THE VIOLENT SECESSION AND THE VELVET DIVORCE:
Croatian and Slovak Secessions in Perspective

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by

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The thesis examines the Croatian secession from Yugoslavia in 1991 and the Slovak secession from Czechoslovakia in 1993. There are two objectives of this examination. First, the thesis seeks to determine why the respective secessions occurred. Second, the thesis attempts to discern why the Croatian secession was violent and why the Slovak secession was peaceful. In reaching the answers to the objectives, the thesis utilizes an explanatory approach rather than a normative one. John Wood's theoretical framework on secessions is utilized to organize the analysis presented in this study. It is argued that the basis for the secessions of Croatia and Slovakia rests with the collapse of political institutions. The collapse of necessary political institutions in Yugoslavia in the former case and in Czechoslovakia in the latter case precipitated the secessions of Croatia and Slovakia. The Croatian secession was in large part the result of the dissolution of the Yugoslav Communist Party, the re-pluralization of politics, and the re-birth of ethnically defined political entities bound by ethnically defined political agendas and ideals. The Slovakian secession can hardly be called a secession. It should be characterized as a dissolution of a bi-national state after a brief revisitation with democracy. The Slovakian secession was a product of a flawed federal constitution borrowed from communist ancestors, a disinterested populace and political elite, and the existence of a zero-sum game perception that was common in this bi-polar state. On the issue of violence, the thesis examines Robert Young's work on peaceful secessions. In this regard, the most salient issue in the Croatian case regarding the explosion of violence is the existence of a significant national minority within existing Croatian territory coupled with an equally threatening external presence of a nationalizing Serbia. The absence of a complex web of inter-ethnic relationships in the former Czechoslovakia created a suitable atmosphere for a peaceful dissolution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank both Dr. William McGrath and Dr. Stephen Tomblin for their assistance with the research and writing of the thesis. Dr. McGrath's expertise on Eastern European Politics and Dr. Tomblin's thorough understanding of Comparative Federal Politics proved to be excellent resources.

I would also like to thank both John Wood and Robert Young for the use of their academic works on secession. John Wood's framework on secession helped formulate a guide for the thesis, allowing me to focus on the most salient issues in the Croatian and Slovakian cases. Robert Young's work on peaceful secessions also introduced me to an analysis of the Czechoslovak dissolution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES AND PLATES

DEDICATION

To my best friend and wife, Sheri Masaro, for her encouraging words and unequivocal support during Graduate School. Her kindness helped me continue even through the most trying times. Thanks Sheri.

To the people of the Balkans and the former Yugoslavia. May the rest of the world remember and learn from the horrors committed during the dissolution of Yugoslavia. And may we learn from the Czechs and Slovaks - peace is by no means impossible.

1.0 A PREVIEW OF THE CROATIAN AND SLOVAKIAN SECESSIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A paradox exists in the world with regard to simultaneous trends towards the political integration of states and the disintegration of individual states. Two seemingly incompatible forces have been unleashed in the international community: global interdependence and the rise of independence-seeking subnational units propelled by nationalism.[1] While the forces promoting the integration of states, particularly in Western Europe are reasonably well understood, the meaning of and reasons for the recent secession of subnational units have not received the same kind of attention.

The break-up of states in Eastern Europe has featured two paths for gaining independence. While many will assume that secession necessarily leads to violence (as was the case in the former Yugoslavia) Czechoslovakia's "velvet divorce" is an example of a peaceful separation. This thesis focuses on the secession of Croatia from Yugoslavia in 1991 and the secession of Slovakia from Czechoslovakia in 1993 with the objectives of increasing our knowledge of secessions and shedding light on how violence can be avoided in the future.

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[1] Ivo D. Duchacek, "Multicommunal and Bicommunal Polities and Their International Relations," in Perforated Sovereignties and International Relations - Trans-Sovereign Contacts of Subnational Governments eds. Ivo D. Duchacek, Daniel Latouche, and Garth Stevenson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 4-5.

In the process, the thesis seeks to examine various explanations for the aforementioned secessions. In addition, reasons are sought to explain the divergence in methods used by Croatian and Slovak political elites in their respective independence campaigns. Thus the thesis utilizes an explanatory approach as opposed to a normative one.

As such, three arguments are defended in the thesis. First, the secession of Croatia from Yugoslavia in 1991 and Slovakia from Czechoslovakia in 1993 are indicative of similar interests in the two republics to reject the respective federal arrangements. These interests reflected a dissatisfaction with previous communist regimes, a desire by republican political elites to seize the opportunity to pursue parochial political interests, and an unequivocal rejection of federal institutions in both countries.[2] The political elites we are referring to are those individuals who occupied positions of influence in the communist intelligentsia. In each state there was a strong tendency for the elites to identify with the republic to which they were ethnically attached. The thesis utilizes an analytical framework that focuses on the structural aspects of federalism with emphasis on constitutional arrangements, federal institutional collapse, and federal and republican-level processes involving power-seeking, entrepreneurial political elites.

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[2] By federal institutions we mean legalistic entities utilized in the political organization of a state. These institutions form the basis for governing a multi-unit state. See, Thomas O. Hueglin, "Legitimacy, Democracy, and Federalism," in Federalism and the Role of the State eds. Herman Bakvis and William M. Chandler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 32.

Second, the secessions of both Croatia and Slovakia were realized because of the institutional collapse of communism and long-term trends which promoted national senses of grievance and difference within the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak states. Nationalism was subjected to constraints which varied in severity through time during the history of communist power in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia but even during periods of severe repression it remained alive. Once the dismantling of communist controls began the open manifestation of nationalism rapidly made itself felt in East European politics and contributed to the break-up of multinational states.

Finally, the thesis focuses on why the Croatian secession was so violent in comparison to the Slovak "velvet" secession. It is the contention of the thesis that the violence of the Croatian secession was partly due to the intention of the Serbian elite under the leadership of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to strengthen Serbia's position, either in a united Yugoslavia or in a "Greater Serbia", if preservation of the Yugoslav state proved impossible. Particularly important is the existence of a large Serbian minority in the eastern region of the "Krajina" in Croatia. Coupled with the problem of the Serb minority was the issue of state borders. Once Croatia's determination to secede became apparent, the issue of its territorial delimitation became an acute problem. Czechoslovakia's break-up did not involve the conflict-engendering issues of borders and minorities.

The next section provides an overview of events leading up to the secessions of Croatia and Slovakia from their respective federal entities. This overview is provided

in order that the reader might better understand the arguments that are provided in the remainder of the thesis. The second chapter examines and explains the Croatian and Slovakian secessions. The third chapter discusses the divergence in secessionist methods utilized in Croatia and Slovakia.

1.2 THE WOOD PARADIGM

The thesis utilizes an analytical framework based on John R. Wood's article "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework." While there are no theories of secession, Wood has identified a set of processual conditions that increase the likelihood of secession.[3] The thesis utilizes these conditions as a framework to explain the secessions of Croatia and Slovakia.

As Wood correctly points out in the article, most scholars in Political Science during the 1970s and early 1980s focused on the trend of interdependence in the international community. However, there has been an explosion of political trends in the opposite direction. Not only is European integration proving to be difficult, secessions involving several ethnic minorities and federal states have come to the forefront of world politics in the recent past.

Wood begins with the preconditions of secession which are those events that may cause a feeling of alienation among secessionists. These feelings might include anger at

[3] John R. Wood, "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework," Canadian Journal of Political Science 14 (1981): 107-134.

domination by a particular region or ethnic group within a segment of the economy or political landscape. Second, the rise of secessionist movements must be examined.

Third, the response of central governments is an important consideration when examining the phenomenon of secession. In this regard, the success or absence of success by federal governments in preventing the secession is important. Fourth, attention is focused on the direct precipitants of secession, particularly those events that occur just prior to the decision to secede. Are these events confrontational? Are they violent in nature? These events may determine whether the participants have gone past a point of no return. Fifth, the issue of the use of violence as a resolution to the secessionist conflict is crucial to any analysis because it points to the use of violence by either the existing government or the secessionist entity. This condition also raises the question of the influence of international actors on the secessionist process.

1.3 NARRATIVES ON THE VELVET DIVORCE AND THE VIOLENT SECESSION

The articulation and development of nationalistic politics in both Croatia and Slovakia contributed to the eventual demise of their host states.[4] The re-emergence of nationalism as a political force was facilitated by the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Once the communist regimes were dismantled, the re-pluralization of politics

[4] Sabrina Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1992), 19. Ramet provides a succinct analysis on the role of Slobodan Milosevic in the outbreak of violent conflict. Also see Sharon Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia," East European Politics and Societies 8 (Winter 1994): 153-188.

began to develop which included the re-emergence of ethnically based political parties and inter-ethnic antagonisms. At this juncture, the thesis discusses the events leading up to the secessions. This task is necessary to provide a basic understanding of the political climate prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

1.3.1 The Disintegration of Yugoslavia

The following discussion is broken down into two parts. The first segment discusses, very briefly, the background to Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav idea, with some discussion of the Yugoslav republics, ethnic groups, and political leadership. The second segment examines the most important events and issues leading up to the 1991 dissolution of Yugoslavia. It should be noted, however, that there is some overlap between the two segments.

1.3.1.1 A Background to the Second Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Idea

The Yugoslavia that is discussed in the thesis refers to the second attempt at uniting the south slav peoples from 1945 to 1991. The first Yugoslavia existed as a kingdom from 1918 to 1939.[5] During World War II, much of Yugoslavia was occupied

[5] Both the first and second Yugoslav states contained serious internal tensions based on competing visions of desired outcomes with regard to the development of the Yugoslav state and relations between its constituent units and peoples. See Dennis Rusinow, "The Avoidable Catastrophe," in Politics, Economics, and Culture eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubisa S. Adamovich (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 17.

by German or Italian troops.[6] From 1945 until the end of Yugoslavia in the summer of 1991, Yugoslavia was comprised of six republics (Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia) and two autonomous republics located within Serbian territory (Vojvodina and Kosovo). For an illustration of the former Yugoslavia, see Figure 1 on page 8 of the thesis.

Ethnically, the Yugoslav republics were intermixed in a complex web of communities. In fact, Bosnia-Hercegovina was and still is seen as a smaller version of Yugoslavia as it is comprised of Slavic Muslims, Croats, and Serbs.[7] Serbia was and continues to be an ethnic mix as it is comprised of Serbs, Albanian Muslims, Hungarians, and Croats.[8] Croatia, like the aforementioned republics, was ethnically diverse and its population notably included approximately 11.6% Serbian concentration, most of whom were located in the eastern regions of the republic.[9]

The state was formed by communist partisans who fought from 1941 to 1945 to defeat the Serbian royalist regime defenders and to rid the area of German and Italian

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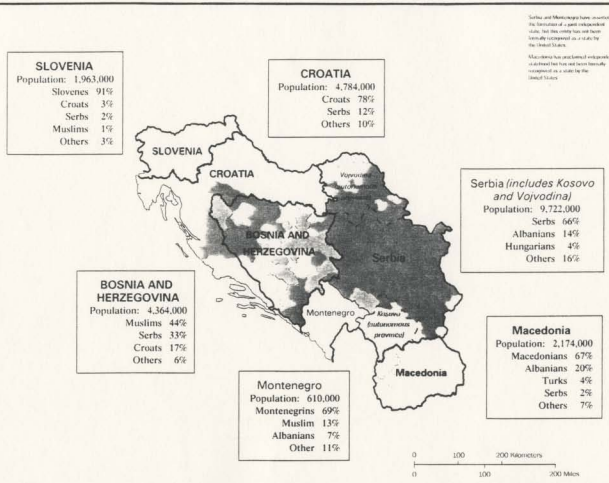
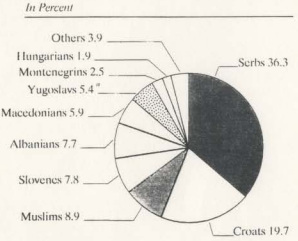
[6] Franjo Tudjman, Nationalism in Contemporary Europe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 104-106. During the war, Serbia, what is now known as Bosnia-Hercegovina, and much of the Croatian coast (Dalmatia) was occupied by German and Italian forces. Croatia existed as a puppet state of the Nazis and was governed by the fascist regime of Ante Pavelich which is often referred to as the Ustasha. Ustasha state terrorism focused principally on Serbs and Jews, and was so extreme that it alarmed the German military authorities Hitler had stationed in Croatia. See J. Rothschild, Return to Diversity, A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 51.

