesting against the local Kosovo leadership. As we already saw, between August and October the LCY presidium and central committee gave their substantial endorsement to a recentralisation of Serbia. Moreover a narrow

majority at the seventeenth meeting of the LCY central committee approved the constitution of a working group to discuss the possible dismissal from the party collective organ of members of the Kosovo party leadership Azem Vllasi, Kolj Shiroka, and Svetislav Dolašević (ethnically a Serb, strongly opposed to Milošević) (*Borba*, 20 October 1989: 1, 5; Meier 1999: 79; Šuvar 1989b: 100, 249). At the LCY presidium meeting of the 9th of November, the Kosovo leadership was accused of not implementing what was decided by the LCY and on the 14th of November the Serbian party leadership demanded the resignation of Kaqusha Jashari, because of her "incapability" to fulfil her functions[18] (Meier 1999: 80).

The final showdown began with the resignation *en masse* of the Kosovo party presidium members of Serbian nationality followed by the forced resignation of some of Jashari's close associates (Meier 1999: 81). On the 17th of November Kaqusha Jashari stepped down from her position as leader of the League of Communists of Kosovo and Azem Vllasi, one of the most influential among the Kosovar Albanian political figures, was ousted from the Kosovo party presidium[19] (*Borba*, 18 November 1988: 1-2). The orchestrated dismissal of the Kosovo party leadership ignited the spark of unrest in Priština where, already on the 17th, the largest Albanian demonstration since 1981 took place (Dizdarevic 2001: 403 and ff.). The protest of the Albanian population (which partially the outcome of the Albanian communists' efforts to mobilise the crowd "from above") lasted three days and ended on the 20th. Serbs in the Kosovo party were warning Albanian functionaries that, under democratic centralism, they were bound to respect the decisions of the federal party leadership (Meier 1999: 81).

Jashari was substituted by the weak Remzi Kolgezi, while the Kosovo interior minister Rahman Morina in a quick turn-around sided with Milošević and fired a

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[18] It was also demanded that Serbs be allowed to organise their own, separate, communist organisation (Meier 1999: 80).

[19] Officially, the reason for Vllasi's dismissal was that, being a member of the LCY central committee, he could not occupy the post of member of the Kosovo party leadership (Meier 1999: 81).

large number of Albanian policemen loyal to the old Kosovo leadership (Meier 1999: 81). Relations between Serbia and Kosovo were extremely strained as Milošević apparently even discussed the possibility of ordering the arrest of Vllasi and Jashari for having allegedly organised the Albanian protests. The federal party presidium convened on the 22nd and 23rd of November after the mass demonstration in Priština had ended and criticised the Kosovo party leadership for failing to consolidate power at the provincial level. This criticism was reiterated at the beginning of December when the LCY presidium once again expressed dissatisfaction at the Kosovo party's failure to replace its cadres and to constitute a "united front of Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins and others for the struggle against Albanian separatism and nationalism and all other chauvinisms and separatisms" (Šuvar 1989b: 178).

In the following weeks tension continued to remain high in the province and the Kosovo presidency sent a worried letter to the state presidency concerning the proposed amendments to the Serbian constitution. At the end of January, Milošević's ally Rahman Morina was elected head of the League of Communists of Kosovo and set for himself the main task of "liquidating counterrevolution" (*Politika*, 29 January 1989: 9). As previously noted, on the 30th of January the Yugoslav party's central committee convened and discussed (but did not approve) Šuvar's dismissal. Azem Vllasi and Svetislav Dolašević were instead relieved from their duties as members of the central committee with a narrow majority of 86 and 85 votes out of 165 respectively (Šuvar 1989b: 107). The plenum confirmed again its support for the Serbian constitutional amendments (*Politika*, 31 January 1989: 3; Magaš 1993: 209).

The imminent changes to the Serbian constitution were the cause of another wave of Albanian protests which began in early February (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 8 March 1989: 3-18). The Albanians were now "demonstrating" indoors as all mass demonstrations had been forbidden after the rallies of November (Dizdarevic 2001: 416). Nevertheless, these new phenomena of mobilisation were taken very seriously not only by Serbia but also by the federation. In fact, on the 15th of February, at a meeting of the Yugoslav

presidency the possibility of introducing the state of emergency in the province began to be seriously discussed (Dizdarevic 2001: 416). On the 19th of February a group of miners in Stari Trg refused to leave the pit and began a hunger strike, demanding guarantees on the preservation of Kosovo's autonomy and the resignation of Morina and of other Kosovo politicians close to Milošević (Dizdarevic 2001: 416; Meier 1999: 86). In actions of solidarity with the miners, different sectors of the Kosovar society mobilised. Protests were organised in the schools, in the University of Priština, and in other factories of the province. While Morina refused to resign, Serbs in the Kosovo leadership were divided. Member of the Kosovo Presidency Petar Kostić opposed any concession to the protesters while others, like Tomislav Sekulić, favoured a compromise (Dizvdarevic 2001: 421). The local communist organisation in Kosovo Polje expressed its support to the pro-Milošević provincial leadership (*Politika*, 24 February 1989: 13).

On the 23rd of February the Serbian parliament passed the amendments to the Serbian constitution after they had been approved unanimously by the Serbian constitutional committee[20] (*Borba*, 27 February 1989: 13; Meier 1999: 85-85). Very importantly, in view of what happened afterwards, the Kosovo police came now to be under the direct control of Serbia[21] (Gow 1992: 90). In addition, the amendments eliminated the provinces' veto right on future changes in the Serbian constitution. On the 27th the federal presidency met and decided the introduction of emergency measures in the province, with the consensus of all members of the collective organ[22] (*Borba*, 28 February 1989: 1). Morina, as well as other pro-Milošević Albanian members of the Kosovo leadership, (rather unexpectedly) resigned and this brought about the end of the miners' strike. On the following day the Yugoslav party presidium met while a big crowd of protesters was gathered in

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[20] Kosovar deputies were now too intimidated to run the risk of being included in the lists of "Albanian separatists".

[21] In May 1989 the Serbian presidency initiated legislation to unify the defence system of the republic, abolishing the autonomous territorial defence organisations of Kosovo and Vojvodina (*Politika*, 5 May 1989: 5).

[22] The Slovene representative, who was abroad attending the funeral of the Japanese emperor Hirohito, did not take part in the vote (Meier 1999: 89). For a detailed account of the presidency meeting see also Raif Dizdarevic's interview with *Radio Slobodna Evropa* (Pejić 1999).

Belgrade demanding the arrest of Vllasi and the rejection of Morina's resignation (Meier 1999: 89-90). Under pressure from Milošević and the angry crowd outside the LCY presidium expressed its support for the Serbian constitutional changes for the emergency measures decided by the state presidency (Šuvar 1989b: 114-115) and called for a ban against new political organisations in the country (Magaš 1993: 189). After a tense debate, the party leadership asked the state organs to "immediately proceed to take all legal actions against the organisers and perpetrators" of the Albanian protest (Šuvar 1989b: 114). After the party meeting Milošević, directly addressing the demonstrators in Belgrade, promised the arrest of the organisers of the demonstrations (Đukić 1994: 121; Meier 1999: 91). On the 2nd of March Vllasi and other Albanian political figures were brought into custody and a few days later formally accused of "counterrevolutionary activities" (*Politika*, 6 March 1989: 1).

Following the introduction of the state of emergency JNA troops and approximately 1,500 federal police arrived in Kosovo to impose order (Meier 1999: 89). Moreover, in accordance with the new Serbian constitution, Serbian police units were now sent directly from Serbia proper to the province (*Mladina*, 30 March 1990: 28-29). Meanwhile, with the withdrawal of Morina's resignation (rejected by the presidium of the League of Communists of Kosovo on the 1st of March) and the arrest of Vllasi, new protests broke out. Members of the Kosovo parliament who were thought to be against the amendments were summoned by the police and threatened of being accused of being "counterrevolutionaries" if they voted against the constitutional amendments (Meier 1999: 93). On the 14th of March the party and provincial presidencies of Kosovo expressed themselves in favour of the amendments to the Serbian constitution (*Politika*, 15 March 1989: 1). Finally, on the 23rd of March, also the provincial assembly gave its approval with only a handful of delegates who voted against (*Borba*, 24 March 1989: 1, 3; *Politika*, 24 March 1989: 1, 5; Dizdarevic 2001: 454; Meier 1999: 93). The atmosphere of intimidation in which the vote took place was concretely reflected in the heavy military presence in Priština where thousands of soldiers were enforcing the special emergency measures.

After the first clashes between the police and Albanian students of the 24th, Kosovo plunged into chaos on the 27th and the 28th of March, when the demonstrations turned violent with casualties among the police and the protesters (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 15 April 1989: 3-8). Once again, words of condemnation against Albanian nationalism came from a meeting of the federal party presidium (Meier 1999: 93). Throughout the following months it was left to the army and the police to maintain order.[23] The repressive apparatus was now becoming increasingly "serbianised", as most of the ethnic Albanian policemen were fired between 1989 and 1990. In November 1989 Morina was re-elected president of the Kosovo party presidium at the fifteenth extraordinary conference of the League of Communists of Kosovo (*Politika*, 12 November 1989: 1). In January 1990 new large demonstrations took place in the province and at the end of the month Milošević asked the then head of the state presidency, Janez Drnovšek, to send JNA troops to end the protest (Drnovšek 1998: 154-155; Jović B. 1996: 100-101). Initially, Drnovšek dragged his feet and refused to allow the use of the army to maintain public order. However, on the 20th of February, at a subsequent meeting of the state presidency, the issue of the deployment of the army in Kosovo was discussed again and the collective presidency this time approved further military measures with Drnovšek's "reservation" (Drnovšek 1998: 161; Jović B. 1996 116-117).

During the first half of 1990 Albanian language newspapers were shut down and the Kosovo Academy of Arts and Sciences was closed. In general, the Albanian population of the province suffered legally endorsed discrimination as a result of the measures imposed by Serbia to the province (Malcolm 1998: 345-346). After having reduced the autonomy of Kosovo with a first set of constitutional amendments, Serbian authorities were now promoting further changes to the republican constitution, with the aim of completely abolishing it. The Serbian assembly decreed the establishment of a special administration in Kosovo and ordered the police to block the entrance to the Kosovo assembly (Meier 1999: 98). After Kosovo deputies met outside the building in response and declared Kosovo

[23] In the following months and years the Serbian police in Kosovo closely collaborated with the Yugoslav army at time making direct use of the JNA's facilities (*Mladina*, 25 July 1990: 39).

a sovereign republic (within Yugoslavia), the provincial assembly was formally dissolved and the provincial government abolished (Meier 1999: 98). On the 11th of July a very tense meeting of the Yugoslav presidency was devoted to recent events in Kosovo which ended with the highest state organ giving its support to Serbian policies (Jović B. 1996: 165-166). In the absence of federal organs capable of stopping Serbia's nationalist leadership imposing its direct and autocratic rule over Kosovo, the province completely lost its autonomy and in September this was officially sanctioned in the new constitution of Serbia. Ironically, the fact that Kosovo (as well as Vojvodina and Montenegro) still had its own representatives in federal institutions made it easier for Milošević to exert a stronger control over the decaying federal power centres.

Milošević's hegemonic project and its first successes

In the previous sections we have seen how Milošević, as the new ruler of Serbia, successfully gained the control of Vojvodina, Montenegro and Kosovo substituting their leadership with his allies. The LCY and its organisations (at the federal, republican and provincial level) provided very important channels and in general a favourable institutional environment, which allowed Serbia's leadership to carry out its plans.

The nationalist rallies of 1988 and 1989 were clearly an example of mobilisation "from above" which was the outcome of an organisational effort carried out using the Serbian party and its mass organisations. In fact, Milošević did not invent nationalist rallies but simply took control of them and gave them impetus making use of the political infrastructure under his control (Milošević 1997: 68). The "happenings of the people" became possible thanks to the support of a significant part of the power apparatus.[24] Rallies were organised, participants were transported (usually by bus) as a result of the direct involvement of local activists

[24] Activists of the Socialist Alliance (the party's mass organisation) even prepared the traditional salt and bread, to welcome the crowds of Kosovo Serbs (Milošević 1997b).

and *apparatchiks* (Milošević 1997: 69). For local political actors, becoming engaged in the organisation of such demonstrations was a way to manifest their loyalty to the new leadership of Serbia but also to increase their visibility and popularity at the local level thanks to the enthusiastic coverage granted to nationalist meetings by the mass media loyal to the new regime. In sum, it was an easy way to consolidate their power using the same strategy, although on a more limited scale, that Milošević was using in Serbia as a whole.

We have repeatedly mentioned how the Kosovo Polje party organisation, in particular, became an important tool used by the Serbian leadership to promote the meetings of Serbs and Montenegrins (not only in Kosovo but in southern Yugoslavia in general). Dizdarević recounts that, according to sources in the federal interior ministry, the Serbian agitator Šolević was receiving instructions from Milošević through Draško Miličević, a member of the central committee of the League of Communists of Serbia (Dizdarevic 2001: 452). Later on the party infrastructure became even more directly involved in the organisation of the "happenings of the people". In his account of political events of 1988 and 1989, Stipe Šuvar maintains that "it was no secret" that the leadership of the committee organising the meetings had direct contacts with Serbia's political elite (1989b: 98). Significantly, he adds that at the end of summer and the beginning of autumn 1988 "many of the meetings were not any longer orchestrated by Šolević but rather by the League of Communists and the Socialist Alliance especially in Serbia "where citizens expressed in this way their support to the Serbian leadership" (1989b: 95). Yugoslav workers (of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality), who were previously mobilised to take part in Leninist mass events, were gathered to take part in the nationalist meetings.[25]

[25] For example, in October 1988 a significant number of the participants in the Novi Sad meetings were workers of the *Jugoalat* factory, led by the company's director. Ljubiša Stanković, former president of the Montenegrin youth organisation, recalled in an interview with *Radio Slobodna Evropa* how the committee that organised the meetings was composed by representatives of the university and youth mass organisations and of the workers' organisation of the factory *Radoja Dakića*.