[7] Ibid., 120.

[8] Steven L. Burg, "Why Yugoslavia Fell Apart," Current History (November 1994): 357.

[9] Susan Woodward, Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 35.





[a] Yugoslavs are those persons who listed themselves as such in the 1981 census. They are dispersed across the country.

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Figure 1

troops. Josip Broz Tito, the well known former President of Yugoslavia, led the partisan military organization. Tito ruled until 1980.[10] From 1980 to 1991, Yugoslavia began to disintegrate slowly.[11] However, Tito's rule did not exhibit complete stability. The introduction of the 1974 constitution was at least partially the result of unrest in Croatia where Croatian Communists sought to increase the republic's autonomy in areas related to banking and resource allocation.

1.3.1.2 Important Events and Issues Leading Up to the 1991 Dissolution

The year 1991 witnessed the ravages of violent conflict in the former Yugoslavia beginning with the declarations of independence in Slovenia and later in Croatia. Slovenia, with a population comprised primarily of ethnic Slovenes and relatively few ethnic minorities, separated from Yugoslavia after a brief 14 day war with the Yugoslav National Army.[12] The Republic of Croatia, in contrast, would not experience the same fortune as it would become embroiled in a bitter, longer-lasting conflict with both the

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[10] Tito's Yugoslavia attracted considerable attention from Western scholars. Just a few notable studies examining the controversial leader and his policies are, Aleska Djilas, The Contested Country - Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution 1919-1953 (London: Harvard University Press, 1991); Richard West, Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994); and Duncan Wilson, Tito's Yugoslavia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[11] Ibid., 3-4.

[12] Susan Woodward, Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War, 30.

Yugoslav National Army and minority Serbs in the region of the Krajina.[13] This bloody conflict and a subsequent one in Bosnia-Hercegovina, with their terrible episodes of "ethnic cleansing", would spark much spurious commentary concerning ancient enmities in the Balkans. This seemingly irrational phenomenon can be understood. First, we have to consider its immediate background and we have to go outside Croatia to Serbia and consider the rise of Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic.

Milosevic's rise to power occurred during a period when Yugoslavia was burdened by crisis. Economic and social problems were becoming severe and ethnic antagonisms were rising. Within Serbia, long-developing tensions in Kosovo were coming to a head. Relations between Kosovo's Albanian majority and Serb minority were deteriorating. It was in this context, in 1987, that Serbian Communist leader Slobodan Milosevic organized a "putsch" in the Serbian League of Communists consolidating support by raising the Kosovo question and purging both the Albanian-Muslim bureaucracy in the autonomous province, as well as those Serbian politicians who opposed him.[14] The importance of his rise to power in Serbia is evident when one considers that his policy on Kosovo and the Albanian Muslim administrative leadership in the province struck a chord with nationalistic Serbs in Serbia proper, making

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[13] Ian Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," The Political Quarterly 67 (1996): 36-38. The Yugoslav National Army or JNA was primarily a Serbian armed force as most officers were of Serbian origin. The Krajina Serbs also possessed a paramilitary force which included former police officers.

[14] Sabrina Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 68. For Serbs the Kosovo question is important for two reasons. First, the granting of provincial status to Kosovo and Vojvodina within Serbia by Tito reduced the number of votes held by Serb politicians in the Federal Assembly, making it difficult for the Serbs to pass federal legislation. Second, Kosovo has historic importance for Serbs because it is the location of medieval Serbia and the battle-ground for the Serbian loss to the Ottoman Empire.

Milosevic a folk hero.[15] Also, Milosevic appealed to those Serbs who felt that they were unjustly criticized for the woes of the Yugoslav federation and those who were unhappy with the demands for increased decentralization as articulated by the Croats and Slovenes.[16]

Milosevic played the nationalist card for all that it was worth. Specifically, the focus on nationalism by the Serbian leader was based on the widespread support for the re-establishment of Serbian hegemony in an increasingly decentralized Yugoslavia. This contributed to the demise of Yugoslavia's Communist Party which went into a state of terminal decline following its 14th Congress in 1990 which ended in deadlock.[17] The League of Communists of Yugoslavia gave up its monopoly on power and competitive elections were organized in the republics. Nationalist centre-right parties won the elections in Croatia and Slovenia.[18] The debate over Yugoslavia's political future became more intense as a consequence. The Serbian Communist leadership, now restyled as Socialists, sought a more centralized political union while Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Milan Kucan of Slovenia sought a more decentralized political and economic union. In short, the political agenda of Slobodan Milosevic equated a stronger Serbia

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[15] Ibid, 68-69.

[16] Vesna Popovski, "Yugoslavia: Politics, Federation, Nation," in Federalism: The Multiethnic Challenge ed. Graham Smith (London: Longman, 1995), 196.

[17] Laura Silber, "Slobodan Milosevic's Politics of War and Peace," World Policy Journal 13 (1996): 63-66.

[18] Martin Van Heuvan, "Understanding the Balkan Break-up," Foreign Policy (1996): 178.

with a stronger Yugoslavia - a contention which was diametrically opposed in Croatia and Slovenia.[19]

Despite the worsening situation in Yugoslavia, attempts were made to accommodate all regional interests. Federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic, a Croat by birth, managed to stabilize the economy in 1990 thus obtaining guarantees for further foreign investment and aid.[20] The development, nevertheless, did nothing to stifle attempts in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia to pursue parochial interests. By 1990, Slovenia's President Milan Kucan was opting for an asymmetrical federal arrangement while Franjo Tudjman of Croatia wanted to pursue a confederal model.[21] President Milosevic of Serbia was adamantly against these recommendations arguing that Yugoslavia was better off with greater central control.

Meanwhile, the federal presidency was in utter chaos, unable to achieve any semblance of a consensus on future arrangements.[22] Coupled with these problems, the increase in grass roots political groups in Croatia and especially in Slovenia led to calls

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[19] Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 68.

[20] Robert F. Miller, "The Pitfalls of Economic Reform in Yugoslavia," Australian Journal of International Affairs 45 (November 1991): 217-220.

[21] Asymmetrical federalism can be defined as the existence of one or more subnational units which exercise, as sanctioned by the constitution or political fact, powers not available to other subnational units. Confederalism refers to an arrangement between subnational units and the federal government where political power has moved away from the centre and toward the subnational units. Confederalism is essentially an extreme decentralization of a multi-unit state. For further examination of these terms see Christopher Hughes, "Cantonalism: Federalism and Confederacy in the Golden Epoch of Switzerland," in Comparative Federalism and Federation - Competing Traditions and Future Directions eds. Michael Burgess and Alain G. Gagnon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 155; and David Milne, "Whither Canadian Federalism? Alternative Constitutional Futures," in Comparative Federalism and Federation - Competing Traditions and Future Directions eds. Michael Burgess and Alain G. Gagnon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 203.

[22] Laura Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 122-123.

for independence and secession from the federation, an indication that the federal government and the Serbian leadership were moving too slowly.[23]

Initially, referenda were held in Croatia and Slovenia, indicating a peaceful yet provocative approach to assess the desires of their respective constituencies. However, the use of peaceful mechanisms was only temporary. Violence soon erupted in the Balkans when Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) sought to act upon the May 1991 referendum calling for independence.[24] With the Yugoslav Army still in Croatia, the Croatian Legislative Assembly declared independence on June 25, 1991.

Considering these developments, the Krajina Serbs resorted to armed force to resist Croatian control over the region, culminating in armed conflict with Croatian troops.[25] The JNA, initially acting in the guise of a buffer peacekeeping force, was seen as an occupying force by Croatians and its troops were attacked by Croatian paramilitary forces.[26] Despite international recognition of Croatia in January 1992, fighting continued near the port of Dubrovnik, the region of Slavonia, and in the

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[23] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War, 109.

[24] Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," 28.

[25] Marko Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia: Sliding into War," in Beyond Yugoslavia - Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubisa S. Adamovich (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 69. From a Serbian perspective, their resistance to Croatian independence stemmed from legislative realities in Croatia where President Tudjman reneged on a promise to provide Croatian Serbs with constitutional recognition as a constituent nation in the newly independent Croatia and instead relegated them to the level of a protected minority. The constitutional change was alarming to the Serbs of the Krajina.

[26] Ibid., 67-69.

Krajina.[27] When fighting did subside later in 1992, the Croatian government had lost control of one-third of its territory.[28] The eruption of a terrible civil war in Bosnia during 1992 would pull international attention away from Croatia until the summer of 1995 when a new major Croatian offensive culminated in the recapture of the Krajina region and a mass expulsion of Serbs. While Croatia has normalized relations with Yugoslavia in the summer of 1996, the continuation of peace is by no means guaranteed.

1.3.2 The Dissolution of Czechoslovakia

The discussion of Czechoslovakia which follows is divided into a segment on the background of the state and a segment on the most salient events and issues up to the 1993 secession of Slovakia.

1.3.2.1 A Background to Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia was located in east central Europe and it consisted of two republics, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The languages of the two republics are very similar. The Czech Republic consisted of Bohemia and Moravia.

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[27] Loc., cit.

[28] David S. Mason, Revolution and Transition in East-Central Europe (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 27.

Ethnic composition continues to be primarily Czech in origin.[29] Other ethnic groups include Germans, Moravians, and Silesians.[30] The Slovak Republic is primarily Slovak in ethnic origin with a large Hungarian minority.[31] Other ethnic groups include Poles, Ruthenians, and Russians.[32] Politically, Czechoslovakia has gone from being a unitary democratic state, a unitary communist state, a federal communist state, and lastly to a brief-lived democratized federal state.[33] For an illustration of the former Czechoslovakia, please see Figure 2 on page 16 of the thesis.

Czechoslovakia has gone through several changes since its first inception as a united country in 1918. Czechoslovakia initially existed as a unitary state in 1918 with a democratic and plural system of government.[34] From 1918 to 1938, the two principal population groups (Czechs and Slovaks) lived in the areas that are now the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, respectively. During this period, the Czechs and Slovaks lived very differently. The Czechs were one of the most industrialized people in Europe

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[29] Milan Kucera and Zdenek Pavlik, "Czech and Slovak Demography," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European University Press, 1995), 15-16.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 18.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization, and Dissolution of a Nation-State," Regional Politics and Society 3 (1993): 90.

[34] Edita Bosak, "Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Coexistence," in Czechoslovakia, 1918-88 ed. H. Gordon Skilling (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 65.

Map of the Former Czechoslovakia

Figure 2

with a highly developed political party structure.[35] In contrast, the Slovaks were primarily agrarian, with a significant level of illiteracy and minimal political participation.[36]

In 1938, the landscape of Czechoslovakia would change rapidly. The Nazi acquisition of the Sudetenland in the western part of the Czech lands soon gave way to a full occupation of the entire territory. Slovakia was given a quasi independent state in 1938 under the guidance of the Nazis.[37] After World War II, attempts had been made to once again reunite Czechoslovakia and some discussion of a plural and democratic system began. However, the communists in Czechoslovakia began to assert their control during this period. With the assistance of the Soviet military and Soviet communists, Czechoslovakia was under communist control in the Soviet bloc from 1947 to 1989.[38]

From 1947 to 1968, Czechoslovakia existed as a unitary state. This soon became problematic as the Slovaks sought to gain further autonomy. Also, a political reform movement was gaining ground in the Czech lands in what was called the Prague Spring.[39] Playwrights and intellectuals challenged the authority of the communists. However, in 1968, Soviet tanks rolled in Prague to quash the reform movement. The

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[35] Kucera and Pavlik, "Czech and Slovak Demography," 16.

[36] Bosak, "Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Coexistence," 66-67.

[37] Ibid., 76.

[38] Ibid., 78.

[39] Ibid., 79.

only reform to survive Czechoslovakia's "normalization" was the introduction of a constitution in 1968 that federalized the country and split it into a Slovak and Czech republic.[40]

From 1968 to 1989, Czechoslovakia would exist as a communist federation but 1989 proved to be a year of remarkable change in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev's attempt to reform the Soviet Union and to encourage similar reforms in Eastern Europe precipitated the collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia.[41] Both Slovaks and Czechs united to bring down the communist monopoly of power.[42] However, after the initial euphoria of a democratic Czechoslovakia, attention turned to the re-emergence of inter-ethnic antagonisms which was primarily based on the different needs of each republic.[43] Constitutional negotiations were sought to alter the framework of the federation but by the end of 1992, the only agreement the Czech and Slovak republic leaders could achieve centred on the need to dissolve the state.[44]

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Robert A. Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1994), 4-5.

[42] Milan Svec, "Czechoslovakia's Velvet Divorce," Current History (November 1992): 376-377.

[43] Robert Henry Cox and Erich G. Frankland, "The Federal State and the Breakup of Czechoslovakia," Publius: The Journal of Federalism 25 (1995): 30.

[44] Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia, 41.

1.3.2.2 Salient Issues and Events Prior to 1993 in Czechoslovakia

The year 1989 witnessed the re-emergence of democracy in some Eastern European countries. Vaclav Havel, the playwright and lifelong advocate of democracy, who had been subjected to continued harassment and imprisonment at the hands of the Soviet-established Czechoslovak Communist regime, embarked on a maiden voyage as President of a newly-democratized Czechoslovakia.[45] Despite the re-emergence of democracy in Czechoslovakia, Slovak dissatisfaction with the federation continued to exist, especially in relation to the progressive economic policies of the federal government in Prague.[46] The disparity in economic development in Slovakia, although at par with the Czech lands in the 1990s, had created a Slovakia that was dependent on large industry.[47] The Soviet model of economic development required that Slovakia industrialize rapidly, thus creating an over-dependence on military-related production.[48] With reforms the norm in Prague, many industries were placed on the chopping block, creating serious hardships for the Slovaks.

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[45] Vaclav Havel, current Czech President, made his mark in Czechoslovak history as the articulate playwright who challenged the legitimacy of the Communist regime in post WWII Czechoslovakia. For his efforts, Vaclav Havel was jailed and he eventually became a symbol of the Czechoslovak democratic underground and resilience. For further discussion of Vaclav Havel see Timothy Garton Ash, The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe (Cambridge: Granta Books, 1989); Vaclav Havel, Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation With Karel Hvizdala/Vaclav Havel (London: Faber, 1990); and Gordon H. Skilling, ed. Czechoslovakia, 1918-88: Seventy Years from Independence (Oxford: Macmillan, 1991).

[46] Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia," 155-158.

[47] See Milan Svec, "Czechoslovakia's Velvet Divorce," Current History (1992): 379. Svec points out that the Slovak republic was very reliant on heavy industry, especially in the military hardware sector. This orientation became problematic because Slovak companies were not very competitive and the military industry was frowned upon by Czech politicians.

[48] Ibid.

To the Slovak people and politicians, the problem with the federation was the speedy nature of economic reform which eventually was seen as a lack of concern for the Slovak people.[49] In addition, by 1990, political leaders in Slovakia (including Prime Minister Meciar) felt that Slovak interests might be better served in an independent state.[50] While support for independence was not that wide spread, many Slovaks were keen on obtaining autonomy on economic and social policy. Czech Republic leader Vaclav Klaus saw no reason to prevent the secessionist desires of the Slovak leadership.[51]

Political elites in Czechoslovakia influenced the emergence of discord and the eventual dissolution of the state. Specifically, Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel, Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus, and Slovak Prime Minister Vladislav Meciar were key actors in the entire political crisis prior to the 1993 dissolution. With the re-pluralization of politics in 1989 after the collapse of the communist system of government, free elections permitted the inclusion of a significant number of political leaders.[52] This, in turn, created what can be called a "fluidity of the party system",

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[49] Cox and Frankland, "The Federal State and the Breakup of Czechoslovakia: An Institutional Analysis," 83.

[50] Ibid., 83.

[51] Robert A. Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1994), 41. The author points out that Vaclav Klaus and Vaclav Havel became concerned about the impact of uncertainty on the Czech economic and political landscape. Thus they began to acknowledge that the Slovak Republic would eventually secede and declared their intention not to intervene. It can also be argued that Klaus may have pushed Meciar into a commitment to support secession.

[52] Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Politics of Transition and the Break-Up of Czechoslovakia," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (New York: Central European Press, 1995), 226.

slow party formation, and a large number of political parties.[53] This fluidity also involved low levels of party identification in the Czech and Slovak republics.[54] The end result of these factors was the emergence of a citizenry which was mobilized easily by various political elites and groups.[55]

The so-called "hyphen war" during the spring of 1990 provided a warning that relations between the Czech and Slovak republics in the Czechoslovak state would not be harmonious. Post-communist political leaders did not wish to retain the official title of "The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic" for their state but could not agree readily upon a new designation. Slovak leaders wished to introduce a hyphen into the name "Czecho-Slovakia" to emphasize the distinctiveness of their national identity. Ultimately a new official title the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic was adopted but considerable friction was generated in the process.[56]

In this environment, republican leaders Vaclav Klaus and Vladislav Meciar sought to promote parochial interests. Without popular support, each leader adopted intransigent policies that set the stage for a political impasse. While Slovaks blamed Klaus for the

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[53] Ibid., 227.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] For a concise review of the hyphen war see, Carol Skalnik Leff The Czech and Slovak Republics. Nation Versus State (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 129-130.

political impasse and Czechs blamed Meciar for the same, in 1991, most Czechs (79%) and most Slovaks (69%) favoured the continuation of the state.[57]

Klaus and Meciar continued to engage in the negotiation to complete the separation of the two republics. Klaus, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union, articulated a right of centre political agenda, focusing on policies that emphasized rapid economic reforms.[58] In contrast, Meciar, the leader of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, argued for a moderate approach to economic reforms because Slovakia was hurt by the rapid reforms mentioned above.[59] Also, Meciar sought to obtain greater autonomy for Slovakia, a move that was in complete contradiction to the centralized approach of Klaus.[60]

This disagreement was extremely pronounced in 1991 as several larger parties disintegrated.[61] This precipitated the continued movement of public opinion in each republic in opposite directions. In Slovakia it was clear that rapid economic reform, in the form of rapid privatization and capitalist development, was not acceptable.[62]

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[57] Ibid., 233.

[58] Ibid., 240.

[59] Ibid., 238-240.

[60] Ibid. Vaclav Klaus was adamant about the necessity to maintain a centralized federal system in order to facilitate the economic reforms which were popular in the Czech republic.

[61] Gordon Wightman, "The Development of the Party System and the Break-up of Czechoslovakia," in Party Formation in East-Central Europe ed. Gordon Wightman (Brookfield: Edward Elgar, 1995), 64-65.

[62] Ibid., 68.

Meanwhile, Meciar and Klaus continued to stifle attempts to negotiate a renewal of federalism in Czechoslovakia.[63]

Defenders of a renewed federation hoped republican and federal parliamentary elections during June, 1992 would result in governments which were prepared to effectively negotiate a resolution to constitutional squabbles. Instead "the 1992 elections only finalized the stalemate...without conscious effort to destroy Czechoslovakia, the two electorates by focusing on republic-level concerns, had nonetheless elected leaders who could not, and did not, reach agreement on how to continue the state."[64] Soon after the elections, Vaclav Klaus, the Czech Prime Minister, virtually forced secession onto the Slovaks declaring that the federation was at an end. The Slovak parliament adopted a declaration of sovereignty on July 17, 1992 precipitating the resignation of President Vaclav Havel.[65] Czech and Slovak political leaders were finally able to agree on something. They decided on the dissolution of the Czechoslovak state and the emergence of two newly independent states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, which took place on January 1, 1993.

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[63] Ibid.

[64] Carol Skalnik Leff, The Czech and Slovak Republics, 130-131.

[65] John Morrison, "The Road to Separation: Nationalism in Czechoslovakia," in Contemporary Nationalism in East Central Europe ed. Paul Latowski (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 83.

2.0 EXPLAINING THE CROATIAN AND SLOVAKIAN SECESSIONS

The developments reviewed in the preceding narratives now will be viewed in a more analytical perspective. John R. Wood, a UBC political scientist, has proposed an analytical framework which is very useful for such a purpose. He directs attention to the preconditions of secession, the rise of secessionist movements, the response of central governments, the direct precipitants of secession and the role of armed forces in the face of a secessionist crisis.[66]

John Wood's work on secession is essentially a critical response to the over-emphasis in the political science literature of the 1970s on supranational organizations and communities. Little had been written during the 1970s and early 1980s about the proliferation of secession and emergence of nationalistic movements. Wood apparently decided that it would be useful to follow the model of integration studies but to do so in reverse. Consequently, he developed an analytical framework influenced by neo-functionalist thought[67] on regional integration but directed his inquiry towards examples of political disintegration. Wood's analysis of disintegration is processual, directing

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[66] John R. Wood, "Secession: A Comparative Analytical Framework," 107.

[67] Neo-functionalists focus on the integration of states and segments of states with other states. With the integration of the world or globalization of states, the sovereignty of states is seen as being a hinderance on the achievement of integration. Nonetheless, with the integration of states comes the increase of political instability in the form of secession and parochialism. See John Pinder, "The New European Federalism: The Idea and the Achievements," in Concepts of Federalism and Federation - Competing Traditions and Future Directions eds. Michael Burgess and Alain G. Gagnon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 64.

attention to the principal actors and events involved in the on-going emergence and development of political secessions.

2.1 THE PRECONDITIONS OF THE CROATIAN AND SLOVAKIAN SECESSIONS

The thesis argues that in the case of Yugoslavia, the secession of the Republic of Croatia was due to the collapse of the federal institutional order, especially the LCY or League of Yugoslav Communists along with the decline of federal governmental institutions. Within this context, the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the secession of Croatia from Yugoslavia was the result of a simultaneous institutional collapse coupled with the desire of Croatian political elites to assert control over existing Croatian territory. The inability of the federal government and republican governments to reach an alternative model of governance as a single state contributed to the break-up of Yugoslavia.

More importantly, the violence that was associated with the Croatian secession can be linked to the actions of those political elites in Croatia and Serbia proper who aimed to promote their respective parochial interests.[68] In addition, the existence of significant numbers of minority groups in Croatia led to the perception, real or imagined, of perpetual danger. That is, the possibility that a particular ethnic group, whether

[68] Steven L. Burg, "Why Yugoslavia Fell Apart," Current History (November 1993): 357-360.