The fact that Milošević, from his position, could use the party-state apparatus to mobilise the crowd under nationalist slogans, was indirectly confirmed by Stipe Šuvar in a conversation I had with him. Recalling the conflict between him and Milošević over the issue of the nationalist meetings, Šuvar remembered how he told Milošević that, if he only wanted, he could organise similar mass demonstrations in Zagreb and Split as well. Only, Šuvar would have had to employ a Croatian nationalist rhetoric. As Branka Magaš puts it, the ostensibly spontaneous rallies were "carefully organised by the party-state machine" (1993: 203).

Another way in which the party structure provided favourable conditions for the implementation of Milošević's plan is linked to the principle of democratic centralism and the way in which it governed the functioning of the LCY. It is true that LCY was in fact a confederation of eight parties each of which enjoyed considerable autonomy.[26] However, democratic centralism continued to be an in-built feature of the structure of the Yugoslav communist party[27] for two reasons. Firstly, democratic centralism was still, formally, a principle on which the LCY's functioning was based and thus it could be used at least at the discourse level to justify attempts to impose a (re)centralisation and stricter party discipline. Milošević, at times helped by Stipe Šuvar (who was ideologically oriented towards centralism), made use of the principle of democratic centralism to

[26] While he was the head of the LCY presidium Stipe Šuvar at times felt necessary to remind the party leadership that the Yugoslav party was still governed by the principle of democratic centralism. In an interview with me, however, he recognised that democratic centralism was governing the functioning of the party (at least at the federal level) only on paper (Šuvar, interview 2002). I discussed this issue with other former members of the Yugoslav leadership. Miran Potrč, who served as the president of Slovenia's parliament in socialist Yugoslavia, expressed the view that one of the problems of the Yugoslav political system was that to the 1974 federalisation of the state did not correspond a complete federalisation of the party (Potrč, interview 2002). In conversations I had with Boško Krunić (former chairman of the LCY presidium) and Nandor Major, however, they both stressed how the different republican and provincial leagues of communists were granted very significant autonomy (Krunić, interview 2002; Major, interview 2002).

[27] This view was expressed by Janez Kocijančič, a former high rank official in Slovenia and member of the central committee of the LCY in an interview with me (Kocijančič, interview 2002).

legitimise the strict control he exerted over the party organisations of the two provinces, which had always been at least formally part of Serbia. In addition, the rhetoric of democratic centralism affected the behaviour of peripheral elites under pressure from the street and from federal/central organs. When asked why the leadership of Vojvodina eventually resigned, Boško Krunić answered: "We were party people. [...] [T]he federal leadership, the presidium of the LCY central committee required that we immediately held a meeting of the provincial committee and resigned" (Bogdanovic 1999).

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, democratic centralism governed the functioning of the league of communists at the republican and provincial levels. Democratic centralism thus allowed Milošević to impose a strict party discipline in the League of Communists of Serbia, a party that before turning to Serbian nationalism had been dominated by "liberal centralisers". Branka Magaš claims that in Serbia "liberals were defeated in the end not by force of argument, but by a party machinery based on Stalinist conceptions of unity and democratic centralism" (1993: 204). The new nationalist leadership of the Serbian communist party after coming to power could purge party organs in Serbia thanks to the lack of internal democracy within the League of Communists of Serbia and to its centralised structure. In the same way, after Milošević's allies had been placed at the top of the party hierarchies in Vojvodina, Montenegro and finally Kosovo, the new leaderships of these federal sub-units could impose their control over the entire party organisations at the republican/provincial level. Hence, after having become Serbia's leader, for Milošević it was sufficient to prompt a change in the leaderships of the League of Communists of Vojvodina, Montenegro and Kosovo to put under his control practically the entire party-state apparatus in four out of the eight Yugoslav federal subjects.

Moreover, it is important to stress again that Milošević and his allies at different levels, as already noted in the previous sections of this chapter, were able to mobilise vast sectors of the Serbian population in Yugoslavia thanks to the support they obtained from the Serbian media. More precisely, they gained consensus making use of the Serbian media they had (almost) full control over. A

Serbian nationalist discourse began to be widespread in the Serbian print and broadcast media which were often directly involved in organising and giving publicity to the Serbian meetings. While I will not discuss here in detail how the Serbian means of mass communication were effectively used by the Serbian nationalist leadership, it is worth noting that Milošević was able to obtain control of the media thanks, once again, to the centralised structure (and non-democratic nature) of the party-state apparatus in Serbia. Milošević, as we mentioned when we discussed the beginning of his political career, started to prepare the terrain for his subsequent take-over of the Serbian media in 1984 when he was at the head of the Belgrade party branch. Subsequently, when he consolidated his power in Serbia, he fully exploited the control the party apparatus had over republican media[28] to complete the purge and ensure that his hegemonic project was enthusiastically endorsed by *Politika* and other Belgrade based media.[29]

In discussing the importance of the principle of democratic centralism we have just warned that while provincial and republican parties were rather centralised, it would be probably incorrect to say that the LCY was governed by democratic centralism in its federal organs. However, in one feature the functioning of the federal party differed from the functioning of the most important federal state institutions. Within the LCY, republics and provinces did not have a veto power similar to the one they enjoyed, for example, in the Yugoslav parliament. Although at the practical level the federal party did not actually play a significant

[28] Draža Marković, a key figure in socialist Serbia and Yugoslavia, writes in his diary:

> A particularly extreme one [...] is the case of Ivan Stojanović, director of "Politika" and member of the central committee of the LCY, who learned from the news that the presidency of the League of Communists of Serbia decided to propose to the Socialist Alliance of Serbia his replacement [...]. There were no preliminary discussions about this neither with Ivan Stojanović, nor with "Politika", nor with the presidency of the Socialist Alliance, nor with its organs and committees (Marković 2004).

[29] A Serbian nationalist discourse could be relatively easily employed by the Serbian media also thanks to the fact that many sectors of the Serbian *intelligentsia* were nationalistically oriented. We mentioned in the fourth chapter the now famous memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, which was drafted in 1986 and anticipated, in some respects, Milošević's program.

role in the policy-making process, what was decided by the central committee of the LCY often conferred legitimacy to Milošević's recentralising plans. With Macedonia's leadership already close to the Serbian nationalists' positions, it became quite easy for Milošević to obtain the support of a substantial part of the votes in the LCY central committee. This support became a majority afterwards, when Serbia already had full control over Vojvodina and Montenegro, whose representatives at the federal party were now responding to the Serbian leadership. It was after a vote in the federal party's central committee, for example, that prominent Albanian politicians were ousted leaving space to Milošević's allies. In general, we have repeatedly underlined how the party, despite the occasional criticism of Milošević's strategy of the meetings, constantly endorsed the revision of the Serbian constitution reducing the provinces' autonomy.

Leaving aside the institutional and formal mechanisms which determined how the party worked, an important intervening factor helped Milošević in acting at the federal party level. The fact that Stipe Šuvar, who was a centraliser by orientation, was at the head of the LCY presidium between 1988 and 1989, certainly played into Milošević's hands. Although Šuvar was badly repaid by Milošević, when the Serbian media attacked him systematically and the two clashed, Šuvar continued throughout his mandate to express his support for the Serbian constitutional amendments and to routinely denounce Albanian nationalism, attacking the Kosovar communists for failing to tackle with the problem. While Šuvar's reasons for being in favour of a recentralisation of Serbia were certainly very different from Milošević's ones, his position indirectly conferred further legitimacy on Milošević's strategy.

We saw that in Kosovo the mere use of the crowd was not enough to put pressure on the local, prevalently Albanian, leadership and to abolish the province's autonomy. Kosovo was inhabited by an overwhelming Albanian majority and in fact, the Serbian leadership's attempt to impose its rule over the province produced important episodes of Albanian mobilisation, which was partly spontaneous and partly the result of actions conducted at the level of the League of Communists of Kosovo. However, what is important to underline here is the fact that, given the

ethnic composition of the province, the Serbian leadership needed to use force and repression to impose its rule over Kosovo. This in turn could happen thanks to the fact that, as Stipe Šuvar emphasised in my interview with him, "the repressive apparatus was in Milošević's hands" (Šuvar, interview 2002).

Serbian nationalists came to control the Kosovo police first thanks to their alliance with Rahman Morina, the Kosovo police chief, whom they persuaded to become loyal to the Serbian side and to promote a purge of the provincial police. The circumstances in which Morina changed side are not completely clear and Warren Zimmermann (former US ambassador in Yugoslavia), in his memoirs describes a meeting in 1989 with a somewhat scared Morina watched closely by his Serbian "aides" (Zimmermann 1999: 79). Whatever may have been behind Morina's decision to become an instrument in the hands of Milošević his control over the Kosovo police helped the Serbian leadership to employ coercion and repression to impose its rule over the province. After the Serbian constitution was amended in 1989, Serbian police sent directly from Belgrade could operate in Kosovo, making it much easier for the Serbian leadership to impose "law and order" in the province.

The police was not the only instrument of repression in Kosovo. Particularly after the proclamation of a state of emergency in the province the army became a useful tool for the realisation of Milošević's hegemonic project. It is interesting, in this respect, what happened in 1990 when the presidency authorised the army's intervention in the province. The collective presidency, contrary to other Yugoslav state institutions, did not grant veto power to the eight representatives of the federal sub-units. This was true to the extent that, when the ceremonial head of the Yugoslav presidency, Janez Drnovšek, personally opposed the use of force in Kosovo, the collective organ nevertheless supported repression. The Yugoslav presidency had little powers when it came to the day-to-day functioning of the Yugoslav state, thus it could not normally function as a cohesive factor within the Yugoslav system. It had, however, the power to impose emergency measures in crisis situations. In the non-democratic Yugoslav political environment, the impossibility, on the one hand, of solving the Yugoslav crisis through reform

(because of the unworkable federal system) and the possibility, on the other hand, that a majority in the presidency could decide emergency military measures meant that repression was in fact almost the only way in which the Yugoslav state could deal with unrest.

Also when discussing how Milošević made use of the repressive apparatus other factors that helped him to carry out his strategy need to be mentioned. One of them was certainly the close relation (which was based on the strong Serbian presence in the JNA)[30] Milošević was forming with the army or at least with some sectors in it.[31] A second important factor was the weakness of the Kosovo territorial defence which, after the 1981 riots, had been significantly downsized, making its use, or the threat of its use, impossible. Due to the lack of military resources (such as weapons of the territorial defence) available to other ethnic groups in Yugoslavia and thanks to the very strategy adopted by their leadership, Albanians in mid-1991 were "the only demilitarised nation in Yugoslavia" as one could read in the Slovenian magazine *Mladina*'s reportages from Priština (*Mladina,* 18 June 1991: 25).

Before ending this chapter, a few words need to be devoted to other intervening factors which made it easier for Milošević to obtain control of the two provinces and Montenegro. Beginning from the most trivial aspect, the sheer geographical position of Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro made them easier targets than other federal sub-units farther from central Serbia. This proved to be important especially when organising mass meetings, as demonstrators had to be transported

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[30] Albanians, conversely, were in general underrepresented in the army (Gow 1992: 109 and ff.) especially after the 1987 Paraćin shooting, when an Albanian soldier went berserk and killed four soldiers of other nationalities, including a Serb.

[31] These factors may help us explain why the Yugoslav presidency did not use its powers to stop Milošević, instead of authorising the use of force in Kosovo. Imposing a state of emergency in Serbia (this was contemplated by the Yugoslav presidency in February 1989) turned out to be politically unfeasible. Even more so, using the army directly against Milošević would have been unthinkable. Serbia, in the Yugoslav balance of power system was certainly much stronger than Kosovo and its close ties with the army, as just mentioned, made a military intervention in the republic impracticable.

from Kosovo, or elsewhere in Serbia, and geographical proximity facilitated the task of the organisers of the rallies.[32] Moreover, the ethnic composition of Vojvodina (where according to the 1991 census Serbs constituted 57.2% of the population) allowed Milošević's allies to mobilise greater consensus in the province employing a Serbian nationalist discourse.

Another reason behind the meetings' success in Montenegro was linked to the very close cultural and historical ties between Serbs and Montenegrins. Montenegrin nationalism at times becomes partly overlapping with Serbian nationalism and, as Serbian nationalists were allegedly protecting the rights of "Serbs and Montenegrins" in Kosovo, they could obtain significant support among the Montenegrin population. In addition, the deep economic crisis that was affecting Montenegro made it possible for Milošević and his allies to incite nationalist and "anti-bureaucratic" protests against the local leadership. In this they were helped by the pro-Milošević faction in the Montenegrin party.

I end this chapter with a few words about the timing and the preconditions which made the Serbian political elite's hegemonic project possible. The fall of the two provinces and of Montenegro was the result of the first steps taken by Milošević to assure his control over Yugoslavia or over a large part of it. We saw that these first successes overlapped with a period of tension and conflict between Serbia and Slovenia and later between Serbia and other Yugoslav peripheries increasingly worried by Milošević's aggressive policy. We also saw how the Yugoslav federal structure and the decay of the regime made impossible for the Serbian leadership to achieve a recentralisation of Yugoslavia. However, for the very reason that they increased the spaces of autonomy of all republics, including Serbia, they allowed the Serbian political elite to use nationalism and the crowd to impose its control over central Serbia's weakest neighbours. In this respect, the suppression of the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, as well as Serbia's control over Montenegro, were the by-products of the residual centralistic features in the

[32] The strategy of the meetings was attempted in Slovenia as well, but the sheer geographical distance, and the fact that protesters had to cross the territory of Croatia, were among the causes of its failure.

party structure and in the repressive apparatus as well as of the collapse of central control at the level of federal state institutions.

7. The end of Yugoslavia

With the war in Slovenia, the federal centre collapsed and ceased playing a significant role in the events that followed the separation of the republic. In this chapter we will chiefly look at the development of different forms of centre-periphery conflict in the other Yugoslav republics that became independent as a result of the Yugoslav disintegration. In the first three sections we will deal with the problem of why the Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian leaderships opted for independence only late or very late in the Yugoslav crisis. In final part of the chapter I will provide a summary and an assessment of the arguments presented in this and in the previous chapters.