Croatian or Serb, would be harmed was envisioned by both the public and political elites.[69] However, while one can attribute the violence in the Croatian secession to the existence of minorities and territorial cleavages, the phenomenon of political culture, or in the case of the Croatian and Serbian conflict, a culture of intolerance is relevant.[70] A culture of intolerance refers to the absence of political and social experiences based on cohesion and cooperation between ethnic groups or between majority or minority groups.

In the case of the Slovak secession and the collapse of the Czechoslovak state, the primary reasons for the end result in 1993 are somewhat different. While systemic difficulties existed, they were primarily in the realm of an emerging democratic and free-market system. Also, many of the problems between the Slovak and Czech republics rested on the perception of Czech dominance at the expense of the Slovak republic's well being. Previous years of uneven development and socio-political differences created different expectations during the post cold-war era.[71] This was manifested in the problematic discourse over economic reforms regarding their short and long term effects.

The political elites in Slovakia and the Czech lands seemed unable or unwilling to reach a compromise through negotiation despite the fact that only a minority of

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[69] M. Rady, "Self-determination and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia," Australian Journal of International Affairs 48 (November 1994): 385. Rady provides a discussion on prevalent perceptions and fears in the Yugoslav case.

[70] Alan Cairns, "Federalism is not enough: Minorities Within," in Rethinking Federalism eds. Karen Knopp, Sylvia Ostry, Richard Simeon, and Kathryn Swinton (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), 22-25.

[71] Caroll S. Leff, "Could This Marriage Have Been Saved? The Czechoslovak Divorce," Current History (March 1996): 129-134; and Stanislav Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization and Dissolution of a Nation-State," Regional Politics and Policy 3 (Spring 1993): 73.

Slovaks wanted to secede from the federation in the last election before 1993. Most Czechs and Slovaks were concerned with the standard of living and the rise of unemployment in Slovakia.[72] In addition, the most salient problem for the continuance of a common state after the velvet revolution seemed to be the divergent and contrasting political environments in the Slovak and Czech republics.

2.1.1 The Secession of Croatia and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia

It has been argued by journalists, the television media, and by many scholars that the creation of Yugoslavia was a terrible mistake and that the federation was artificial and incapable of continued existence.[73] Adding to this, another common statement on Yugoslavia is that its inhabitants have been at war for centuries and cannot live with one another.[74] While the recent inhumane treatment Croats and Serbs have inflicted upon one another may prevent inter-ethnic cohabitation, the assumption that ancient enmities have caused the secessions is false. The break-up of Yugoslavia and the violence experienced in the early 1990s was not inevitable.[75] The inhabitants of the Balkans have not lived in war for centuries but have lived in relative peace with each other for

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[72] Kusy, "Slovak Exceptionalism," 144.

[73] Martin Van Heuvan, "Understanding the Balkan Break-up," 175-188.

[74] Alan Cairns, "Federalism is not enough: Minorities Within," 27. Cairns explains the relevance of a culture of violence and the role totalitarian regimes play in the development of inter-ethnic antagonisms.

[75] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 77.

many centuries.[76] Towns and villages in Croatia, Serbia, and what is now known as Bosnia-Hercegovina have been characteristically inhabited by ethnic groups from Croat, Serbian, or Slavic-Muslim origin.

Another point of contention is the assumption that only homogenous federations can survive. Most federations in this world cannot be regarded as homogenous ones, yet most seem to survive despite their heterogeneity.[77] These contentions, while based on misperceptions, are dangerous because they simplify the Yugoslav experience. This chapter demonstrates that the secession of Croatia and the subsequent collapse of the Yugoslav federal government were the result of complex institutional problems combined with the parochial interests or republican leaders and the changing of a once predictable international community.

However, it can be convincingly argued that federal and confederal systems, regardless of ethnic heterogeneity, are not stable entities. Depending on the number of subnational units, ethnic character of those units, and the size of the subnational units, one can argue that these types of state structures are not stable at all.[78] Nevertheless, it is necessary to examine different aspects of each federal state to determine why instability existed and why secession became a reality.

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[76] Dennison Rusinow, "The Avoidable Catastrophe," in Beyon Yugoslavia - Politics, Economics, and Culture eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubisa S. Adamovich (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 13.

[77] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 15.

[78] Jonathan Lemco, Political Stability in Federal Governments, (New York: Praeger, 1991), 41-42.

2.1.1.1 Historical Foundations

While the thesis places some emphasis on the institutional and economic foundations of Croatia's secession and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the historical aspect of the dispute merits some discussion. Here, we examine the historical characteristics of inter-ethnic differences and animosity that may have at the very least facilitated the dissolution of the Yugoslav state. Specifically, the relationship between the Croats and Serbs is of interest because the two ethnic groups pursued nationalistic policies that were formulated in response to the perceived "Serbian" or "Croatian" threat.

Delving further back to the pre-dissolution period, we can outline several issues that led to the catastrophic days prior to conflict in 1991. The death of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito led to the eventual implementation of a rotating presidency. From 1945 to 1980, Tito managed to hold together the complex inter-ethnic federation. The charismatic leader of Croatian-Slovenian origin overcame inter-ethnic problems initially by utilizing the Soviet threat of invasion in the 1950s and Yugoslavia's independent foreign policy as mechanisms to promote unity. Yugoslavia's reputation for independence was enhanced through the introduction and development of an ostensible system of worker self-management.[79] Worker self-management was supposed to result in the control of public enterprises at the local level by their employees.

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[79] The balance of internal control coupled with the international importance of Yugoslavia as a single state worked to keep the country united. The end of the cold war immediately raised the spectre of Yugoslavia's importance to the west as a neutral state. Coupled with internal economic decline and political collapse, the right conditions existed for the rise of nationalism and the secessionist movements. See Susan Woodward in Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 130.

Yugoslavia's early development inspired hope among many socialists that Tito and his supporters might pioneer a path to socialism. However, Yugoslavia began to run into serious political and economic trouble in the 1960s and 1970s. Dissatisfaction with worker self-management became increasingly apparent and transfer payments to the poorer republics sparked resentment at the elite and citizen levels, especially in Croatia and Slovenia, Yugoslavia's most prosperous republics.[80] The Croatian Crisis during the early 1970s, a period during which Croatian political elites and communist youth movements contemplated increased autonomy for Croatia, demonstrated that Croatian nationalism was not dead but had rested in a dormant state during the first decades of Tito's rule. Tito's repressive means of dealing with the crisis (the removal of senior Croatian Communists and the institution of hard-line Communists), while diffusing a dangerous precedent, merely exacerbated nationalistic feelings and perceptions of Serbian dominance.[81] Croatian nationalism as articulated in the early 1970s demonstrated that the extremism of the 1930s and 1940s at the height of Croatian political independence was not superseded by Tito's "Yugoslav" ideals and that (regardless of the uniqueness of Tito's Yugoslavia as compared to other communist states) the desire for greater autonomy for Croatia was never adequately addressed.[82]

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[80] Vesna Popovski, "Yugoslavia: Politics, Federation, Nation," 198.

[81] Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 68.

[82] Anton Bebler, "Yugoslavia's Variety of Communist Federalism and Her Demise," Communist and Post-Communist Studies 26 (March 1993): 76; and Franjo Tudjman, Nationalism in Contemporary Europe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 109.

Of primary importance in this discussion is the historical differences between the Croats and Serbs in their mutual development as nations in the Balkans. Throughout the history of the Serbs and Croats, each ethnic group has been subjected to external rule.[83] The political division of the Balkans between the Ottomans and Habsburgs reinforced a pre-existing religious schism between Serbs and Croats. The separation between the Roman and Byzantine churches during the eleventh century split the region between Catholicism and Orthodoxy.[84] Two fundamentally different religions developed, two linguistic scripts emerged, and two different cultural traditions were born.[85] To further divide these peoples, the Ottomans and Habsburgs instituted a policy of divide and rule in their respective domains which further differentiated the Croats and Serbs.[86]

Distinctive political and religious histories did not impose a destiny of violent conflict upon Serbs and Croats but did complicate their attempts during the twentieth century to live within one state. While the Serbs and Croats have lived in ethnically mixed communities and even engaged in inter-marriage, the centuries of division and the development of distinct cultural and religious differences created a level of mutual

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[83] See Ivo Banac in The National Question in Yugoslavia - Origins, History, Politics (London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1-15; and Franjo Tudjman in Nationalism in Contemporary Europe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 121-123. Croatia lost its independence during the twelfth century as it was ruled by Hungary and the Habsburg dynasty for a period of eight centuries. Serbia was incorporated into the Ottoman empire during the fourteenth century and experienced four hundred years of Turkish rule.

[84] Cohen, Broken Bonds-The Disintegration of Yugoslavia Second Edition. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 129. Croats typically are Catholic and Serbs are typically Orthodox.

[85] Although the linguistic scripts are different, the Serbian and Croat languages are almost indistinguishable aside from dialect and pronunciation differences.

[86] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 329.

suspicion and mistrust.[87] It is arguable that the two different historical traditions contributed to the development of mutually incompatible political ambitions, namely a Greater Serbia and Serbian hegemony and a Greater Croatia.[88]

It should be pointed out, however, that the objective of Pan-Slav unity was originally articulated by Croat intellectuals and religious figures in the 19th century.[89] While there were many differences in the structure of Pan-Slav unity proposals, the main objective was to protect and maintain Croatian cultural identity in the face of external threats.

However, it is clear that the level of suspicion did eventually lead to paranoia and ethnic chauvinism during World War II when both the Croatian fascist Ustasha and the Serbian extremist Chetniks committed unspeakable horrors against each other in the name of ethnic purity.[90]

The historical division of the Croats and Serbs undermined repeated attempts to unite the south slav peoples.[91] The divergent cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions coupled with mutual suspicion over threatening political agendas and horrendous war-time atrocities directly challenged the plausibility of integrating the Yugoslav community.

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[87] Ibid., 328.

[88] Robin Remington emphasizes a roughly similar point very strongly in her article on the legacies of communism in Eastern Europe. Remington, though, does not argue that the Croats aimed at a Greater Croatia. See Robin Alison Remington, "The Collapse of the Yugoslav Alternative," in The Legacies of Communism in Eastern Europe eds. Zoltan Barany and Ivan Volgyes (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 277.

[89] Aleska Djilas, "The Foundations of Croatian Identity," South Slav Journal (Vol. 8 No. 2, 1985): 27-28.

[90] Dennison Rusinow, "The Avoidable Catastrophe," 18.

[91] Ibid., 331.

The Croats and Serbs were segmented politically because of these differences, thus unity was always an extremely difficult task.

It is evident that while institutional and economic conditions laid the foundation for the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the historical experiences of the Croats and Serbs made it difficult to unite the south slav peoples. As such, the impending inter-ethnic suspicion created an environment where the respective ethnic groups were predisposed to identify with their nation rather than a south slav political entity.

2.1.1.2 Institutional Foundations

In a most basic sense, one can argue that the origin of the secessions in Croatia and the other republics hinged on the collapse of governmental authority and the erosion of order in the republics. In the period just prior to secession, the political authority in Belgrade was unable to effectively govern the country and moderate the desires of the republican leaders, especially in Croatia where violence was already on the verge of being realized.[92] However, one must go beyond this obvious condition of governmental beak-down to look further at the structural issues underlying the paralysis of the federal and republican governments.

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[92] See Susan Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 328; and Laslo Sekelj, Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 38.