Why Slovenia first? Croatia's delayed separation

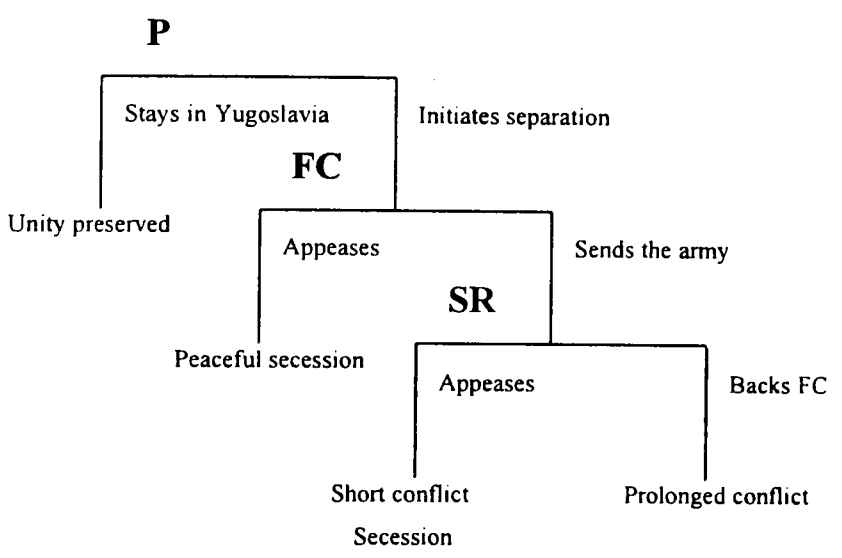
In chapters four and five we saw how changes in the political regime opened new possibilities for Yugoslav peripheral leaderships (and for Slovenia in particular) to become more assertive on one hand and, on the other, for the Serbian political elite to initiate a hegemonic project at the centre. In chapter five I ended my analysis with a discussion of the Slovenian conflict which had involved the republican leadership, as well as two other important players, Serbia and the federal centre.[1] When discussing in more detail the process that led to the emancipation of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, a question needs to

[1] Arguably, the JNA to a certain extent acted as an autonomous actor as well.

be addressed: why did the other republics start to separate only later, after Slovenia had already taken important steps in that direction?

Asking ourselves this question means trying to understand why a model similar to the one I used in figure 5.8[2] appears to work or, better, to make sense of the conflict, only in the Slovenian case and not in general when analysing the dynamics between the federal centre, Serbia and a generic periphery P.

Figure 7.1 A general model?



Looking at the strategies of the leaderships of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia through the prism of this or of a similar model is only possible when we analyse the period of time prior to the war in Slovenia which saw not only the separation of the northern republic but also the disintegration of federal institutions. Still, if we analyse what happened in these three republics before and shortly after the secession of Slovenia, some interesting observations can be made.

The most complicated case is probably Croatia, since this republic passed through different stages marking different positions adopted by the republican leadership on the issues of reform, increased autonomy and independence. Until the late eighties the Croatian leadership remained dominated by conservatives and the

[2] Not incorporating the different scenarios relating to the periphery's military capabilities, which may have only pertained to the Slovenian case.

party governed the republic under a "great silence", which had started in 1972 after the purges. Things began to change as a result of both Yugoslav internal and international developments. The emergence of a clearly nationalist leadership in Serbia, the progressive emancipation of Slovenia and the tensions between Belgrade and Ljubljana as well as an international context in which Leninist communist parties in Eastern Europe were starting to lose their grip on power (Woodward 1995: 102) were all factors that initiated significant changes in the political equilibria in Croatia. Between 1988 and 1989 Croatia moved increasingly towards Slovenia in an alliance that saw Zagreb and Ljubljana opposed to Milošević in Belgrade (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Situation Report (Yugoslavia)*, 26 May 1989: 3-8). In 1989, in particular, political debates in the republic became more open both within the League of Communists of Croatia and in the Croatian society at large. These debates, however, remained strongly influenced by the narrow choices available to what was still a communist leadership of a Yugoslav republic among whose members a Yugoslav (and indeed often conservative) orientation continued to be widespread. Moreover, the Croatian political elite was divided along ethnic lines between Serbs and Croats and this meant that members of the Croatian leadership had to be more cautious when taking stances that could be perceived as promoting Croatian nationalism.

The radical changes in the Croatian political scene came with the eleventh congress of the League of Communist of Croatia in December 1989. The liberally oriented Ivica Račan was elected chair of the party to the surprise of Račan himself who instead expected the "centrist" candidate's victory[3] (Meier 1999: 136). The rather quick democratisation of the Croatian party (which adopted the additional name of "Party of Democratic Changes") was marked by the scheduling for April 1990 of the first multiparty elections in the republic. The previously existing "registered associations" could now start acting as political parties in an electoral campaign in which the main opponent to the communists became Tuđman's HDZ.

[3] According to Meier the unexpected outcome of the election came as a result of the fact that the vote was carried out through secret ballot and that it followed a vote taken among all ordinary party members (Meier 1999: 136).

The change in the Croatian political environment had its effects on inter-republican political dynamics before the 1990 election, with the further strengthening of the alliance between Slovenia and Croatia and the growing tensions between Zagreb and Belgrade. However, the real turning point came with the (again, partly unexpected) victory of Tuđman and of his nationalist party. As we said in chapter four, this victory was also the result of an electoral system that even if it was designed to be advantageous to the League of Communists of Croatia instead paved the way for a landslide victory of the HDZ.

In sum, we can identify four distinct phases in the transformation of the Croatian political environment. The first one, starting in 1971-1972 and ending in 1987-1988, could be labelled, at least for some of its characteristics, a form of "post-totalitarian" equilibrium, in which a conservative and passive orientation prevailed within the republican leadership.[4] The second phase, which ended at the end of 1989, was a liberalising one, that saw the increasing emergence of a liberally oriented communist leadership and the progressive opening of the Croatian political environment. With the transformation of the Croatian League of

[4] See Linz and Stepan 1996 for a definition of post-totalitarian regimes. I have repeatedly referred to the post-Tito period in Yugoslavia as a "liberalisation by decay" phase. At the same time, it should not be surprising that I am now discussing political dynamics in Croatia, at least up to the mid-eighties, as characterised by a "post-totalitarian" equilibrium. The fact that a regime transformation occurred at the federal level, throughout the eighties, did not mean that the situation in the different Yugoslav republics was changing in the same way, and with the same pace. The opening and the decay of the Yugoslav regime meant that local leaderships had more autonomy if they wished to promote political reform. But the issue of whether they actually wanted to promote changes in the political environment at the republican level is a different one. In fact, as we saw, the new nationalist leadership of Serbia used the greater autonomy it enjoyed to initiate an authoritarian reversal in the republic. In Croatia, for the reasons we discussed, the local leadership remained for a long time very careful in making any real concessions in the direction of a liberalisation of the local political environment. The Yugoslav case, in this respect, presents some similarities with the Soviet one. While Gorbachev's *perestroika* is a classic example of liberalisation, it was similarly characterised by very different dynamics at the federal centre and in some of the Soviet peripheries. An increased freedom in Moscow did not produce any significant changes in some of the Soviet peripheries. Central Asian republics, for examples, remained substantially untouched by the process of political reform and continued to be ruled by local hard-liners.

Communists and the first democratic elections, a third phase began which saw the beginning of the democratisation of the Croatian political environment. The 1990 elections, however, were marked by the victory of Croatian nationalists who came to control both the republican parliament and the presidency. In many respects, we can see this as the beginning of a fourth neo-authoritarian phase in which the old non-democratic political system was replaced by a new form of authoritarianism, this time having as its basis for legitimacy Croatian nationalism. But regardless of this, what is important here is to underline how the new elections registered another abrupt political shift in which the old communist leadership was excluded from power.

Hence, the path of political transformation in Croatia was different from political developments in Slovenia in the late eighties and one of the most significant differences between the two processes is probably its sheer duration. The Slovenian communists took steps in the directions of liberalisation earlier and in a much more decisive way than the Croatian leadership.[5] This, already at an initial stage, gave rise to the emergence of a relatively independent Slovenian civil society, exacerbated tensions between Belgrade (and the JNA) and Ljubljana and eventually gave the Slovenians the possibility to organise a military response to a possible central intervention well in advance. Moreover, the fact that Slovenian communists were more determined, from the start, in pursuing greater autonomy and greater democracy, made them more successful in the first multiparty elections held in the republic. While it is true that in the Slovenian parliament the opposition coalition DEMOS became the dominant force, in the presidential elections it was Milan Kučan, the reformed communist candidate, who obtained the majority of the votes cast.[6]

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[5] This is true also for other Yugoslav republics. As Woodward underlines, "the process of self-organization, political differentiation, and redefinition of individual and national interests that had been going on at its own pace for a decade in Slovenia now had to occur within months in the other republics" (1995: 199).

[6] Certainly, one of the explanations of Kučan's popularity was the role he had in transforming the League of Communists of Slovenia into a reformed communist party and the stance he took in favour of a democratisation and a decentralisation of Yugoslavia.

At the time of the joint Slovenian-Croatian declaration of independence the situation in Slovenia and Croatia differed in many respects. Firstly, as already mentioned, Slovenia was relatively well prepared from the military standpoint while Croatia was not in a position to oppose significant military resistance to the Yugoslav army. Secondly, while in Croatia the nationalist HDZ was in power, and in full control of both the presidency and the parliament, the situation in Slovenia was more complex with Kučan as the president and a moderately nationalist, pro-independence opposition coalition (which proved to be rather fragile), having the majority of the parliamentary seats. Thirdly, and more obviously, in Croatia there was a significant Serbian minority chiefly concentrated in certain areas of the republic. This had effects not only at the political level in Croatia, having made the local leadership more cautious, at least initially, when it came to discussing issues of republican sovereignty and independence; it also had other, and perhaps more important effects in Serbia, where the republican leadership could on the one hand use the issue of the Serbian minority in Croatia to mobilise nationalist feelings and, on the other, could count on the military support from Serbian militias in Croatia in case of war. As we noted in the fifth chapter, keeping Slovenia within Yugoslavia was not a priority for the Serbian nationalist leaders, but Croatia undoubtedly had to remain within the "future borders" of Yugoslavia.

Given that the Slovenian leadership had already committed itself to independence, for Croatian nationalists it was almost impossible to refrain from joining Slovenia in asserting, at least symbolically, the independence of their own republic. The issue of independence was in fact an important part of the agenda of the HDZ and the departure of Slovenia would have made it even more problematic for Croatia to remain in what was destined to become a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia. In Croatia, however, the independence declaration retained chiefly a formal value at least in the period which immediately followed it. While in Slovenia steps were taken to assert the sovereignty of the republic, Croatian authorities substantially refrained from acting in a similar way and adopted a more "passive" stance.

In July 1991, the Croatian president declared that "Croatia is not Slovenia" and added: "we will not allow the army to become involved in the battle. Our path to

freedom is different"[7] (*Pravda*, 12 July 1991: 4). While interethnic clashes were already erupting in ethnically mixed areas of Croatia, Tuđman's approach in dealing with the JNA was nonetheless less confrontational than the one adopted by the Slovenian leadership. There may be various explanations for the tactic adopted by the Croatian leadership but a commonly held view is that Tuđman wanted to appear "defenceless" hoping in this way to be able to obtain greater support from the international community (Woodward 1995: 171; Pirjevec 2002: 69). This, in other words, means that the very military unpreparedness of the Croats was in fact a result of Tuđman's tactic aimed at signalling, through the absence of military preparations, Croatia's unwillingness to enter into an armed conflict. An alternative interpretation might be that Croatian forces did not act simply because they were not militarily prepared and for this reason wanted to refrain, at all costs, from a confrontation with the Yugoslav army. Whether what happened was mostly the effect, or the cause of Crotia's military unreadiness is not going to be discussed here. I simply want to emphasise that the Croats did not have their declaration of independence accompanied by concrete measures and this delayed by a few weeks the beginning of a full-scale war in Croatia.

The declaration of independence of Slovenia and Croatia was in fact immediately followed by a military intervention only in Slovenia and not in Croatia. Interestingly enough, while for Milošević Croatia was much more important than Slovenia, for the federal centre it was more feasible to use force against Ljubljana rather than Zagreb since in Slovenia the separation of the republic acquired a real meaning which implied, among the other things, a serious and concrete threat to the authority of the federation. Reasserting the federal authority over the Yugoslav borders, for example, was initially necessary only in Slovenia where the republican authorities were quick in taking control of border posts after independence. However, after the short war in Slovenia and what effectively came to be a defeat for the JNA, Croatia became the theatre of a much longer and bloodier conflict which already involved chiefly two players: the Croatian and the

[7] Quoted in Ramet 1992, p. 257.

Serbian leaderships, with the latter rapidly gaining control of what, only a few weeks earlier, was still officially the Yugoslav federal military apparatus.[8]

Coming back to our model in figure 7.1, Croatia, at least initially, cannot be said to have "initiated separation" in real terms. The Croatian leadership, in an effort to prevent Croatia from being involved in the conflict, formally declared independence but *de facto* did not act in this direction. The whole dynamics of the game, however, changed literally in a matter of days and when the war in Croatia started it was no longer the outcome of a conflict between a weak federal centre and the Croatian nationalist leadership, but rather a conflict between Croatia and the Serbian leadership, which was trying to exert its full control on a smaller Yugoslavia through the army and Croatian Serb militias. A Yugoslavia which, in the plans of Milošević, had to comprise Croatia, or at least those regions in Croatia prevalently inhabited by Serbs and had to be a much more centralised political system than it used to be in the past. Similar plans, for obvious reasons, could not be acceptable to the new Croatian leadership and military confrontation between Serbian and Croatian forces escalated.