Of primary importance is the constitutional order or lack of order prior 1991 in Yugoslavia. One of the most contentious issues in the years prior to the dissolution of the state was the role of the Communist Party (LCY or League of Yugoslav Communists). The role of the LCY and the federal government was to ensure the communist monopolization of power.[93] This fact prevented the possibility of extending dialogue on true democratic reform and a confederal arrangement for the country as an alternative to what Croats believed was a Serbian-dominated federal government. The Communist Party (hereafter referred to as the LCY) would not and could not allow the pluralization of politics during the 1980s because such a decision would have undermined its monopolistic position and would have possibly lead to increased political turmoil.[94] The grip of the LCY on power and its connection to the politicized Yugoslav Army, limited the possibility of fruitful negotiations.[95] The LCY power monopoly, although never centralized federally, contributed to further economic and political decline, its links to the army allowed political elites such as Slobodan Milosevic to manipulate the JNA (Yugoslav National Army) to hamper economic reform, and to interfere with any federal political reform movements.[96]

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[93] Laslo Sekelj, Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration, 158.

[94] Sabrina Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism, 68.

[95] For an examination of the Yugoslav Army please see M. Milivojevic, N. B. Allcock, and P. Maurier, eds. Yugoslavia's Security Dilemmas: Armed Forces, National Defence, and Foreign Policy (Oxford: Berg, 1988); and M. Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia: Sliding into War," in Beyond Yugoslavia - Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubisa S. Adamovich (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 68-70.

[96] Ibid.

Also important in the discussion of instability in Yugoslavia in the late 1980s is the issue of political parties and their role in creating stability in federal entities. According William Riker and Jonathan Lemco, as political integration of "federal" parties decreases, the likelihood of secession increases.[97] In other words, the absence of political parties which have influence and support throughout a federal state makes it difficult to facilitate inter-republican cooperation. This, in turn, may lead to political stalemates which further weaken the viability of the federal government.

The principal institutional failure which set the stage for Yugoslavia's dissolution was the political paralysis of the LCY which ceased to function effectively at the beginning of 1990.[98] During the period following Tito's death in 1980 the LCY "federalized" to an important extent. The party monopolized power but power was decentralized to the republican and regional levels.[99] Republican leaderships became increasingly quarrelsome and were utterly deadlocked by 1990 when in keeping with changes sweeping through Eastern Europe, the LCY surrendered its power monopoly and authorized competitive republican-level elections.[100]

Also related to the constitutional order of the Yugoslav state is the dual concept of "nation" that developed in communist era Yugoslavia in reference to the ethnic peoples

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[97] William H. Riker and Jonathan Lemco, "The Relations between Structure and Stability in Federal Governments," in The Development of American Federalism ed. William Riker (Norwell: Kluwer, 1987), 80.

[98] Rusinow, "The Avoidable Catastrophe," 17-18.

[99] Ibid., 18.

[100] J. Seroka, Political Organization in Socialist Yugoslavia (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), 33-45.

and peoples inhabiting territories. While the republics had the right to sovereignty, the nature of this sovereignty was contested. Proponents arguing for a move back to a more centralized system of government contended that this right was only in the realm of administrative control at the republican level.[101] In Croatia and Slovenia, however, the common position was that the aforementioned right extended to the realization of increased autonomy or secession.

As Franjo Tudjman discussed in his work Nationalism in Contemporary Europe, the treatment of the national question by the Yugoslav constitution failed to address the problem of nationality and self-determination. Tudjman argues that the constitution set out to permit the republics to acquire additional autonomy without addressing the problems of minority issues and territorial integrity.[102] The contention here is that this issue remained uncontested and unanswered for decades and that the glossing over of the issue contributed to future inter-ethnic antagonisms.[103]

Systematically, the most problematic aspect of the institutional crisis was the effectiveness of the Federal Assembly. The Yugoslav Federal Assembly consisted of a pentacameral chamber of republican delegates charged with the formation of economic policy, but decisions were based on the principle of unanimity. The Federal Assembly was based on a cooperative governmental model which required the consultation of the

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[101] Ibid., 68.

[102] Tudjman, Nationalism in Contemporary Europe, 109. Tudjman, who now is a successful nationalist political leader, earlier pursued a writing career and produced publications which got him into trouble with the Communist-era authorities.

[103] Tudjman, Nationalism in Contemporary Europe, 112.

republics and the autonomous provinces through republican representatives.[104] While Yugoslavia was formally a federal state, the day-to-day political reality was that its was truly a confederation, becoming increasingly decentralized with power at the centre weakening to the point where there was little that the federal government could accomplish.[105]

Most problematic with this institution was the fact that the republican leaders could veto any decision made by the assembly, thus rendering it ineffective. This fact was very evident in the latter phases of Yugoslavia's existence as the Federal Assembly was completely at the mercy of the feuding republics, especially over economic policy.[106] The economic aspect of the structural crisis is discussed in the next section to illustrate the manner in which the economic decline of the state influenced the perceptions of the republican political elites and their citizenry.

The provisions of Article 244 of the Yugoslav Constitution, as written in 1974, were largely responsible for the aforementioned institutional crisis. In no uncertain terms, Article 244 contributed to the increased devolution of power to the republics by

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[104] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 66.

[105] A "confederation" implies the sharing of governmental institutions between two or more unitary entities. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the unitary entities, although bound by the League of Communists and the Yugoslav National Army to uphold the Yugoslav Constitution, the LCY and the republics were decentralized, sharing a number of federal institutions. See Christopher Hughes, "Cantonalism: Federation and Confederacy in the Golden Epoch of Switzerland," in Comparative Federalism and Federation - Competing Traditions and Future Directions eds. Michael Burgess and Alain G. Gagnon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 155.

[106] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 130.

emphasizing the "unanimity principle".[107] While the LCY prevented the articulation of republican ethnic grievances through its monopoly of power, the 1974 Constitution and its decentralizing effects laid the groundwork for future inter-ethnic grievances and legislative paralysis.[108] The combination of these two conditions likely contributed to the difficulty in acquiring a new federal arrangement prior to 1991 and the effective management of the economy.[109]

To further worsen political relations among the federal republics in Yugoslavia, the collective presidency, instituted after the death of President Josip Broz Tito in 1980, proved to be an utter failure in executive federalism. It consisted of a rotating presidency whereby each republic had a single representative to the collective institution and a single president of the federation who rotated his or her position annually. By the mid 1980s, the collective presidency showed serious signs of fatigue as it was incapable of adequately sustaining the federation due to the impending political feuds between republican leaders who were more interested in promoting their parochial interests than the unity of the Yugoslav state.[110]

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[107] Vojin Dimitrijevic, "The 1974 Constitution and Constitutional Process in the Collapse of Yugoslavia," in Yugoslavia: The Former and Future eds. P. Akhavan and R. Howse (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1995), 58-60.

[108] Triunovska, ed., Yugoslavia Through Documents From its Creation to its Dissolution, 224-236. The point made here is that the 1974 constitution began the slippery slope to devolution and decentralization, creating institutions which would immobilize the government. Under a political system where discourse and compromise are commonplace (i.e. democratic societies), such a devolution of powers may not be so detrimental.

[109] Vojin Dimitrijevic, "The 1974 Constitution and Constitutional Process in the Collapse of Yugoslavia," 60-71.

[110] Rusinow, "The Avoidable Catastrophe," 17.

The federal government's incapacity can be demonstrated with reference to the Prime Ministership of Ante Markovic, a Croat, who failed to strike a balance between the demands of his own republic and the republics of Slovenia and Serbia prior to the dissolution of the state in 1991. Even more disturbing was the influence of the JNA (Yugoslav Peoples Army) in the dealings of the Federal Assembly and Prime Minister Markovic. Specifically, the JNA, acting on behalf of Milosevic and his military and political objectives, acted in contradiction to Markovic's plans to reform federal institutions by promoting a pro-communist hard line movement led by the head of the JNA.[111] Marko Milivojevic in "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia: Sliding Into War" also reiterates the aforementioned contention. Milivojevic claims that Markovic's government and the Federal Assembly were doomed because the JNA directly interfered with both Markovic's federal agenda as well as the reform movement in Serbia proper.[112] The political nature of the JNA and its attachment first to the LCY and later to the Milosevic government in Belgrade precluded any possibility of compromise in negotiations between republics. The existence of democratically oriented parties and political movements among the major players in the Yugoslav conflict may have created an atmosphere that was more conducive to political negotiation and compromise. The

[111] Marko Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia: Sliding Into War," 77.

[112] Ibid.

fact that the federal government and its legislative arm were immobilized by the parochial interests of the republics rendered any constitutional or legal order improbable.[113]

2.1.1.3 Economic Foundations

The deterioration of the Yugoslav economy and the chaos that was associated with it must be examined with reference to the impact that it had on political and social institutions and relations. The impact of decades of economic decline was significant and was influenced largely by the inability of federal and republican institutions to develop policies that were sensitive to external market challenges and opportunities.[114] While the effects of economic decline created additional problems for the Yugoslav federal government, the blame rests primarily with inadequate political institutions at the federal level and the continuing rivalry among republics. It is arguable that this inter-republican rivalry contributed to the failure of the political and economic institutions.

The economic crises which have slowly emerged from the 1960s onward presented substantial difficulties for the federal union. From 1965 to the dissolution of the federal union, Yugoslavia was unable to substantially improve its economy while much of non-socialist Europe had gone through two technological revolutions. The numerous crises included inflation that exceeded 2000 percent, an extremely high level

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[113] Ibid., 69.

[114] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 51. Cohen provides an explanation of the effects of economic crisis on the viability of the Yugoslav state.

of foreign debt, and soaring unemployment.[115] Particularly problematic was the 1974 constitution which required the consensus of all 6 republics and 2 autonomous provinces, each with significantly different economic and political motivations. The result was a complete mismanagement of economic resources and calls from wealthier republics such as Croatia and Slovenia for more autonomy in certain areas of the economy.[116]

In particular, the Slovenian government of Milan Kucan believed that his republic had been contributing a high price to remain in the union. Specifically, the Slovenian republic contributed 25% to the federal budget, 19% to the Federal Fund for Underdeveloped Regions, 18% to the Gross National Product, and 23% of total exports while only comprising 8% of the total Yugoslav population.[117] Thus, the prevailing view of Slovene and Croat leaders (Kucan and Tudjman respectively) was that the federal government, seemingly staffed by incompetent Serbian bureaucrats, was incapable of investing the resources that originated from the richest Yugoslav republics. The common perception among the aforementioned republics was that the federal government was utilizing these funds and resources to deal with the Serbian obsession with Kosovo and its historical importance to the Serbian nation.[118]

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[115] Robert F. Miller, "The Pitfalls of Economic Reform in Yugoslavia," Australian Journal of International Affairs 45 (November 1991): 216-217.

[116] Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism, 68.

[117] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 328-329.

[118] Lenard Cohen, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia," Current History (November 1992): 369-375.

An often overlooked aspect of Yugoslavia's economic decline is the existence of external pressure on the country to reform its economy. This pressure, primarily coming from international financial organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), precluded the Yugoslav federal government from pursuing economic policies that may have alleviated some of the economic pain in the republics, thus perhaps removing ammunition from republican leaders' nationalistic platforms.[119]

In the period after the formation of Yugoslavia and until the 1970s, Yugoslavia had significant difficulty in obtaining financial aid from both western and Soviet-bloc nations.[120] Due to its status as a member of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), Yugoslavia was overlooked by the United States on several occasions for aid.[121] As time wore on and the Yugoslav government was in need of funding, negotiations with the IMF brought some temporary relief. However, the beginning of the 1980s brought a change in the economic well being of all Yugoslav republics, especially in the Republic of Croatia.[122]

This period marked the beginning of an austerity program aimed to slash the immense foreign debt, decrease inflation, and improve Yugoslavia's economic image abroad. What was most problematic during this period was the fact that the standard of

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[119] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 17.