If it is true that Tuđman was personally against extensive military preparations in response to a possible central military intervention, this may simply be interpreted as a major mistake on the part of some sectors of the Croatian leadership. Refraining from getting involved in a direct confrontation with the Yugoslav federal army might have made sense in the context of a still, somehow, functioning federal Yugoslavia. However, it was a completely pointless tactic[9] in a conflict between Serbia and Croatia at least for a leadership whose stated aim was to create the basis of a sovereign Croatian nation-state. It was a tactic that, possibly, succeeded in delaying the conflict for a few weeks but eventually made things worse, when finally Serbia could use all the military resources now at its disposal in an attempt to prevent Croatia from separating.

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[8] Which, in turn, promoted the constitution of local Serb militias in Croatia.

[9] A reflection of the Croatian leadership's misperception of the changing dynamics of the Yugoslav conflict might also be seen in the already mentioned fact that the Croatian representative in the Yugoslav presidency was the only one to vote against the withdrawal of the JNA from Slovenia.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina liberalisation and democratisation started even later than in Croatia and the local communists were even less enthusiastic about reform than their Croatian counterparts. Once again, this can be traced back to different historical factors, which in Bosnia-Herzegovina had produced a political climate particularly unfavourable for political reform. Since the seventies and the eighties the Bosnian communist leadership had been very repressive, by Yugoslav standards, in trying to prevent the emergence of public manifestations of dissent and of an organised civil society in general. This, for the Bosnian communist leadership, was a way to maintain extremely delicate ethnic equilibria in the fear that any move towards a liberalisation of the local political environment would have implied the explosion of ethnic tension between the three main groups living in the republics: Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats[10] (Meier 1999: 196-197). When, at the beginning of 1990, the Bosnian parliament passed a new constitution and allowed the emergence of independent political parties this seemed to be simply the necessary response to the development of multiparty pluralism elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

In the early stages of the Bosnian democratisation the republican authorities tried, in an attempt that proved to be completely unsuccessful, to prevent political parties from organising themselves on an ethnic basis. In fact, in the November 1990 elections to the assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina the three ethnic parties representing the Bosnian Muslims, the Serbs, and the Croats living in the republic obtained 202 out of the 240 seats of the republican parliament. As we briefly discussed earlier, the three parties initially agreed to rule together in a coalition which saw ethnic quotas applied at different institutional levels including the presidency which was organised as a collective body. This meant that the transformation of the political environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina was different

[10] The suppression of the Croatian Spring in 1971 had reverberations also in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where any possible expression of feeling even faintly reminding of Croatian nationalism was strongly discouraged and repressed.

from similar processes both in Croatia and Slovenia and had different outcomes. While in a first phase the political climate was characterised by a "post-totalitarian" equilibrium (possibly with even less freedom allowed than in Croatia), the republic was forced by external developments to proceed to a quick democratisation whose outcome was strongly conditioned by the mixed ethnic composition of the Bosnian population. Even more than elsewhere, the reformed communist party was unsuccessful in presenting itself as a viable alternative to new nationalist (or at least national) parties. In the aftermath of the elections, forming a fragmented coalition of ethnic parties was the only way not to exclude any of the Bosnian ethnic groups from power.

It is necessary to underline that everything we discussed about ethnic elites at the republican level applies only partly and with qualifications to the political elite of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This republic's mixed ethnic composition and its delicate ethnic equilibrium make it difficult to speak about the Bosnian political elite as of a republican ethnic elite. The democratisation and the corresponding ethnic polarisation of the Bosnian political environment created instead three distinct ethnic elites having as their constituencies their own respective groups. Bosnia-Herzegovina had now, in some respects, problems similar to the ones Yugoslavia had been suffering from in past years. In the decision-making process, a consensus of all three parties representing the interests of different ethnic groups was, if not strictly required, desirable. Clearly, the mixed ethnic composition of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the delicate equilibrium between ethnic parties made this republic proceed towards independence in a much more cautious way than Slovenia and Croatia. Alija Izetbegović, the leader of the national Bosnian Muslim party SDA, and now the head of the Bosnian collective presidency, continued in fact to have a very prudent attitude towards the issues of sovereignty and independence. Although the SDA relied on Muslim "national" symbols to obtain the support of the Bosnian Muslim population, it would not be correct to qualify it merely as a nationalist party. Izetbegović's party's program was relatively moderate especially if we compare it to the political platforms of other national parties which were emerging throughout Yugoslavia in an atmosphere of opposed radical nationalisms.

We said that in post-electoral Bosnia-Herzegovina a stable coalition of all three ethnic parties was highly desirable but in fact not strictly necessary. What was strictly necessary, for the coalition to enjoy a parliamentary majority was that at least two of these parties remained in it. The escalation of the conflict between Serbs and Croats in Croatia and the increasing ethnic tensions in Bosnia-Herzegovina itself made the fragile three party coalition extremely unstable. In February 1991, when Croatia and (even more decisively) Slovenia were moving towards independence, a declaration of sovereignty was discussed in the Bosnian assembly but successfully blocked by the SDS BiH, the Serbian ethnic party led by Radovan Karadžić. From this moment, the Serbian component became less and less involved in the political life of the republic within its institutions and continued instead to play the ethnic mobilisation card with the support of the Serbian nationalist leadership from Serbia proper. With the constitution of Serbian paramilitary groups and the unilateral proclamation of Serbian autonomous regions in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the pattern followed in this republic was similar to events which had happened and were happening in Croatia.

While it was left chiefly to the Bosnian Muslim and Croatian components to keep republican institutions functioning, as late as June 1991 Alija Izetbegović (together with Kiro Gligorov) promoted the last, desperate attempts to save Yugoslavia in the form of a loose confederation. We saw how these plans clashed with the opposite positions of Slovenia and Croatia on one side and Serbia and Montenegro on the other. I remind this to emphasise, once again, how at this stage both the Bosnian and the Macedonian leaders were not interested in outright independence but rather in remaining in Yugoslavia while preventing the Serbian leadership to carry out its hegemonic plans.[11] In an interview I had with the former

[11] Malcolm, in his history of Bosnia, highlights that "in any debate about changing the federal structure into a looser confederation, Bosnia would be on the side of Slovenia and Croatia as they pressed for change, since it too wanted to reduce the scope for the domination and manipulation of Yugoslavia by Belgrade. But all the same Bosnia could not support Slovenia and Croatia all the way in these arguments. The prospect of those two republics actually carrying out their threat to leave Yugoslavia was deeply alarming to most Bosnians since they would then be left, together with another weak republic, Macedonia, entirely under Serbia's thumb" (1994: 224).

president of Macedonia Kiro Gligorov he confirmed that one of the reasons why he and Izetbegović were putting great efforts in trying to reconstitute Yugoslavia on a different and confederal basis was that at that time they were well aware that a collapse of Yugoslavia could have ended in a bloodbath.[12] And it was not difficult to foresee that among the Yugoslav republics the one in the riskiest situation was precisely Bosnia-Herzegovina.

These negotiations failed and conflict erupted first in Slovenia and then in Croatia. During the Croatian war the Bosnian leadership chose by and large a neutral position, once again being worried about possible repercussions of a more pro-Croat stance both within Bosnia-Herzegovina and in the relations with Serbia. While this was happening at the political level what remained of the old federal army began to concentrate in different areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina, both in preparation for the next Yugoslav conflict and in defence of the strategically important arm industries located in the republic (Malcolm 1994: 230-231; *Vreme News Digest Agency,* 9 December 1991).

The issue of Bosnian sovereignty was discussed again in October 1991 while the hopes for Bosnia-Herzegovina to remain in some sort of Yugoslav federation or confederation were fading away. On October the 15th after the SDS BiH deputies had walked out of the Bosnian assembly, the republican parliament declared the "sovereignty" of Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Borba*, 16 October 1991: 2, 3; Malcolm 1994: 228). While the army and the various Serbian militias were continuing to carry out military preparations, Izetbegović chose to do very little, if anything, to get ready for a military confrontation. Remarkably the Bosnian leadership opposed very limited resistance to the army's confiscation of the territorial defence units possibly, also in this case, in an attempt to reassure the army's commanders signalling its peaceful intentions (Malcolm 1994: 230). But with the EC countries recognition of Croatia's independence (January 1992), the issue of Bosnian independence became the most important problem in the Yugoslav crisis. Before a possible recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence, European leaders

[12] Gligorov in particular witnessed how Izetbegović said that Bosnia-Herzegovina "could [exist] neither without Croats nor without Serbs".

were asking that the republic follow the example of Slovenia and Croatia by holding a referendum on the issue. The Bosnian leadership, despite the fierce opposition of the Serbs, scheduled it for the 29th of February and the 1st of March 1992.

A week before the referendum, an agreement between the SDA, the SDS and the Bosnian HDZ (the Croatian ethnic party) was signed in Lisbon. The document recognised the existing borders of the republic and at the same time proposed a division of the Bosnian territory into ethnic cantons as the Bosnian Serbs were asking. What happened after the agreement was signed is not completely clear yet. According to some historical accounts of the Yugoslav conflict, a week later Izetbegović simply withdrew from the agreement insisting on the necessity to create a multiethnic Bosnian republic without internal ethnic borders (Lampe 2000: 362; Pirjevec 2002: 133; Woodward 1995: 197; Zimmermann 190-191); usually, the main reason which is quoted as being behind Izetbegović's change of mind is the pressure in this direction exerted by other members of the SDA leadership after he came back from the negotiations to Sarajevo. Meier underlines however that "it is not at all the case [...] that Izetbegović 'retracted' his assent after his return. What was important was what the Serbian side was then preparing, openly or in secret" (1999: 210). It is probably true that after the agreement was signed each side made of it what it wanted (Meier 1999: 210). This seems to emerge also (for example) from the memoirs of the last American ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman. He reports that Nikola Koljević, the number two in the Bosnian SDS, "interpreted" the Lisbon agreement as a go ahead for the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1999: 189). A few days after the signing of the Lisbon agreement, a division of Bosnia-Herzegovina was indeed discussed at a "secret" meeting in Graz, where Karadžić, Milošević and Tuđman devised a strategy to coordinate Serbian and Croatian territorial claims at the

expense of the Bosnian Muslims[13] (Malcolm 1994: 232-233; Pirjevec 2002: 133; Zimmerman 1999: 190; *Vreme News Digest Agency,* 20 January 1992).

All this seems to point to the fact that no party was really committed to respecting the agreement signed in Lisbon, and particularly for the Bosnian Muslim side it became difficult to stick to the reluctant concessions it had made accepting a regionalisation of Bosnia-Herzegovina on a strictly ethnic principle. Within the Bosnian Muslim leadership many expressed their discontent at the Lisbon agreement which was vague enough for the Serbian side to immediately view it as a way to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina *de facto*. It is important to remember that, at this stage, the Serbian side already enjoyed a considerable military superiority in the field whereas the Bosnian Muslims were lagging behind in carrying out their own military preparations. With the military resources at its disposal, the Serbian leadership of Bosnia-Herzegovina could easily use the document signed by all parts in Lisbon as a pretext to impose a partition of the republic using force if necessary.

The referendum on independence was largely boycotted by the Serbian population who was responding to the appeal or was under the threat of Karadžić's party which, with the help of the militias it controlled prevented the polling stations from being set up in areas controlled by the Serbs. Thus, only 63.4% of the Bosnian electorate took part in the consultation. Of those who did, an overwhelming majority voted for independence but this was far from being a plebiscite in favour of secession similar to the ones that took place in Slovenia and Croatia.[14] The Serbian population of Bosnia-Herzegovina constituted a very

[13] Also former Yugoslav prime minister Ante Marković maintained, in his October 2003 testimony at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, that Milošević and Tuđman had agreed to divide the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina between Serbia and Croatia (*Vjesnik*, 24 October 2003: 2). This was confirmed in the testimony of Hrvoje Šarinić, who worked as Tuđman's chief of staff (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline*, 22 January 2004).

[14] Although it is true that the Serbian population boycotted the referendum also in Croatia this was politically less significant than a similar boycott in Bosnia, for the very fact that the Serbian population constituted a smaller portion of the population in Croatia. In addition, in Bosnia-Herzegovina no single group constituted the ethnic majority in the republic and this made a

significant part of the Bosnian electorate and the fact that it did not participate in the referendum meant that the outcome of the vote was to be treated more carefully if not by the Bosnian leadership in Sarajevo then at least by the international community.

On the 3rd of March when the results of the referendum became known, the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina was proclaimed. In the following month various episodes of ethnic clashes were reported throughout the republic while the international community was still trying to find a solution through negotiate to the Bosnian problem. Full-scale war started between late March and early April and the EC recognised Bosnia-Herzegovina on the 6th of April followed the day after by the United States (which on the 7th recognised the independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). International recognition came for Bosnia-Herzegovina at a time when the republican leadership not only did not do much to assert the sovereignty of an independent country but was too weak in all respects to take any steps in this direction. At best, Bosnian authorities controlled Sarajevo and a few other urban centres (Pirjevec 2002: 146).

This situation was also the outcome of the ethnic and political fragmentation of the Bosnian political leadership. We discussed how the Bosnian Serbs, with the support of Milošević opposed any move towards independence. Also the Croat-Muslim coalition was a very fragile one in which the Croatian side acted rather ambiguously as a result of the war in neighbouring Croatia and of Tuđman's plans to extend his influence to Bosnia-Herzegovina or at least to certain areas of the republic.[15] If we add to this the divisions within the Bosnian Muslims themselves, it becomes clear why and how, for the Bosnian leadership it was very difficult to

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"consociational" agreement of all three ethnic components all the more necessary.

[15] At the beginning of 1992 Tuđman succeeded in having the more moderate Stjepan Kljuić replaced at the leadership of the Bosnian HDZ by Mate Boban, a hard-line Croatian nationalist. Although the official line of the Croatian HDZ was against a redrawing of the Bosnian borders, there are many indications that Tuđman had plans to extend Croatian control to Herzegovina, probably in the framework of an agreement with Milošević on the division of the republic between Serbia and Croatia. See also Kljuić's testimony during the Milošević trial at the Hague tribunal.

move in a linear way towards independence and perhaps even more importantly to move to take control of the republic once independence was finally declared.