[120] Van Heuvan, "Understanding the Balkan Break-up," 177.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Miller, "The Pitfalls of Economic Reform in Yugoslavia," 217-218.

living declined significantly and the social programs that guaranteed equality among citizens were under direct attack due to the ensuing economic decline.[123] This decline created an atmosphere of chaos and a sense of economic and political turbulence as republican leaders and the federal government could not find the means to halt the changing economic order of the country. Accompanied with this sense of chaos was the realization among republican political leaders that the benefits of remaining in the union were slowly diminishing.[124]

Yugoslavia's economic vulnerability was highlighted further when, in 1987, federal Prime Minister Branko Mikulic reopened negotiations with the IMF.[125] Earlier, Mikulic attempted to develop a set of economic policies designed to stabilize the price of goods and maintain social programs. However, the continuation of IMF support necessitated a return to an orthodox program. The result of the IMF's demands and the implementation of the program included the significant rise of consumer prices, major cuts in spending, and a frequently devalued currency. Republican feuding continued to act as a catalyst to further economic collapse. Speculation among the wealthier republics such as Croatia and Slovenia blamed the economic decline on "Serbian" mismanagement at the federal level.[126]

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123 Ramet, Federalism and Nationalism, 73.

124 Branka Magas, The Destruction of Yugoslavia (London: Verso, 1993), 23.

125 Robert F. Miller, "The Pitfalls of Economic Reform in Yugoslavia," 213-222.

126 Marko Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia," in Beyond Yugoslavia - Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubisa Adamovich (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 69.

In summation, it is clear that the desires of the international financial community and the needs of the Yugoslav federation were in conflict. The IMF wanted a stronger central federal administration of economic policy which rested on an increase in civil order and a more centralized economy. The reality of the Yugoslavia of the late 1980s was a society that was further decentralizing to the point of a confederation and increased regional autonomy. The request by the IMF for increased centralization was political suicide for the Yugoslav state.[127] The federal government could not move in the opposite direction to the republics, and for a time, the Markovic government of the late 1980s attempted to follow the lead of Slovenia and Croatia in the process of democratization and free-market reforms.[128]

However, the IMF demands for increased central control initially worsened the economic condition of the republics which, in turn, created a sense of federal insensitivity and incompetence, making the prospect of separation much more appealing. As Susan Woodward states in the Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War, such conflicts are often resolved in legislatures in western democracies. Yugoslavia's continued existence was at the most crucial point - a point of flux or transition between an old communist system of one-party monopoly to an unknown pluralistic and democratic system requiring significant negotiation, compromise, and

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Miller, "The Pitfalls of Economic Reform in Yugoslavia," 217.

patience.[129] Given recent history we now know that the period of transition for a political entity is its most dangerous period. And in this case, the worst case scenario was quickly becoming a reality.

2.1.1.4 Demographic Foundations

Also important as a means of explaining the Croatian secession and the Yugoslav dissolution is a brief examination of how demographics facilitated the secession and violence from 1991 to 1995.

The composition of Yugoslavia and Croatia is very complex. The communities are intertwined and intermarriage is common. The former Yugoslavia consisted of Serbians (36.3%), Croats (19.7%), Muslims (8.9%), Slovenes (7.8%), Albanians (7.7%), Macedonians (5.9%), Yugoslavs (5.4%), Montenegrins (2.5%), Hungarians (1.9%), and those classified as "other" (3.9%).[130] Croatia's ethnic composition included, prior to 1995, Croats (78%), Serbians (12%), and others (10%).[131]

It is important to recognize that the demographic make-up of the former Yugoslavia made it difficult to remain united. In this sense, the nature of all ethnicities

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[129] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 328. Cohen discusses the problems of transformation as they relate to susceptibility to political and economic turmoil.

[130] Mihailo Crnobrnja, The Yugoslav Drama (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 25-27.

[131] Ibid. However, the ethnic composition of Croatia has changed dramatically since Croatia's re-acquisition of the Krajina which originally was inhabited primarily by Croatians of Serbian origin.

in the country affected the viability of the state because the extreme diversity may have eventually contributed to inter-ethnic discord, not just among Croats and Serbs, but also between other ethnic groups.[132] This contributed to an atmosphere of chaos disunity.[133] For example, the constant antagonism that existed between the Serbs and Albanian Muslims in Kosovo may have created an air of disunity. The Serbian policy in Kosovo from 1982 onward became provocative and cast a dark shadow over future inter-ethnic cooperation.[134] In fact, the Slovenes and Croats had been wary of Serbian military action in the autonomous province because it signalled the reality of the use of aggression as a means to stifle the articulation of national assertion.[135]

In terms of furthering inter-ethnic suspicion and intolerance, the existence of a significant Serbian minority in the Krajina and Slavonia (Eastern Croatia) was problematic from 1989 to 1995 because of the fear among Croatian Serbs of the perceived re-emergence of Croatian fascism of the 1940s.[136] These regions and their demographic characteristics made it difficult for Croatia to secede peacefully.

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[132] This observation might seem to echo the viewpoint, criticized earlier, which insists on the artificiality of the Yugoslav state and the inevitability of conflict between its peoples. One can acknowledge, however, that Yugoslavia was a conglomerate country in terms of its ethnic make-up and a fragile state without agreeing to the point that it was fated to break-up.

[133] Thomas M. Poulsen, "Yugoslavia in Geographical Perspective," in Yugoslavia in Transition ed. John B. Allcock, John J. Horton, and Marko Milivojevic (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 39-40.

[134] Vesna Popovski, "Yugoslavia: Politics, Federation, Nation," in Federalism: The Multiethnic Challenge ed. Graham Smith (London: Longman, 1995), 198.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 47.

2.1.2 The Dissolution of Czechoslovakia

While systemic problems coupled with a declining economy and an increase in nationalism contributed to the decline of the Yugoslav state, the failure of Czechoslovakia in 1993 is based far more on the bilateral relationship and experiences of Czech and Slovak political leaders than on the failure of institutions to accommodate regional interests or the rise of secessionism or nationalism. This section attempts to outline the major contributors to the dissolution of the Czechoslovak state and the secession of the Slovak republic.

2.1.2.1 Historical Foundations

One of the most notable features of Czech and Slovak history is the divergent development of the two national groups.[137] Politically, economically, and culturally, the Slovaks experienced modernization much more slowly than the Czechs and many observers contend that this divergence may have been detrimental to future inter-ethnic cooperation and unity.[138] The divergence in development is largely due to the fact that for centuries the Czechs had been under Austrian rule and the Slovaks had been under

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[137] See Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, Slovakia: Nation at the Crossroads of Central Europe (New York: Speller and Sons, 1960), 10-35; and Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization and Dissolution of a Nation-State," Regional Politics and Policy 3 (Spring 1993): 69-95.

[138] Edita Bosak, "Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Coexistence," in Czechoslovakia, 1919-88 ed. H. Gordon Skilling (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 67-68; and Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, Reflection on Slovak History (Toronto: Slovak World Congress, 1987), 12-24.

Magyar (Hungarian) domination. While the Czechs enjoyed significant autonomy and embarked on industrial, political, and national development, the Slovaks were subjected to the process of Magyarization as the assertion of their national identity was ruthlessly denied.[139] Consequently, a sense of distinct Slovak nationhood developed more slowly than its Czech counterpart.[140]

The implications of this divergent historical development are arguably equivocal. While it is difficult to discern what impact the suppression of the Slovak nation had on future inter-ethnic relations, the thesis contends that the asymmetrical development created two politically and economically contrasting nations, where from 1918 onward, tensions arose from this divergence to directly place pressure on the sanctity of the Czechoslovak union.[141]

For example, it is arguable that the political environment in Slovakia (one based on ties to religion and cultural traditions) did not mix well with the pluralistically and democratically oriented Czech political environment.[142] However, it is difficult to ascertain what impact this may have had on future relations but one may conclude that

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[139] Ibid., 66.

[140] The Hungarians implemented the Magyarization policy, denying the use of Slovak in schools and in other forms of communication, because they believed the Slovaks were not a nation but were an extension of the Magyar nation and they feared the emergence of pan-slavism which would have directly challenged the hegemony of the Hungarian monarchy in the region. See Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization and Dissolution of a Nation-State," 70-85.

[141] Leff, "Could this Marriage Have Been Saved? The Czechoslovak Divorce," 129. Also, J. Rychlik stresses this argument in his "National Consciousness and the Common State (A Historical-Ethnological Analysis)," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. J. Musil (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995), 97-105.

[142] Bosak, "Slovaks and Czechs," 68.

competing political traditions emerged which led to seemingly incompatible national agendas and eventual paralysis during the post-communist era.[143] Rychlik concludes his examination of the differing Czech and Slovak historical experiences with the observation that "the potential factors of Czechoslovakia's destruction were laid down in the very basis of the common state. Nonetheless, it could not be said that their activization in 1989 to 1992 was inevitable.[144]

Another argument that can be entertained as an extension of the historical divergence hypothesis rests on the issue of the economic development of Slovakia. Because Slovakia had remained underdeveloped in comparison to the Czech lands, the principal period of industrial development took place during the communist period. What can be called over-industrialization or rapid industrialization created a Slovakia that was overly dependent on heavy industry, particularly in the military sector.[145] With the dawn of reform politics on the horizon after 1989, the economic reforms of the federal government adversely affected Slovak industry in an asymmetrical manner, thus further contributing to inter-ethnic antagonism and eventual secession.[146]

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[143] Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization and Dissolution of a Nation-State," 69-75.

[144] Rychlik, "National Consciousness and the Common State (A Historical Ethnological Analysis)," 103.

[145] The impact of asymmetrical economic development is discussed in the section entitled "Economic Foundations." See V. Prucha, "Economic Development and Relations, 1918-89," in End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European Press, 1995), 68-69; and Rychlik, op., cit., 103.

[146] Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Czech Republic and Slovakia," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European University Press, 1995), 236-237.

Historically based analysis is extremely important. The historical experiences of the Slovaks and Czechs created two fundamentally different political, economic, and cultural realities. This divergence, in the very least, may have created barriers to future cooperation and unity. However, it is not the contention of the thesis that the aforementioned divergence is solely responsible for the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Institutional, economic, and demographic concerns must be addressed.

2.1.2.2 Institutional Foundations

The constitutional problems of post-communist Czechoslovakia had much to do with the inheritance of the 1968 constitution.[147] While the thesis does not fully examine the exact characteristics of that constitution, this section outlines the main problem with it and how it exacerbated the unity crisis after 1989.

The existence of three chambers, one federal and two republican, made the likelihood of passing constitutional amendments very difficult. Under the provisions of the 1968 constitution, a majority in each chamber was required to pass legislation. To make the task more ominous, in the case of constitutional amendments, there was a three fifths majority requirement in each chamber. In no uncertain terms, this constitution was

[147] Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization and Dissolution of a Nation-State," 74. Kirschbaum examines the constitutional constraints of the adopted 1968 constitution in post-communist Czechoslovakia.

problematic under the condition of a pluralistic system of government.[148] During the communist period the cooperation between republics that is required to pass legislation was guaranteed because the Communist party monopolized its position in government. When one considers the nature of post-communist politics with its conflictual party platforms and agendas, the likelihood of passing important constitutional amendments reflecting the future arrangement of the federation was negligible.[149] In essence, the constitutional process was a failure because of the existence of the parity principle, the requirement of a super-majority for constitutional amendments, and the prohibition of majority rule.[150]

2.1.2.3 Economic Foundations

The communist period of existence ended in Czechoslovakia in 1989, allowing the Czech lands and Slovakia to embark on a period of democratic and economic reforms in a multi-party pluralistic society. While the federal institutions of communist Czechoslovakia and post-communist Czechoslovakia were problematic in terms of

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[148] Katarina Mathernova, "Czecho?Slovakia: Constitutional Disappointments," in Constitution Making in Eastern Europe ed. Dick Howard (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 1993), 57-92.