Another very important factor that shaped the action of different sectors of the Bosnian political elite (together with their allies in other Yugoslav republics) were the very different military resources available to the three ethnic leaderships of Bosnia-Herzegovina before and after the conflict started. We have already mentioned that Serbian militias, supported by the old Yugoslav army, were being set up and started to gain control of vast areas of the Bosnian territory.[16] The Croats, initially on a smaller scale, constituted their own militias, and at the end of 1991 refused to hand over the weapons of the territorial defence to the army.[17] The Bosnian Muslims were the least prepared for a military conflict and although some efforts had been made, particularly in early 1992, to organise the defences against a possible attack, these did not (and could not) match the military preparations of the Serbs, in particular. It appears in fact that the Bosnian leadership in general and Izetbegović in particular understood that a war was almost inevitable (only) in early 1992, and started to prepare themselves for it. In his account of the Yugoslav collapse, Meier speculates that from December 1991, Izetbegović was simply trying to postpone the outbreak of the conflict using the remaining months to set up Bosnian Muslim militias (1999: 208). At any rate, the very fact that Bosnian Muslims were badly prepared from the military standpoint seems to be one of the crucial reasons why the Serbian leadership decided to initiate the conflict. While the Bosnian Serbs were certainly in a position to achieve much through negotiations, they thought they could achieve everything through force (Meier 1999: 213) and this prompted them to start full-scale war, in early April.

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[16] Veljko Kadijević openly states in his memoirs that in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia the JNA fought together with Serbian units of the territorial defence (1993: 94, 162).

[17] The building up of Croatian forces in Herzegovina, which had close relations with Croatian paramilitary groups in Croatia, was linked to military developments in the conflict that opposed Serbs and Croats in Croatia.

From this brief account of political developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina prior to the outbreak of the conflict, it should be clear why we cannot use a model like the one presented in figure 7.1 in this case to understand the dynamics between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the centre. The reason is very simple. The Bosnian leadership did not want Bosnia-Herzegovina to separate from federal Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Muslim political elite, in particular, was conscious of the fact that it could not lead Bosnia-Herzegovina towards independence alone, that it needed the support of the other ethnic groups living in the republic which, in the case of Bosnian Serbs, was impossible to obtain. Moreover, the Bosnian Muslim side in Bosnia-Herzegovina, employed a discourse that was less radically nationalist in its tones than the rhetoric used by the Croatian and (even more) the Serbian sides. This might have been the consequence of the Bosnian leadership's more cautious stance but also of the fact that before the beginning of the war a Muslim (now Bosniak) national identity was probably less developed than Croatian and Serbian nationalisms. For the Bosnian Muslim leadership, mobilising ethnicity was clearly more difficult than for the Serbian and Croatian political elites. In fact, at least until the end of 1991, the Bosnian leadership put great efforts into trying to save federal Yugoslavia, moving thus in a very different direction from the one chosen by the Slovenes and the Croats. Afterwards the Bosnian Muslim leadership finally realised that independence was the only option if they wanted Bosnia-Herzegovina to retain a certain degree of autonomy without seeing its external borders redefined, and possibly new internal ethnic borders drawn. Furthermore, the Bosnian Muslims realised that, to achieve their goals, they had to prepare themselves for a war, something they started to do very late. The conflict in Croatia, the military mobilisation of Serbian communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as the separation of Macedonia (the negotiations on the peaceful withdrawal of the army from the republic were completed in March 1992) left alone Bosnia-Herzegovina in what was now, in all respects, a Great Serbia. In the war which started in April the old federal centre had already ceased to exist and, consequently, played no role. Indeed, at the end of the same month, a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia composed by Serbia and Montenegro was officially born. This did not mean, of course, that in the following years the Serbo-Montenegrin

federation and what was left of the old Yugoslav army did not remain deeply involved in the conflict.

Macedonia's peaceful separation

I only briefly mentioned that an agreement on the withdrawal of the army from Macedonia was reached already in early 1992 and we still need to analyse political dynamics in the only republic that separated from Yugoslavia in a peaceful way. Also in Macedonia political liberalisation came relatively late as a dogmatic and conservative communist leadership was in power in Skopje until 1989. Before the beginning of its political transformation, Macedonia was in fact a close ally of Serbia in the conflict that opposed at that time chiefly Slovenia and the centre. In an episode that remained famous, at the 17th session of the Central Committee of the LCY (October 1988), Macedonia's representative, Vasil Tupurkovski, labelled the growing opposition to Milošević an "unprincipled alliance" (Dizdarevic 2001: 279; Šuvar 1989b: 173) and in March 1989, the Macedonian representative at the Yugoslav presidency attacked the Kosovar Albanian leader Azem Vllasi who was dismissed from the Kosovar party leadership in late 1988 and subsequently arrested in 1989 by Serbian security forces.[18]

Things began to change in mid 1989 when Serbia started to exert its expansionist pressure also on Macedonia and this put in a difficult situation the old-time allies of Serbia within the Macedonian party and favoured the emergence of a more liberal and reform-minded leadership in Skopje. At the end of 1989, thanks to these developments and also to the influence of similar processes of political liberalisation in the north of Yugoslavia, independent political associations were

[18] The issue of Kosovo and of Albanian nationalism in general was quite a sensitive one for the Macedonian communist leadership, given the very significant number of Albanians living in Macedonia. This meant that, also for the Macedonian leadership, Albanian national mobilisation was seen as very dangerous. Vllasi himself, in early 1988 (when he was still the president of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Kosovo) criticised the Macedonian authorities over the issue of the rights of the Albanians in Macedonia (Poulton 2000: 129).

allowed to be constituted and subsequently transformed themselves into parties. A first moderately nationalist party, the MAAK, was founded in early 1990 by members of the Macedonian *intelligentsia*. While the MAAK was able to organise large demonstrations and to present itself as the vanguard of the Macedonian national movement, it was soon "replaced" in this role by a more radical nationalist party that was constituted in June 1990, the VMRO-PMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity).[19]

The second half of 1990 saw the real beginning of the democratisation of the Macedonian political environment after the republican assembly decided to schedule for November of the same year the first multiparty elections in the republic. The ethnically and politically fragmented composition of the Macedonian electorate was reflected in the post-electoral Macedonian parliament. The Macedonian nationalist party VMRO-PMNE obtained the largest number of seats (37 out of 120) followed by the reformed communists (31 seats). A considerable success was obtained by the Party of Democratic Prosperity which became the most important political force representing the interests of the Albanian population (more than 20% of the total population of the republic). Kiro Gligorov, who had been a liberal in the communist party (and for this reason had his political career interrupted in the early seventies) became the new president of Macedonia in January 1991.

Like Kučan in Slovenia, Gligorov had to deal with a parliament in which the reformed communists were not the biggest political force. Despite this apparent similarity, the situation in the Macedonian political arena was more complex than in Slovenia and events took a very different course in Skopje and Ljubljana. The Macedonian nationalists were in the end excluded from the majority coalition which was instead formed by the former communist Party of Democratic Change, the Party of Democratic Prosperity and a third party of liberal orientation. With the nationalists at the opposition and a multiethnic and moderate coalition in

[19] Whose name is traced back to the organisation that fought against the Turks at the end of the 19th century.

power, Macedonia refrained from rushing towards independence at least until it became clear that remaining in Yugoslavia was impossible.

We have already mentioned that Gligorov, together with Izetbegović, was very active, in the first half of 1991 trying to save Yugoslavia through compromise and negotiations. Kiro Gligorov, in an interview explicitly stated that he believed that while respecting the "aspirations of the republics that wanted to become independent" there "was no need to interrupt all relations based on 70 years of life together" [in Yugoslavia] (Gligorov, interview 2002). Other than those reasons related to the internal political situation of Macedonia and to the type of coalition that had the majority in the parliament, there are several factors that help us explain why Macedonia could not move decisively to assert its independence. One problem that threatened the stability of an independent Macedonia was certainly related to the large number of Albanians living in it who were often demanding in terms of national rights more than Skopje was willing to grant. Moreover, the Macedonian economy was relatively backward and highly dependent on its integration in the Yugoslav economic system.[20] Indeed, Kiro Gligorov told me that maintaining a unified Yugoslav economic market was one of the main reasons behind his efforts to keep Yugoslavia together, in some form. Finally, Macedonia was very weak in the international arena having to face, once independent, threats coming from different external actors (Gligorov, interview 2002). Obviously, the first problem for Macedonia was Serbia, whose leadership could decide to intervene militarily in the republic as it did in other Yugoslav peripheries. But that was not all, and it is well known how Greece in particular regarded with great suspicion the possible creation of a new independent state with the same name of a Greek region.[21] Also Bulgaria, where the existence of a separate Macedonian

[20] Vasil Tupurkovski, in an interview with *Mladina*, expressed the view that the main reasons which made impossible for Macedonia to pursue independence were economic ones (*Mladina*, 26 February 1991: 27).

[21] Greece's intransigence over the name of Macedonia and the possible emergence of an aggressive Macedonian nationalism, which subsequently led to a Greek boycott against the country, was certainly excessive, but had some justifications in the "subliminal irredentism", which was particularly widespread in certain sectors of the Macedonian *intelligentsia* (Meier 1999: 190). Already in October 1989 Macedonian nationalists were employing slogans like "Solun [Salonika]

language and nation was often put in question could represent a problematic neighbour for Skopje. In sum, all neighbouring countries, including Albania, which had interests in defending the rights of the Albanian population in Macedonia, could represent a potential threat for Skopje (although not necessarily a threat of a military character).

As a consequence, even if the Macedonian parliament asserted the republic's autonomy in January 1991, independence for Gligorov and the Macedonian leadership was not the "first best" but rather the "necessary evil" if remaining in Yugoslavia proved to be impossible. The separation of Slovenia and Croatia and the war in these republics made the scenario of preserving Yugoslavia as a loose confederation less and less likely (while the Macedonian authorities were putting significant effort to make sure that Macedonian soldiers were getting involved in the Croatian conflict as little as possible) (Poulton 2000: 176). In September 1991, much earlier than in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a referendum on independence was held. The question on which the electorate was called to express its opinion left the door open for the possible reconstitution of a Yugoslav commonwealth of states, in that it spoke of "independent and sovereign Macedonia with the right to join the future alliance of sovereign states of Yugoslavia" (Poulton 2000: 177n). A very significant majority of the voters cast their ballot in favour of independence but also in Macedonia an important part of the electorate chose to boycott the referendum. In this case the Serbs (little more than 2% of the population) were joined by the Albanians and the total turnout amounted to about 72% of the voters with 95% of the votes in favour of independence (Woodward 1995: 466n).

In November 1991, a new Macedonian constitution was passed, which *de facto* declared Macedonia's independence (Meier 1999: 182). Now Macedonia moved towards a complete separation from Yugoslavia pressed by external events and also from within by the strong Macedonian nationalist movement (Woodward 1992: 342). The most interesting question in dealing with how Macedonia gained

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is ours" (Poulton 2000: 172) and, when in 1991 a new Macedonian constitution was passed proclaiming the necessity to "care for" Macedonians outside of the country, this became another point of attrition between Skopje and Athens.

its independence is related to what happened in the months following its formal assertion, when the Macedonian leadership successfully negotiated a peaceful withdrawal of the army from the republic. This is one of the most interesting puzzles in the whole history of the Yugoslav collapse and a few hypotheses can be made on the factors that favoured this peaceful separation.

Macedonia did not start to separate or even less so, declare its independence when federal Yugoslavia was still functioning. We have seen the reasons why this happened and how Macedonia initially was even an important ally of Serbia. Significantly, the alliance between Skopje and Serbian nationalists in Belgrade had not been imposed like elsewhere by Milošević (through the instrument of mass nationalist meetings) but was the outcome of decisions taken by Macedonian leaders who thought until 1989 that a strategic alliance with Serbia was in the interests of Macedonia.[22] This is important because it meant that while Macedonia (given its position and its relative weakness) could have easily been a possible target of Milošević's plans to substitute local leaderships through mass mobilisation, for Serbia putting such pressure on Skopje was not necessary until late 1989 or early 1990. When it eventually became necessary, it was probably already too late to implement similar plans also in this republic. This made possible the beginning of the Macedonian liberalisation without significant Serbian interference. At any rate, even after the political thaw in Skopje, the local leadership continued to favour a transformation of Yugoslavia into a loose confederation rather than its dissolution. A war like the one experienced by Slovenia, when the republic separated from the federal centre, was not possible simply because as long as the federal centre continued to function Macedonia did not try to secede.

What was still possible, nevertheless, was a later intervention by Serbia after independence was proclaimed in an attempt to make Macedonia a part of a rump Yugoslavia hegemonised by Serbia. There are several reasons why this did not happen. Although Macedonia did not enjoy the advantage of being ethnically

[22] One of the issues that could bind together Skopje and Belgrade was the problem of Albanian nationalism.

homogeneous (like Slovenia), the Serbian population constituted a very tiny minority of its population, which could not give substantial support to Serbian forces in case of conflict. Serbia could not play the ethnic mobilisation card within the republic which in turn meant that a military intervention to prevent independence was more difficult or less sustainable in the long run in the absence of internal allies.

With its small Serbian population, the republic had little strategic meaning for nationalists in Belgrade or at least was a much less important target than Bosnia-Herzegovina. The sheer fact that Macedonia began to separate after a war in Croatia when military preparations were already well under way for the next conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina meant that also for the army, which was withdrawing from the north of Yugoslavia, the continuation of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the most obvious and logical strategy. Opening a southern front in Macedonia would have complicated things and ultimately was not deemed necessary for both political and military reasons.