[149] Prihoda, "Mutual Perceptions," 138.

[150] Mathernova, "Czecho?Slovakia: Constitutional Disappointments," 66-67.

constitutional reform, the reasons for Czechoslovakia's dissolution are not entirely politically based.

Jiri Musil describes several catalysts to the disintegration of the state and the subsequent secessions. The key to the disintegration, according to Musil, are national differences in conceptions and opinions regarding the division of powers between the Czech and Slovak political institutions.[151] The perception of Slovaks is that the federal institutions did not adequately address the concerns of the Slovak people with regard to their political, economic, and social concerns. Musil goes on to say that the most relevant reasons for the country's dissolution are based on differences in economic, social, and cultural development, differences in value orientations, mutual misperceptions, and different attitudes toward the common state of Czechoslovakia.[152] It is at this point that it is necessary to gain an understanding of Slovak society and the absence of an acceptance of the Czechoslovak state.

Although Slovakia had been primarily agrarian and significantly behind the Czech lands in terms of political and economic development in the beginning of this century, Slovakia, in fact, caught up to the Czech lands during the era of communist party rule in virtually all respects. However, the differential political and economic development created a difficulty in maintaining cohesion after 1989 under a pluralistic system of government. Speaking from the perspective of modernization theory, this thesis argues

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[151] Jiri Musil, "Czech and Slovak Society," chap. in The End of Czechoslovakia (Central European University Press, 1995), 78.

[152] Ibid.

that, as Jiri Musil points out, the Slovak and Czech processes of modernization developed "asynchronously" and not in relative unison.[153] The development of the Czech lands occurred significantly earlier and under a capitalist environment where as the Slovak development occurred at a later stage and under a Soviet model of economic development. The problem here is that the Soviet model emphasized a swift industrialization program because of the Warsaw Pact's desire to create militarily viable satellite states in Eastern Europe.[154] Slovakia had, to a significant extent, been an agrarian state.

However, with the implementation of industrial plants capable of constructing military hardware, Slovakia industrialized very quickly. This process also created communities which were almost entirely dependent on large scale industrial organizations. The effects of this swift industrialization included an agrarian sector that had suffered major losses and the creation of an underdeveloped industrial society.

How did this differential development affect inter-ethnic relations in the post-communist Czechoslovakia? Arguably, the reforms of the Czech dominated post-communist federal government, which had focused on rapid economic reform, also differentially affected the level of prosperity in Slovakia, increasing unemployment to a greater extent than in the Czech lands.[155] In turn, the disparity in economic conditions

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[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid., 79. Musil discusses the effects of development on future inter-ethnic relations.

[155] Ibid., 79.

manifested itself in inter-ethnic turmoil at the legislative level, especially with regard to the achievement of constitutional reforms satisfactory to both parties.[156]

After 1989, the Slovak population became less satisfied with the reforms of the federal government as many Slovak citizens lost confidence in the government and its ability to effectively represent the interests of the Slovak people.[157] To the Slovak people, Slovakia gained a significant degree of improvement under a communist system of government and the implementation of reforms in the 1990s seemed only to worsen the economic situation in Slovakia. Surprisingly, nationalistic sentiments were not forthcoming and significant support for Slovak secession was not evident in the populace.[158] Thus the continuation of the separatist movement was primarily supported by Meciar and members of his party. Coupled with these parochial interests, political elites and the general public were growing weary of what they deemed an "emotional" attachment to nationalism and the fact the governing of the state and the implementation of reform policies were becoming increasingly difficult. In the end, the absence of a political will to continue negotiations over a united Czechoslovakia was crucial to its dissolution.[159]

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156 Ibid.

157 Young, The Breakup of Czecho-Slovakia, 10.

158 Petr Prihoda, "Mutual Perceptions in Czech-Slovak Relationships," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European Press, 1995), 136.

159 Kusy, "Slovak Exceptionalism," 143.

Theoretically, what can one say about the impact of economic reforms on a state in transformation? Clearly, economic reform has significant ramifications on states in transition. Economic reforms further destabilize countries as they create unequal conditions and asymmetrical effects.[160] In essence, if we are to use Slovakia as an example, these asymmetrical effects contributed a readiness to accepts secession once political elites made this goal their foremost priority. The economic reforms utilized in Czechoslovakia were macroeconomic in nature and had differential effects on the Slovak Republic, leading to the desire among elites to initially obtain additional autonomy and subsequently to gain independence.[161]

2.1.2.4 Demographic Foundations

Although Czechoslovakia consisted of only two republics, a discussion of demographics is necessary to outline how inter-ethnic relations in a bi-polar state may have made unity difficult to maintain. It is commonly assumed that the Czechs and Slovaks had little in common throughout their long history together in a common state. However, it is clear that while major differences in historical experiences and economic development are notable in Czechoslovak history, the two ethnic groups have grown

[160] Ivo Bicanic, "The Economic Causes of New State Formation During Transition," East European Politics and Societies 9 (Winter 1995): 15.

[161] Ibid.

closer together in important respects.[162] Nevertheless, despite the fact that the two groups were becoming increasingly similar in terms of political and economic development, each national group maintained its identity.[163] The bi-polar relationship between two primary national groups may have made inter-ethnic cooperation increasingly difficult. The inclusion of a third republic, such as a potential "Moravian Republic", as discussed below, would have eased the bi-polar tension between the Slovaks and Czechs and may have eliminated the perception of a zero-sum game.

It is arguable that the very bi-polar nature of federal relations between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic created a politically stressful environment or the appearance of a zero-sum game between two diametrically opposed ethnic groups where one group gains and the other loses.[164] Perhaps the inclusion of a third republic may have undermined at least the perception of a zero-sum game and created an atmosphere where a number of republics could break the constitutional paralysis.

Another argument rests on the problem of Moravian requests for greater autonomy in the Czech lands. The Moravians, a fairly significant ethnic minority in the Czech Republic, grew increasingly interested in gaining more autonomy in the Czechoslovak state during the period of negotiations from 1989 to 1993. The Czech

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[162] Milan Kucera and Zdenek Pavlik, "Czech and Slovak Demography," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European Press, 1995), 36-37.

[163] Ibid., 37.

[164] Sharon L. Wolchik, "The Politics of Ethnicity in Post Communist Czechoslovakia," East European Politics and Societies 8 (Winter 1994): 167-168.

leadership of Havel and Klaus felt that this may have stemmed from the uncertainty of negotiations on the future of the federation and calls from Slovak leaders for a tri-partate federation.[165] The Czech Republic felt that this would merely undermine economic reforms in the Czech lands. One can argue that this internal threat made it more crucial for the Czech leadership to accept Slovak secession and establish a deadline for dissolution.

Demographic realities, therefore, may have at least acted as catalysts to the eventual dissolution of the state as they made it difficult to gain a consensus over a renewed federation. The demographic realities of the Slovak and Czech republics are important in the discussion of why the Czechoslovak dissolution was not violent. Only 1% of the Slovak population was Czech and only 4% of the Czech population was Slovak.[166] In addition, both the Slovaks and Czech minorities were concentrated primarily in the capital cities of Prague and Bratislava respectively.[167] The relatively low level of concentration in each republic and the location of the respective ethnic groups made the likelihood of territorial demands and territorial acquisition very unlikely. The absence of these demands made the use of force equally unlikely.

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[165] Ibid., 168.

[166] Robert Kaiser, "Czechoslovakia: The Disintegration of a Binational State," in Federalism: The Multiethnic Challenge ed. Graham Smith (London: Longman, 1995), 225-226.

[167] Ibid.

2.1.2.5 Conclusion

The Czechoslovak case provides an interesting example of a dissolution without a strongly developed secessionist movement. In Yugoslavia, separatist movements were in abundance and they sought to establish sovereign states with the support, especially in Slovenia and Croatia, of ethnically identifiable citizens. The Czechoslovak dissolution involved the timely congruence of structural failure, cognitive experiences involving negative perceptions and misperceptions, debilitating and differential economic effects, and parochial and diametrically opposed political elite interests in a newly democratic and pluralistic environment where most citizens opted for a unified state - all of which contributed to an environment of institutional paralysis.[168] In essence, the revisiting of constitutional debate that is so often the reality in some western federations (i.e. Canada) was perceived as an unwanted and unnecessary characteristic of the Czech and Slovak union. Despite the widespread support for the continuation of a common state, political identification with political parties was very unstable in the Czech Republic and even more unstable in the Slovak Republic.[169] In fact, the elections of June 1992 indicated a participatory involvement of approximately 83% in both republics, but many citizens, when polled, changed their minds on issues and political party affiliation.[170]

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[168] Musil, "Czech and Slovak Society," 78-79.

[169] Wolchik, op., cit., 227.

[170] Ibid.

What are the implications of these realities? First, because the political affiliation was weak, the citizenry was easily influenced and mobilized by nationalist political elites who sought to garner support for parochial causes.[171] Second, there are fewer limitations placed on these political elites to follow public opinion, as this was clearly the reality in the Slovak and Czech republics where ethnically identified politicians sought out ethnically based political agendas.[172]

It is also important to note that in the Slovak case the dissolution of the Czechoslovak federation was not based on national self-determination or secession as it had been in Croatia but on the simultaneous emergence of constitutional, economic, and political crises during a period of transitional weakness.[173] The success of the secessionist movement in Slovakia can be attributed to the aforementioned unstable political affiliation of the electorate along with the emerging dissatisfaction with economic and political realities of the new Czechoslovakia.[174]

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[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Sabrina Petra Ramet, "The Reemergence of Slovakia," Nationalities Papers 22 (1994): 99-103.

[174] Wolchik, op., cit., 227.

2.2 THE RISE OF SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS: Secession, Ethnic Conflict, and Self Determination

At this juncture it is necessary to examine the emergence of secessionist movements in the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Caution should be used when discussing the Czechoslovak case because one can argue that an authentic secessionist movement did not exist in either the Czech or Slovak republics.[175] Nevertheless, we can examine the nature of the political movements that eventually pushed the country toward dissolution. First, the thesis examines the emergence of secessionist politics in Croatia with a special emphasis on the Serbian Republic because it is necessary to acknowledge the problematic relationship between the two largest ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia. Second, we discuss parties and figures involved in the dissolution of Czechoslovakia with an emphasis on the Czech and Slovak republics. And finally, a discussion of ethnic conflict and nationalism is provided to demonstrate the relevance of these phenomena to the rise of secessionist movements in Yugoslavia and the secession process in Czechoslovakia.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the eventual secession of the Croatian Republic were due to a multiplicity of conditions within and outside Yugoslavia. These conditions, combined together at the right moment, created the right atmosphere for the dissolution of the state and the subsequent secessions. Along with the factors described in the previous sections, the political elites and their secessionist goals were responsible

[175] A secessionist movement is a politically mobilized organization whose main objective is to articulate the desire for independence and to realize that objective. A secessionist movement can be ethnically and/or territorially defined.

for the dissolution of Yugoslavia because of their respective parochial interests and actions.[176]

No other individual in the Yugoslav dissolution has had as great an impact as Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic's political agenda after 1987 began with the implementation of a popular socialist program and the resurrection of nationalistic themes related to the historically important autonomous province of Kosovo and the existence of a significant Serbian minority in Eastern Croatia.[177] The 1987 election of Slobodan Milosevic in the Republic of Serbia began a period of Serbian chauvinism and nationalistic resurgence.[178]

Milosevic's ability to "play the nationalistic card" in Serbian politics was facilitated by a previously existing sense of Serbian national grievance which manifested itself ever more clearly during the 1980s. An important landmark in this development was a joint declaration by prominent Serbian intellectuals. This was issued in the form of a Memorandum from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Belgrade between 1985 and 1986 which alleged that the federal government discriminated against the Serbian people, that the partitioning of Serbia into three parts weakened the republic, and

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[176] Keep in mind that while political elites in Yugoslavia contributed to the rapid disintegration of the state, their behaviour was at least in part the result of the inheritance of a flawed political and economic framework.