It needs to be recognised that the successful negotiations that led to the peaceful withdrawal of the army from Macedonia were also a result of the diplomatic and political skills of Kiro Gligorov. In the already mentioned conversation I had with the former Macedonian president, he stressed how his only objective during his meetings with the Yugoslav army general Blagoje Adžić was to prevent war. To achieve this goal he clearly signalled the peaceful intentions of the Macedonian leadership to the military and, perhaps more importantly, made concessions on the issue of the Yugoslav army's weapons and other assets in Macedonia.[23]

Whether the withdrawal of the JNA from Macedonia was simply a tactical move or meant the true commitment of Serbia to accept Skopje's independence is also a

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[23] In fact, as the former president recalled, when the army left Macedonia troops carried away everything they could (from heavy weapons to light bulbs!). This, in the intention of the army generals, was also meant as a way to prevent a possible "repetition of events which occurred in Slovenia and Croatia", depriving Macedonia of all its military resources. See also *Vreme News Digest Agency*, 17 February 1992 and 2 March 1992.

matter of discussion. Former president Gligorov speculated that the Serbian leadership possibly believed in early 1992 that it first had to direct its attention to Bosnia-Herzegovina to solve only at a later stage the problem of Macedonia (Gligorov, interview 2002). While there is nothing that definitely confirms this hypothesis, there is some evidence that points in this direction. The army, for example, did everything in its power during its retreat to prevent or to make more difficult the development of a Macedonian army. Macedonia at the time of independence was not only very weak militarily but also economically and politically facing the problems we mentioned when we discussed precisely why choosing independence was a difficult decision for the Macedonian leadership. It might well be possible that the Serbian leadership simply tried to weaken Skopje[24] without resorting to force in the hope that sooner or later Macedonia could "implode" and perhaps even ask to join again rump Yugoslavia or to come back under its military umbrella. This did not happen due to some wise decisions of the Macedonian leadership including the one to ask the UN in late 1992 to send troops to monitor Macedonia's borders with Serbia and Albania. Serbian forces remained engaged in Bosnia-Herzegovina longer than expected and when in 1995 the Bosnian war ended with the Dayton agreements, for the Serbian leadership it was not any longer a viable option to initiate a new war against Serbia's southern neighbour.

How Yugoslav republics gained independence

Looking back at what we discussed in this and in chapter five, there are several conclusions which can be drawn. In post-Tito Yugoslavia inter-republican equilibria were very fragile and in the process of "liberalisation by decay" (which occurred, I emphasise, at the federal level) they became increasingly precarious. During the second half of the eighties, two republics in particular were in a

[24] Already at the end of 1991 Milošević tried to exploit the intransigent position of Greece towards Macedonia and apparently even proposed to the then prime minister of Greece Konstantinos Mitsotakis a partition of Macedonia between Serbia and Greece (Meier 1999: 193).

sufficiently powerful position to become a threat to the survival of Yugoslavia: Serbia and Slovenia. Obviously the pressure they exerted went in opposite directions with the leadership of the first aiming at a recentralisation of Yugoslavia and the leadership of the second at its decentralisation and eventually at a complete separation of Slovenia. With the federal centre incapable to respond, in one way or another to these opposite demands, the tension between Serbia and Slovenia became itself a factor that accelerated the further weakening of federal institutions.

This is not to suggest that Slovenia's leadership and Serbia's leadership were equally responsible for the collapse of Yugoslavia. After all, the Yugoslav crisis was precipitated by the emergence of Milošević as the new nationalist leader of Serbia and it was this change in the Serbian political elite that in many respects made the Slovenian response necessary. I am simply suggesting that with Milošević in Belgrade, it was only Ljubljana which was strong enough to oppose a significant resistance to his hegemonic plans. And as Slovenia was alone in this confrontation, its response turned itself into an increasingly intransigent pursuit of full independence.

There are several reasons why only Serbia and Slovenia were in a position to act decisively in an attempt to radically transform Yugoslavia. Some of these reasons have been mentioned already, but it is worth repeating them here. A first, obvious reason is related to Slovenia's ethnic composition and geographical position. Slovenia was ethnically homogeneous and this had the effect of making it much easier for its leadership to advocate the secession of the republic as the future nation-state of the Slovenes. Moreover, Slovenia's position at the very periphery of Yugoslavia made its separation more feasible and made central military intervention or an anti-Slovenian use of the crowd orchestrated from Belgrade, more complicated. A corollary of Slovenia's ethnical homogeneity is that in this republic no areas prevalently inhabited by Serbs were present making it impossible for Milošević to mobilise Serbian militias there. The other peripheral republics were not ethnically homogeneous. Bosnia-Herzegovina had a clearly multiethnic structure. A very significant Albanian population lived in Macedonia

and, though there was a clear ethnic Croatian majority in Croatia, Serbs were locally the majority in certain regions. Serbia was not and is not ethnically homogeneous. But it is clear that for peripheries to oppose centralising pressure and/or to define themselves as autonomous nation-states, it was rather important to be ethnically homogeneous. Whereas it was not for Serbia to transform Yugoslavia into a centralised political system.

If to this we add that Slovenia was economically the most developed of all Yugoslav republics, it become easy to understand why of all federal sub-units not under the direct control of Serbia, only Slovenia could afford to take the lead in opposing Milošević's ambitions and the army's plans to restore order in the republic. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and even Croatia were simply too weak, politically and economically, to act in the same way.[25] When preparing for secession meant later developing a republican army once again Slovenia was the only periphery which, thanks to the commitment of its leadership and to the lack of internal opponents, was able to organise its own armed forces. This meant that its declaration of independence could immediately acquire a real significance.

We have seen why Slovenia was the only periphery which could and indeed did strongly oppose plans to recentralise Yugoslavia but I have not yet dealt with the issue of why and how Serbia was able to exert such a strong pressure in the opposite direction. Also in this case the reasons are quite simple. First and foremost Serbia was not a periphery, it was the biggest and most populated republic in the country and its geographical location overlapped with the political centre of Yugoslavia. From Belgrade the Serbian nationalists could initiate their plans to impose Serbia's hegemony to the rest of the federation. But this was clearly not enough. A very important factor that shaped events in Yugoslavia during the late eighties and the early nineties was Serbia's alliance with the Yugoslav army. Serbia's close ties with the military may be explained by the overrepresentation of Serbs (and Montenegrins) among the JNA officers. Yet the ethnic factor, alone, does not account for everything. For some of the high rank

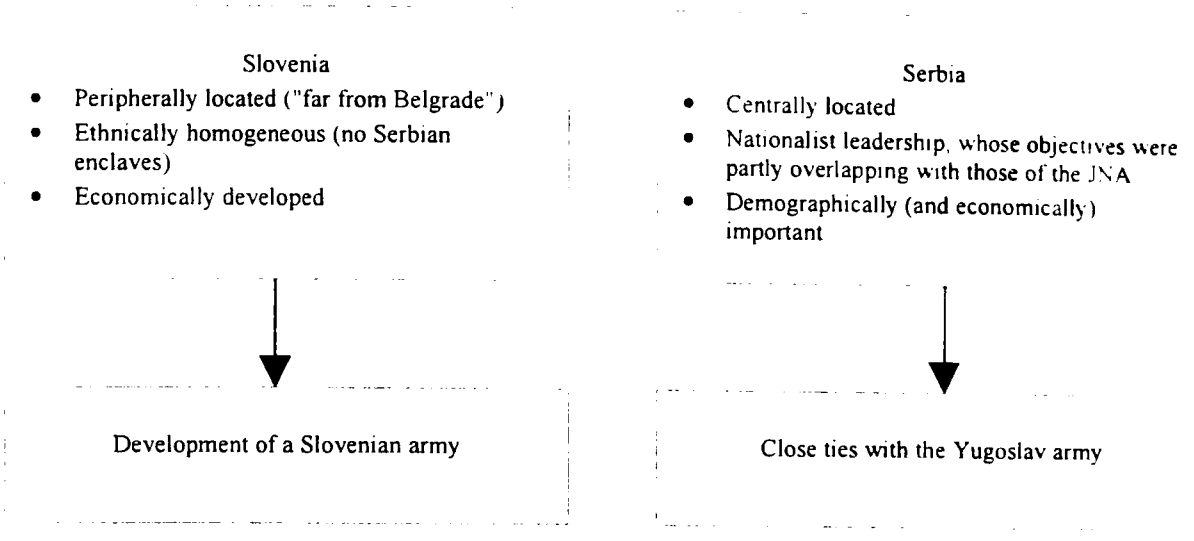
[25] Even today, whether Macedonia and, above all, Bosnia-Herzegovina are viable states in the long run, is still a matter of opinion.

army officers (among whom a conservative orientation traditionally prevailed), Milošević represented a chance to keep Yugoslavia together and to prevent Slovenia from going too far on the path to autonomy and political liberalisation. Those generals who had a "Yugoslavist" orientation had ultimately different goals from the ones Milošević who was not much interested in Slovenia, for example. Until it was convenient for them, Serbian nationalists exploited the conflict between Slovenia and the JNA to carry out their own project.[26]

Thus, Serbia's privileged contacts with the JNA (which had always been a very important cohesive element of the Yugoslav political system) made its position stronger. However, it would not be completely correct to say that before the separation of Slovenia the Yugoslav army was under the direct control of the Serbian leadership. A more precise way to describe the situation from the beginning of the violent collapse of Yugoslavia and the end of the Slovenian war, would be to say that no army intervention could begin without orders from the federal centre but no army intervention could be sustained without the support of Serbia. And this, as we saw, can be used to interpret what happened during the federal military intervention against Ljubljana. To a certain extent, the Slovenian war was only indirectly a result of the opposing objectives of Serbian nationalists and Ljubljana. When the Slovenian leadership reacted to the Serbian hegemonic project with separation that, once the decision to separate was taken (or possibly once the first few days of war were fought), this was opposed only by the federal centre and by the army. We saw how the Serbian leadership substantially decided to let Slovenia go and to concentrate military resources in fighting Croatia, and subsequently Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[26] Boško Krunić, former chairman of the Yugoslav party presidium, expressed this view during an interview with me (Krunić, interview 2002).

Figure 7.2 Slovenia and Serbia as the two main republican players



The tensions between Belgrade and Ljubljana which developed in federal Yugoslavia saw Slovenia moving directly towards separation, in a process that continued from liberalisation through multiparty elections and the creation (from local territorial defence and police forces) of the Slovenian armed forces. Given the nature of this process, which was a continuous process of progressive detachment, its outcome was much less dependent than in other peripheries on the results of the first republican multiparty elections. Post-electoral Slovenia simply continued to move in the same direction as before, led by the reformed communist Milan Kučan.

What happened in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia was quite different and in this chapter we have analysed the different outcomes of the opening of the Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian political environments. In these republics, liberalisation was a by-product of events taking place in other Yugoslav republics as well as the outcome of the final collapse of the federal centre. The beginning of this phase marked a significant discontinuity point in the history of these republics. The democratisation that followed and the outcome of the multiparty elections at the republican level, had a very important influence on the way conflict developed between Belgrade and the (former) Yugoslav peripheries, or at least on its timing.

In the final phase before the breakup of Yugoslavia, already before the elections in Zagreb, Croatia allied with Slovenia but this did not prevent the Croatian communists from being ousted from power shortly afterwards. The new Croatian nationalist elite that emerged after the elections promoted national independence but was in a much more difficult situation than its Slovenian counterpart and, as we saw, lacked the military resources which were available to Ljubljana. The new political elites of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia found themselves instead between the hammer and the anvil, that is between the separating north and the threat of being incorporated in a Great Serbia. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia declared independence only later, when it became clear that no other alternative was available.

We mentioned already that after the war in Slovenia a new distinct phase of the process of Yugoslav disintegration began which no longer significantly involved the federal centre. We can say that the fragile equilibria holding together what remained of Yugoslavia completely collapsed. The wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were wars of a different type, not only because they were considerably longer and bloodier than the brief Slovenian conflict. They were both wars that saw Yugoslav/Serbian forces acting, not so much to defend the territorial integrity of a now non-existing Yugoslavia, but using declarations of independence (which had chiefly a symbolic meaning, or at least little practical meaning) as a pretext, to reassert Serbian control over former Yugoslav peripheries.

Although both the Croatian and the Bosnian wars belong to the same phase of the conflict, the differences between these two conflicts are quite significant. In Zagreb the nationalist leadership was clearly committed to independence but could not for many reasons act in such a decisive way as the Slovenian one did. In Sarajevo (and in Skopje as well) local leaders were practically pushed by Milošević and his allies to declare independence, in a situation where the only alternative to separation was a complete subordination to Serbia. When the army and the Serbian militias attacked, Bosnia-Herzegovina's political leadership in fact

was not in control of most of the republic's territory and was very little prepared to a military confrontation.

Despite the weakness of Croatia's and Bosnia-Herzegovina's leaderships, the wars in which these two republics were involved (probably contrary to the expectations of the Serbs) lasted months in the first case and years in the second one. They both eventually ended with a defeat for Serbia.

Conclusions: do madmen calculate, and what will happen next?

The central argument put forward in this thesis is that the outcome or more precisely the different outcomes of the Yugoslav disintegration process, were mostly the result of the rational strategies pursued by Yugoslav political actors given the institutional resources they had at their disposal and the constraints and incentives they faced. Looking at the action and interaction of different sectors of the Yugoslav political elites we have tried to understand why the Yugoslav disintegration process had disintegrative consequences in some of the federal sub-units, but not in others (Montenegro, Vojvodina and Kosovo) and why in some cases the disruption was accompanied by significant episodes of violent ethnic mobilisation, while in some others it was substantially peaceful (Macedonia, Montenegro, Vojvodina).

Before addressing our main research questions, we have first discussed the weaknesses of the Yugoslav system as a whole, trying to understand why Yugoslavia collapsed in the first place, as opposed to the rather different problem of why its collapse had different outcomes in different peripheries. We have seen how decades of Yugoslav nationalities polices reinforced (in some cases created) and institutionalised national identities establishing in each of the federal sub-units ethnic cadres and elites. The Yugoslav system progressively empowered republican and provincial leaderships in a way that later made it possible for them to become national political elites. The highly decentralised institutional framework defined in the 1974 constitution, with its "consociational" arrangements entailing a requirement of unanimity of all republics and provinces

for most policy decisions, was one of the factors that led to the institutional paralysis of the eighties and contributed to the collapse of the Yugoslav system.

A second factor we have identified as being pivotal in leading to the Yugoslav disruption was the peculiar way in which the Yugoslav regime and political system transformed during the eighties, after the death of Tito, the single most important source of authoritarian power in the system. The greater freedom of movement Yugoslav political elites enjoyed during the eighties was the by-product of a process of transformation of the Yugoslav political system which we have labelled as "liberalisation by decay". This change in the Yugoslav political environment was both the outcome of deliberate reform efforts of sectors of the Yugoslav political leadership as well as the result of the progressive disintegration of federal institutions.

In the absence of Tito's unifying figure, the legitimacy crisis of communism and the pressure of alternative civil society movements induced local elites to respond to emerging challenges to the party's monopoly employing nationalism or "softer" demands for greater decentralisation. The instability of liberalisation processes is often the result of organising civil society before full democratic reforms are implemented and multiparty competition is allowed. In multiethnic and federal Yugoslavia, a major instability factor was the response of local communist elites to the emergence of a relatively autonomous civil society in those republics where a more pluralist climate developed. Indeed, during the second half of the eighties, the gravest threats to Yugoslavia's survival came from Belgrade and Ljubljana where, more than elsewhere, a relatively lively civil society endangered the position of local communist elites.

Unlike other Eastern European countries which began their transition at a later stage, years of inconclusive debates on democratic and market reforms in Yugoslavia had already worn the democracy card out; consequently, using it alone became less effective in the political market for political actors who wanted to present themselves as the "new" alternative. In Slovenia it had to be accompanied by autonomy demands and by a confederalist agenda. In Serbia the local

leadership employed an utterly nationalist discourse accompanied by the populist rhetoric of the "anti-bureaucratic revolution". At the practical level, this was translated into a political project which, through an alliance with the JNA, was aimed at constituting a new, hegemonic centre in Belgrade and at transforming Yugoslavia into a Serb-centred union. Carrying out its hegemonic project, the Serbian leadership produced a situation of "multiple sovereignty" at the centre, introducing a further element of instability into the system.

The Yugoslav regime, increasingly unable to effectively exert (authoritarian) power due to institutional paralysis, had also lost most of its ability to employ coercive measures against republican elites by the late eighties. The traditional instrument of purges ordered from the centre, which had served in Tito's Yugoslavia as an effective means to control local leaderships, ceased to be a factor ensuring the substantial stability of the system. Institutional fragmentation, as well as a change in the political climate, made this instrument simply impossible to use. In the still non-democratic Yugoslav political environment the only remaining way to constrain the action of republican elites was through the direct use of force, that is by employing a military or similar intervention. The extreme nature of this instrument of control made its use unlikely before the disintegration process was well underway and this in turn made local political elites relatively free to act in order to mobilise ethnicity. Moreover, Miloševi's alliance with the JNA made a military intervention against Serbia virtually unthinkable even when the Serbian leadership was directly undermining Yugoslavia as a federation based on the principle of multiethnic representation. However, the fact that a military intervention remained the only instrument of control at the disposal of the centre and of the Serbian nationalists who eventually gained control of the JNA ultimately precipitated the violent collapse of Yugoslavia.

To answer the question of why certain federal units continued to remain part of rump Yugoslavia, we have looked at how the Serbian leadership succeeded in gaining control over them. As we saw, through the use and manipulation of mass protests and demonstrations organised from above, Miloševi and his allies forced to resign the local leaderships of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro. Serbian

nationalist meetings became possible thanks to the support of a significant part of the party apparatus. Rallies were organised and participants were transported as a result of the direct involvement of local activists and *apparatchiks*. The party's mass organisations, previously used to mobilise supporters during Leninist demonstrations and rallies, became useful mobilisational resources in the hands of Serbian nationalists. For local political actors, becoming engaged in the organisation of such demonstrations was a way to manifest their loyalty to the new nationalist leadership of Serbia. It was also a way to increase their visibility and popularity at the local level thanks also to the enthusiastic coverage granted to nationalist meetings by the mass-media loyal to the new regime. In sum, it was an easy way to consolidate their power using the same strategy, although on a more limited scale that Miloševi was using in Serbia as a whole.

Leaving aside the institutional resources made available to Miloševi by the LCY's organisational structure, a second way in which the party structure provided favourable conditions for the realisation of Miloševi's program is linked to the principle of democratic centralism and to the way in which it governed the functioning of the LCY. It would probably be incorrect to say that the LCY, in its federal organs, was functioning according to the principle of democratic centralism. However, democratic centralism continued to be an in-built feature of the structure of the Yugoslav communist party (despite its confederal structure) for two reasons. First, because democratic centralism governed the functioning of the league of communists at the republican and provincial levels. In other words, the LCY was a confederation of rather centralised republican and provincial leagues of communists. Secondly, because democratic centralism was still, formally, a principle on which the LCY's functioning was based and hence it could be used to provide legitimacy to recentralising attempts. Thus, democratic centralism allowed Miloševi? to impose a strict party discipline in the League of Communists of Serbia and, at least at the discourse level, was used to justify his attempts to recentralise Serbia and Yugoslavia.

In Kosovo, the use of the crowd was not enough to secure Serbia's control over the province, inhabited by a prevalently Albanian population. In this case, the Serbian

leadership had to resort to the use of the repressive apparatus as well. The police under Miloševi's control and, particularly after a state of emergency was declared in the province, the Yugoslav Army became necessary both to crush Albanian ethnic mobilisation and to impose Belgrade's control over Kosovo. At this stage, being under Belgrade's control already meant being under the control of Serbia much more than under the authority of the federal centre.

In the last chapters of this thesis we have analysed the strategies at the disposal of peripheral and central elites both in Tito's Yugoslavia and in more detail at a later stage, when Yugoslavia's disintegration was unfolding. In doing so, we have made fully explicit our rationality assumption employing in some cases formal models to illustrate in a schematic way the choices available to political actors. We saw how the breakdown of the equilibrium in the Yugoslav liberalised political environment was accelerated by the emergence of a nationalist leadership in Serbia and of a political elite in Ljubljana which accompanied its liberal and reformist program with a "confederalist" and autonomist agenda. In both Ljubljana and Belgrade, local elites came soon to control military resources. In Belgrade, this happened through an alliance between Serbian nationalists and the Yugoslav Army. In Ljubljana, a Slovenian army developed from the local territorial defence as a result of the resoluteness with which the local leadership began to pursue independence and thanks also to other "facilitating" factors, such as Slovenia's geographical position, ethnic homogeneity, and relative prosperity.

Before and during the brief conflict in Slovenia, the federal centre exerted only partial control over the army which was now *de facto* under the joint authority and influence of the federation and of Serbia. Lack of information and a miscalculation of Ljubljana's response to a military intervention led to a situation whereby a conflict which was meant to be short because of a quick Slovenian capitulation ended up being short because of the lack of support the military option received from Miloševi. The military operation in Slovenia was conceived to be a quick showdown to prove to the Slovenian "amateur soldiers" that the federal centre was serious about restoring order in the republic. Instead the conflict ended rapidly with the Yugoslav army's defeat and Slovenia's

independence. There is rather clear evidence that this happened thanks to the stance taken by Miloševi and his allies who were more interested in using military resources in the subsequent conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, rather than in an attempt to prevent Slovenia from separating. An order from the federal centre was at this point possibly a necessary but no longer a sufficient condition for the sustained involvement of the federal army in a Yugoslav periphery. In other words, a war could not continue without the commitment of both the federal and the Serbian leaderships.

The much bloodier wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina which followed marked a second and distinct phase of the conflict where the old federal centre ceased to play any meaningful role as an independent actor. After the Slovenian conflict, some of the federal institutions at the centre were "occupied" by Miloševi's allies while the federal sub-units not under direct Serbian control ceased to be represented at the federal level. The Croatian and Bosnian ethnic wars and similarly Macedonia's peaceful secession, were to a significant extent the outcome of the strategies and tactics employed by the Serbian leadership to exert control over an increasingly narrow Yugoslavia. This becomes particularly clear in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina where war was substantially imposed over the non-Serbian local leadership.

It is true that a conflict between Belgrade and Skopje was avoided thanks also to the fact that the Serbian side in Macedonia could not count on the presence of large Serbian communities, such as the ones that populated areas of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is however only part of the explanation. The peaceful withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Macedonia was a tactical move necessary to prevent the opening of a southern front after a war had started in Croatia and when military preparations were already being made for the next conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In fact, there is at least some evidence that points to the fact that the Serbian leadership believed in early 1992 that it first had to direct its attention to Bosnia-Herzegovina to solve only at a later stage the problem of Macedonia. The army, for example, did everything in its power during its retreat to prevent or to make more difficult the development of a Macedonian army.

Macedonia at the time of independence was not only very weak militarily but also economically and politically and some sectors of the Serbian leadership simply tried to weaken Skopje without resorting to force in the hope that, sooner or later, Macedonia would "implode" and perhaps even ask to join again rump Yugoslavia or come back under its military umbrella. This did not happen, thanks to some wise decisions of the Macedonian leadership including the one to ask the UN in late 1992 to send troops to monitor Macedonia's borders with Serbia and Albania. Serbian forces remained engaged in Bosnia longer than expected and when in 1995 the Bosnian war ended with the Dayton agreements, for the Serbian leadership it was impracticable to initiate a new war against Macedonia.

This thesis, while certainly relying on existing historical analyses of the Yugoslav collapse, is an effort to look at the disintegration of Yugoslavia avoiding the historical (in some cases atheoretical) approach which is so common in much of the literature on Yugoslavia. A central assumption on which this thesis is based is the rationality assumption. To interpret the behaviour of political actors, we have adopted a rational choice terminology and, for illustrative purposes, we have in some cases used formal game theoretical models. In doing so, we have looked at the Yugoslav disruption not simply as a unique historical occurrence but trying to understand and contextualise it on a more abstract level using models of rational behaviour, as well as some of the theoretical tools developed by scholars of nationalism, mobilisation and, most importantly, transition. This analysis is indeed greatly indebted to the literature on transition and its focus on the role of political actors (constrained by institutions). As we saw, although the forces at play were partly different, the breakdown of the Yugoslav equilibrium had certain analogies with the breakdown of the political equilibrium in liberalised political environments which has been described in recent studies of political transition.

We said that political elites in Yugoslavia behaved rationally in the sense that, recalling our definition of rationality, they maximised their rewards given the information they had and the constraints they faced. Does the outcome of the Yugoslav disintegration process appear to be consistent with reward-maximising rational behaviour? Slobodan Miloševi, usually considered to be the main culprit

of the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia, presents the most problematic case at first glance. After Slovenia separated, Serbia lost control of areas of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina which are (or were) prevalently inhabited by Serbs and Zagreb and Sarajevo became the capitals of two independent states. In 1999, after NATO intervened in Kosovo, the province became an international protectorate over which Belgrade exerted only nominal authority. In 2000, Slobodan Miloševi was ousted from power in rump Yugoslavia. Shortly afterwards, he was arrested and transferred to the custody of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, where he is currently standing trial for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. How could a rational self-interested agent pursue a strategy with such disastrous results?

Being rational and maximising one's own rewards does not necessarily mean ending with positive rewards at the end of the game. Simple two-player games, where both actors play rationally, may end up with a winner and a loser with the latter worse off after the game (and indeed, we can safely assume that Miloševi? was better off at the beginning of his political career than he is today). Having said that, viewing Miloševi's strategy as a failed strategy would be overly simplistic. The strategy adopted by the Serbian leadership was certainly a high-risk strategy (and in this respect Miloševi may be seen as an agent having high "risk proclivity"). However, through the use of nationalism and the mobilisation of ethnicity, Miloševi and some of his allies managed to remain in power, first in Serbia and later in rump Yugoslavia, between 1987 and 2000. If we assume, as we did, that the primary goal of political actors is to stay in power, Miloševi successfully attained this goal for approximately thirteen years. It is true that the Serbian political leadership failed in its attempt to transform Yugoslavia into a Serb-centred union. However, this did not prevent Miloševi and his allies from consolidating their position of power in an increasingly small Serbia, playing the nationalist card and exploiting crisis situations to their advantage.

Miloševi's last military defeat occurred in 1999 when Belgrade lost control of Kosovo. This happened after Belgrade's military and police forces had to withdraw from the province following a military intervention by NATO which

was aimed at preventing further ethnic cleansing against the Albanian population. Slobodan Miloševi's regime collapsed in 2000 after a defeat in presidential elections and mass demonstrations which forced the leader of rump Yugoslavia to resign. The reasons which brought an end to Miloševi's rule cannot be discussed here at length. It is worth pointing out, however, that in the period during and even immediately following NATO's intervention, Miloševi's political survival did not appear to be under threat. On the contrary, the war gave a popularity boost to a Serbian nationalism prone to purporting the Serbian people as the eternal victim and the external military threat gave to the regime the opportunity to employ measures which restricted basic freedoms. What had significantly changed in the 2000 elections was that for the first time in many years a number of opposition parties managed to present themselves as a united bloc backing a presidential candidate who was able to mobilise significant support. Internal political dynamics in Serbia (not directly connected with the ruling elite's use of nationalism), rather than the last military defeat, appear to be the main factor which led to the end of Miloševi's regime. In retrospective, Miloševi's initiative to call elections in September 2000 was certainly a mistake. However, the same cannot be said of his and his allies' entire strategy since the emergence of a Serbian nationalist leadership.

Milan Ku?an, one of the communist leaders who led Slovenia to independence, became the president of the Slovenian presidency in 1990 and president of the country in 1992, in the first direct presidential elections in independent Slovenia. He was re-elected president in 1997 and remained in power until 2002. Also in this case a former communist leader, who first adopted an autonomy agenda and subsequently led the country towards independence became one of the new leaders of independent Slovenia. Slovenia's political leadership was rewarded by the electorate precisely because of the leading role it had in the process that culminated with independence and democracy. In this respect, the political successes in Slovenia of Ku?an and his allies are, indeed, less surprising than Miloševi's long period in power in Belgrade. However, they are again a reminder of the powerful incentives for local elites to pursue an autonomy secession strategy.

In Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, the political elites that led these republics to independence emerged at a later stage,after multiparty elections were held at the republican level. For this reason, they are less connected with the communist past of these federal sub-units. Moreover, in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, they did not directly pursue independence until the very last moment, that is until it became clear that no other option was available to them if they wanted their republic to enjoy any autonomy in a smaller Yugoslavia. In all three cases, however, the republican leaders who were in power when independence was declared remained in power afterwards when new states were created (in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina after bloody wars). This is true of Franjo Tuman, who died in 1999 president of Croatia, as well as of Kiro Gligorov, who remained president of Macedonia until 1999. Although the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was much more complex, given the multiethnic structure of the republic's population (and the powers of the High Representative, appointed by the international community), it is worth noting that Alija Izetbegovi remained in positions of power until 2000, when he stepped down for health reasons.

In a significant number of cases, political actors were rewarded by a number of years in power after having pursued a strategy which we have considered to be rational. This is consistent with our assumption that the main goal of political actors is to remain in power. The history of the Yugoslav disintegration process appears also to confirm that, in general, political actors were willing to run the risks associated with war in order to turn from leaders of Yugoslav federal sub-units into leaders of smaller, but independent countries. To a certain extent, this can be said also of Serbia's nationalist leadership which after having lost a few wars remained nevertheless in a position of authoritarian power in Serbia thus free from the constraints of Yugoslavia's power-sharing mechanisms. After all, Miloševi had repeatedly expressed his position on the future of Yugoslavia saying that he believed the only alternative to the destruction of Yugoslavia was its transformation into a modern (i.e. centralised) federation. We must underline, however, that for the leaderships of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia the option of remaining in Yugoslavia almost certainly meant a significant reduction

in, if not the complete elimination *de facto* of, the autonomy enjoyed in socialist Yugoslavia by the two republics. This (eventually) made independence virtually the only possible strategy for them.

In sum, political elites acted to stay in power and even when this was not an unavoidable choice, preferred being in power in independent countries rather than in a confederal Yugoslavia. In general, the high "rate of success" of what were previously republican leaderships in post-Yugoslav independent republics, is another indicator of the fact that yet there was method in the strategies adopted by political actors. The few members of the Yugoslav political elite who did not have a republican constituency and who, like Ante Markovi, attempted to save Yugoslavia from the federal centre, failed and were ousted from power.

I will end this thesis with a few words on how some of the lessons learned here could be applied to the present of post-Yugoslav republics. Slovenia is the least problematic case given its ethnically homogeneous structure, and in Croatia the number of ethnic Serbs has substantially reduced as a result of the war and of the mass expulsions of Croatian Serbs during operations "Flash" and "Storm" in 1995. However, three countries which became independent as a result of the Yugoslav disintegration retain a multiethnic structure.

The union of Serbia and Montenegro, previously known as Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was formed in 2003 as a loose confederation after the EU brokered an agreement on the relations between Serbia and an increasingly independence-minded Montenegro. It remains composed of four of the old Yugoslav federal sub-units: Serbia, with the two provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and Montenegro. As already mentioned, the control exerted by Belgrade over Kosovo is only nominal, the province being under *de facto* UN administration. Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of two semi-autonomous entities, the Republika Srpska, prevalently inhabited by Bosnian Serbs, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats make up the majority of the population. Also in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a significant role is played by the international community given the ample powers of the High Representative and

the presence in the country of approximately 7,000 peacekeeping troops. In Macedonia, according to the 2002 census, approximately 25% of the population belongs to the Albanian communities and a remaining 10% to other ethnic groups (such as the Turks, Roma, Serbs, etc.). Internal conflict in Macedonia emerged in early 2001, when violent ethnic clashes erupted in which Albanian armed groups were involved. The 2001 Ohrid agreement between the Macedonian authorities and Albanian groups prevented an escalation of the conflict. Following the agreement, constitutional changes were introduced which increased the level of autonomy of local government institutions and improved the status of ethnic minorities without altering the unitary nature of the state.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is probably the political system which resembles socialist Yugoslavia most closely. The powers of the two entities are extensive in principle, although in practice they are strongly limited by the international community through its proxy, the High Representative. In this respect, Bosnia-Herzegovina is in a situation which is similar to that of Titoist Yugoslavia. Highly decentralised institutions conducive to disintegration have little impact thanks to the role played by another "unifying factor" (in this case external). The main difference lies in the fact that Bosnia's unifying factor is not linked to a single personality as in Tito's Yugoslavia but rather to a complex system of external forces which are interested in preserving some sort of Bosnian unity. All things considered, it appears to be unlikely that the international community will allow Bosnia-Herzegovina to disintegrate. Simply, too much has been invested in the peace-building effort and in the state-building process. It appears more probable that, before its complete disengagement, the international community will attempt to force the two entities to accept what could not be imposed during the Dayton peace negotiations, i.e. a more functional and integrated institutional framework at the state level. Recent debates on a revision of the institutional structure created by Dayton and the attempts of the international community to "erode" the powers of the two entities in spheres such as defence and police, point precisely to this.

The union of Serbia and Montenegro, as the (indirect) descendant of Yugoslavia, retains some of its old internal borders and some of its institutional weaknesses.

With Kosovo now already *de facto* independent, it remains to be seen whether Montenegro will eventually opt for independence or will continue to remain part of the same political system with Serbia. In this case, the possibility of a separation appears to be very real. Under the existing agreement between the two republics, a referendum on independence could be held already in 2006. Although the EU, which has played a significant role in the negotiations between Serbia and Montenegro, does not appear to be enthusiastic about the prospect of the creation of yet another independent state in the former Yugoslav area, the incentives for the Montenegrin political leadership to play the independence have been very strong. The Montenegrin political leadership so far has been quite successful in presenting the progressive departure of the small republic from Belgrade's tutelage as a necessary step to promote political reforms which would otherwise be blocked or slowed down by Serbia.

If the separation of Serbia and Montenegro appears possible, or even likely, a violent conflict between the two republics looks today quite improbable. While the institutional framework in Serbia and Montenegro may allow for a disintegrative outcome, the political environment is unlikely to produce centre-periphery violent conflict. After the end of Miloševi's regime, Serbia and Montenegro began a transition to democracy which makes the political environment in this country different from liberalising Yugoslavia in the eighties. It is not yet clear whether the final outcome of this transitional process will be consolidated democracy, given the many difficulties the country is facing after years of Miloševi's authoritarianism and corruption, and the military defeats and international isolation rump Yugoslavia had experienced during his rule. Moreover, it remains open to question whether Serbia and Montenegro will remain part of the same union in a few years' time and this makes reforms, particularly at the federal level (and in sensitive areas such as defence reform), more difficult to implement. However, the political leaderships in both Serbia and Montenegro appear committed to multiparty democracy and, over the past few years, undoubtedly some progress has been made in this respect. This makes the resolution of centre-periphery conflict by peaceful means appear much more likely.

Macedonia, with its tensions between Albanian communities and the Slavic majority, is the country where a peaceful ethnic equilibrium appears to be most precarious. Intervening factors, such as the difficult position of Macedonia in the international arena as well as institutional and economic weaknesses, have made many predict (so far wrongly) the collapse or the "implosion" of Macedonia. In 2001, with heavy clashes between Albanian guerrillas and Macedonian security and military forces, the serious risk of a full-scale war seemed to be very concrete and was only averted after the Ohrid agreement was signed. However, Macedonia's case could be looked at from a completely different perspective pointing out that, despite the many problems the country is facing, an ethnic war has been avoided so far. If we observe Macedonia through the prism of our analysis of the Yugoslav collapse two things need to be highlighted. Firstly, Macedonia has not adopted an ethnofederal constitution and, even after the Ohrid agreement, which has significantly improved the position of the Albanian minority, Macedonia's constitutional arrangement has not changed in its substance. Secondly, since its separation from Yugoslavia, Macedonia has embarked on a democratisation phase without significant authoritarian relapses. Arguably, both Macedonia's institutions, and its leadership's commitment to democracy, are the two factors which have prevented disintegration and full-scale armed conflict so far.

Although the process of Yugoslav disintegration may have concluded years ago, a Yugoslav legacy is clearly still affecting centre-periphery and interethnic relations in some of the former Yugoslav republics. In our analysis of the Yugoslav collapse, we have focused on the interplay between institutions and regime transformation as the main determinants of the action of political agents. With the exclusion of Slovenia, all other former Yugoslav republics are still undergoing a process of political (and economic) transition and, as we have just seen, in some cases institutional arrangements in multiethnic countries still define chaotic and unviable federal systems. This, however, does not mean that we cannot be moderately optimistic about the prospects of these countries of reconciling ethnic diversity with ethnic peace.

A first reason for cautious optimism is that, to a certain extent, the international community appears to have internalised some of the lessons of the Yugoslav collapse. It is mostly thanks to the efforts of the EU that Serbia and Montenegro continue to form a joint state for the moment. More importantly, the active military and political engagement of the international community has produced positive results in the post-war stabilisation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as in preventing full-scale conflict in Macedonia. The international community's record in Kosovo, however, is mixed pending the final resolution of the thorny issue of the province's status. Ethnic riots erupted again in March 2004, leaving 19 people dead and forcing thousands of members of Serbian and other minority communities to flee their homes.

Leaving aside the role of the international community and the many unresolved problems of Kosovo, the main reason for optimism remains linked to the nature of the regimes in former Yugoslav republics. There are no non-democratic regimes, including liberalised authoritarian regimes, in the region. While this does not eliminate the incentives for local leaderships to play the ethnic card, at least it makes it less likely for inter-ethnic tensions or centre-periphery conflict to develop into full scale-wars. The prospects of countries in the former Yugoslavia to maintain ethnic peace are strongly linked to the way in which the democratisation processes which have begun will unfold in the following years. The consolidation of ethnic peace will be achieved, first and foremost, through the consolidation of democracy.

Appendix: methodology and sources

Both discursive parts of this thesis as well as its formal models rely on a number of secondary sources. As noted in the review of the literature, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the events that preceded it have been analysed in a number of studies of historical nature. The historical reconstruction which is presented in this thesis draws also upon existing works on the Yugoslav collapse. Printed media, both from the region and in English, have provided another important source of information. Articles and analyses which were published when the disruption of Yugoslavia was unfolding have been used and cited both as a source of context information and to give an account of episodes central to my research questions. Finally, in two fieldwork trips in the former Yugoslavia, I met and had numerous conversations with local journalists, historians, social scientists, and NGO activists, who were willing to share with me their views on the collapse of Yugoslavia and its causes. Although there are no direct references to them in the thesis, these often informal meetings were for me an invaluable chance to combine information from written sources with the opinions and impressions of witnesses of the events I was describing and explaining.

This thesis, however, is not intended to be a mere account of the Yugoslav breakdown but is an attempt to interpret and explain different outcomes of the disintegration focusing in particular on the role of political elites. In the context of this analysis, conducted using a rational choice approach and it was crucial to make assumptions on the preferences and behaviour of political actors which were as realistic as possible. Wrong assumptions or, worse, assumptions made *ad hoc* to fit an existing theory, would have deprived the analysis of any explanatory or

interpretive power. For this reason this work extensively quotes sources which have become available in recent years such as Borisav Jović's diary of his days at the Yugoslav presidency, Veljko Kadijević's book on his experience as federal minister of defence, as well as other analyses and accounts written by the very political protagonists of those years. In some cases, I have also referred to witness statements and other evidence recently presented in proceedings at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and, specifically, during the Milošević trial.

Most importantly, invaluable information on the political dynamics between actors in the Yugoslav leadership was gathered during eleven unstructured interviews I had with former members of the political elite in socialist Yugoslavia. These were conducted during fieldwork in the former Yugoslav region and, specifically, in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Novi Sad, Skopje and Zagreb. Given the difficulties I often encountered in obtaining contact information for former Yugoslav politicians and/or in agreeing and arranging interviews with them, my research trips were inevitably organised "opportunistically" so as to cover those places/areas where I had good chances of having at least a few productive meetings. For this reason (as well as for the abundance of other sources on the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, in the case of Kosovo, also for security reasons) Sarajevo and Priština were eventually left out of my trips.

Where possible, I chose the politicians I interviewed among high-ranking figures in the Yugoslav state or party and, in particular, among those who could provide me with first-hand information on events which were particularly relevant to my analysis. As has just been mentioned, my choice of respondents was constrained by difficulties in finding former Yugoslav politicians who were willing to share their views with me. This proved to be particularly hard especially in those cases, where potential interviewees were still active in the political scene. Given my interest in the party structure and Milošević's strategy of nationalist meetings, I was particularly lucky in having the chance to obtain an interview with Stipe Šuvar, former head of the party presidium between 1988 and 1989, as well as with a few former communist officials in Vojvodina, which was the first federal unit to

lose its autonomy as a result of Milošević's use of the crowd. Macedonia, being the "deviant" case by virtue of its peaceful separation, was particularly interesting for me and, in this respect, the interview I conducted with former Macedonian president Kiro Gligorov constituted a very important source of information on how Macedonia became independent.

My meetings with these, as well as with other former Yugoslav political actors took the form of long (in some cases lasting two to three hours) unstructured interviews which revolved around a number of key questions relating to specific episodes of the last years of Yugoslav history and, more directly, to my research questions and to the way the "preferences" and action of political leaders could be included in and explained by rational choice strategic interaction models. Clearly, in several cases these discussions "went astray" and covered also a range of other themes, which formed part of the broader historical context of the period I was examining. In general, these interviews constituted one of the key elements forming the empirical foundations of this thesis and allowed me to test and substantiate my initial hypotheses.

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