[177] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 35; and Radan, "Secessionist Self-Determination," 183-195. Both provide a discussion of the problem of external Serbian minorities.

[178] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 328.

that minority Serbs in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and elsewhere were harassed.[179] This memorandum was provocative in that it indicated that Serbia would now be intransigent in its stance for a stronger Serbia in Yugoslavia and it contributed to the devastating military action in Kosovo which was not overlooked by the Croatians and Slovenians.[180] It was not until the years 1989 and 1990 that Milosevic's intentions became clear. Milosevic, with the continued assistance of the politicized JNA, began to assert Serbian authority in the autonomous regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Both provinces were stripped of their independent administrative capabilities and, in the case of Kosovo, the majority Albanian Muslim population was harassed and intimidated by Serbian police and the JNA.[181] The common perception of the remaining republics' leaders was clear: Milosevic would use force to achieve the objective of Serbian hegemony in Yugoslavia or a Greater Serbia at the least.[182] After the election of the HDZ or Croatian Democratic Union led by the controversial Franjo Tudjman in the Republic of Croatia in 1990, Milosevic turned his attention, rightly or wrongly, to the welfare of the Serbian minority in the Krajina.[183] The nationalist inclinations of the Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, quickly became apparent and in the eyes of many

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[179] Christopher Cviic, "Yugoslavia: The Unmaking of a Federation," in The Volatile Powder Keg - Balkan Security After the Cold War ed. F. Stephen Larrabee (Washington: American University Press, 1994), 91.

[180] Ibid. The actions in Kosovo were ominous in that they influenced the attitudes of the political leadership in Croatia and Slovenia.

[181] Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 48.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid., 48-57.

Serbian observers in the region, the existence of fear among Krajina Serbs was legitimate.[184]

The collapse of the LCY in January 1990 led to the indirect control of the JNA by Milosevic in Serbia.[185] Considering that the officer class in the JNA was primarily Serbian, the JNA, on behalf of the Milosevic government in Belgrade, engaged in intimidating acts and periods of interference in Croatia and Slovenia. For example, the JNA immediately following the election of Franjo Tudjman disarmed the territorial defence forces in Croatia.[186] As it was mentioned earlier in the thesis, the JNA acted on behalf of Milosevic who attempted to stifle the attempts of the federal government to embark on political and economic reforms.[187] Kadijevic, the leader of the JNA after 1989, sought to assist Milosevic in his attempt to consolidate Serbian control over several regions outside Serbia and implement Milosevic's agenda for a more centralized Yugoslav union despite the movement toward a more decentralized, confederal model that was articulated by both Croatia and Slovenia.[188]

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[184] For an examination of the growing sense of fear among Krajina Serbs, please see Cohen, Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition, 336.

[185] Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia," 77.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Milosevic and Kadijevic eventually differed in their individual agendas and vision of Yugoslavia. Milosevic believed in the right of secession but emphasized that the secession should not include existing republic boundaries. Milosevic increasingly moved toward a position of obtaining territory where Serbs were located. Kadijevic, as head of the JNA, however, aimed to protect the sanctity of the Yugoslav state and borders. See Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 123.

[188] Ibid.

As was noted in the brief narrative of Croatia's secession in the introduction to this work, Krajina Serbs revolted against the Croatian Republic. Milosevic first incited this development and then utilized the JNA to assist the Krajina Serbs of the Krajina to formally create the Serbian Autonomous Region of the Krajina or SARK. Again, the action of the Serbian president was seen, especially by Croatians, as the realization of his "Greater Serbia" agenda.[189] Subsequent Serbian military action in Bosnia-Hercegovina was also seen as part of his plan to extend the borders of Serbia proper, thus the leadership of Croatia and Slovenia as well as their citizens did not put much trust into negotiations for a renewed Yugoslavia.

While Milosevic's role in Yugoslavia's break-up was criticized, other leaders must share the responsibility of contributing to the Yugoslav crisis and the eventual dissolution of the state. Milan Kucan of Slovenia argued constitutional issues of a matter of right with the federal government even when the government was headed by a reform-minded Markovic from Croatia.[190] This assertion of republican authority included ignoring tax requirements and the economic reforms of the Markovic government. This behaviour only made the reform efforts by the federal government that much more futile and made the plausibility of the dissolution of the state much more realistic.[191]

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189 Reneo Lukic, "Greater Serbia," 49-70.

190 Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 123.

191 Ibid.

Still more important in relation to the subject of this thesis are the initiatives taken by Franjo Tudjman, who disregarded Markovic's federal reforms and sought to intimidate the Serbs of the Krajina.[192] After the election of the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) in 1990, Tudjman introduced a new Croatian constitution. The Croatian constitution redefined the essence of Croatia's sovereignty by stating that its sovereignty resided with the Croatian people which was in contrast to its earlier constitution which emphasized the existence of the Serbian people in partnership with the Croatian people.[193] This move by Tudjman was provocative in nature because it created fear among the minority Serbs of the Krajina, who recalled the massacre of Serbs during World War II.[194] Tudjman also did very little to calm the Croatian people and to curb the growing violence against non-Croats in ethnically mixed regions of Dalmatia where after 1989, firebombings, beating, and the loss of employment by Serbs were becoming commonplace.[195] The political environment created by these political elites was not one conducive to trust, cooperation, or compromise. The direct influence and interference by Croatian, Slovenian, and Serbian officials in federal policy objectives compromised the intention of Markovic's government to search for an alternative model

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[192] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 77. Susan Woodward discusses the rise of violence against non-Croats and the provocative actions of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in 1990.

[193] Trifunovska, ed., Yugoslavia Through Documents From its Creation to its Dissolution, 260; and Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," 26-35.

[194] Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," 28.

[195] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 328.

of government for all of Yugoslavia's republics.[196] One could speculate that the republican leaders' motivations rested with the desire to ensure independence and to acquire territory.

Crucial in the problematic negotiation process and ensuing conflict in the former Yugoslavia is the emergence and role of President Franjo Tudjman. Like Milosevic, Tudjman played a major role in the conflict. Tudjman was a highly placed apparatchik in the Croatian Communist Party until he began to openly articulate the sentiments of many common Croatian citizens on the issue of the Croatian national assertion of ethnic identity and republican autonomy.[197] Despite Tudjman's metamorphosis into a "democrat" and his creation of the HDZ or Croatian Democratic Union in 1990, he was not truly committed to the effective implementation of democratic principles.[198] Tudjman is responsible for political platforms based on the discrimination against minority Serbs within Croatia prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the desire to acquire and alter additional territory outside of Croatia proper, and the articulated policy of not recognizing Bosnian Muslims as an ethnicity entitled to a nation-state of their own.[199] Tudjman is also guilty of the practice of intimidating Croatian independent media whenever such sources question the policies and record of the president, with the paper

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196 Milivojevic, The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia, 77.

197 Robert M. Hayden, "Constitutional Nationalism in the Formerly Yugoslav Republics," Slavic Review (Winter 1992): 655.

198 Ibid.

199 Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," 28.

"Slobodna Dalmacija" being subjected to police harassment and overt political scrutiny.[200]

2.2.1 The Role of Political Parties in the Secession of Slovakia

Important in an analysis of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the Slovak secession is an understanding of the political party differences and their role in bringing about the end of a common state in 1993. While the Czechoslovak dissolution did not involve the explicit rise of secessionist movements, the main political parties in Slovakia and the Czech lands contributed to the secession of Slovakia. Unlike the Yugoslav experience, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia involved no mass movement of separatists, no use of armed forces, no secessionist drives, and virtually no overall public support for the dissolution of post-communist state.[201] Thus while structural concerns and perceptions play a role in the dissolution of the post-communist state, the diametrical situation between the Czechs and Slovaks as illustrated in the motives and aspirations of their respective political parties play an even more important role in this case.

The 1990 election of the Civic Forum in the Czech lands and the Public Against Violence in the Slovak Republic marked the beginning of the end of inter-ethnic cooperation. In 1989, the two parties worked together to bring about the mutually

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[200] Ibid.

[201] Musil, "Czech and Slovak Society," 78. Musil gives a description of public support for a continued union.

agreeable dissolution of the communist monopoly in the country.[202] However, with the communists gone and the task complete, the relationship between the two republics needed to be dealt with in terms of constitutional amendments.[203] Nevertheless, the political parties, with the exception of the communists, were almost entirely representative in their constituent units in each republic with no broad ranging, cross-ethnic appeal. This fact helped to make Czechoslovak statehood problematic.

The diametrically opposed party systems were accompanied by the equally contrasting views of two new and dominant parties after the 1992 elections.[204] The success of "national" parties was a result of the poor performance in elections between 1989 and 1992 of cross-ethnic parties with the Communist Party enjoying the only cross-ethnic support.[205] Vaclav Klaus, leader of the Czech party called the "CDP" or Christian Democratic Party, was intent on pursuing the continuation of economic reform as well as gaining membership in the European Union.[206] This program for action required that the Czechoslovak state become more centralized with some Czech politicians arguing for a unitary state.[207] In contrast, the Movement for a Democratic

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202 Priboda, "Mutual Perceptions," 136.

203 Ibid.

204 Gordon Wightman, "The Development of the Party System and the Break-up of Czechoslovakia," in Party Formation In East-Central Europe ed. Gordon Wightman (London: Edward Elgar, 1995), 59.

205 Ibid., 60-61.

206 Ibid.

207 Ibid.

Slovakia headed by Vladimir Meciar sought to increase the autonomy of the Slovak Republic, primarily focusing on the negative impact of economic reforms on the republic and the perception that the Czechs, through numerical superiority, dominated policy in the federal assembly at the expense of the social welfare of the Slovak people.[208]

The absence of a "federal" party with support in both Slovakia and the Czech lands shifted the emphasis onto the "national" parties, thus contributing in the long run to the emergence of intransigent republican positions on the crisis of the federation and the dissolution of the state.[209] The 1992 elections witnessed the re-emergence of republican parties in the Czech lands which were opposed to a confederal model and in Slovakia which were fundamentally against the continuation of a status quo federation.[210] Klaus' Civic Democratic Party and its coalition partners as well as Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia set in motion the collapse of the federation.[211]

Most crucial in the ensuing secession of Slovakia was the 1992 parliamentary elections and the re-emergence of two parties, the Civic Democratic Union and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, whose party platforms were diametrically

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[208] Ibid., 136-137.

[209] Wightman, Party Formation In East-Central Europe, 64.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid.

opposed.[212] This development was largely due to the reality of divergent party systems in each republic.[213] In turn, this stemmed from separate opposition movements which had been established prior to the collapse of the communist government in 1989 in what has been coined the "Velvet Revolution".[214] Coupled with an electorate which preferred "national" or ethnically based parties and the absence of any federal party, aside from the communists, with any significant cross-cultural support, the emergence of party policies based on intransigent systems of belief on the future of Czechoslovakia ensued.[215] Again, there is a relationship between the existence and prevalence of state-wide party systems and political parties and the stability of the state. The absence of a state-wide system of political parties is likely to increase the probability of political instability and secession.[216]

2.2.2 Ethnic Conflict, Nationalism, and the Rise of Secessionist Movements

It is clear that nationalism in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, as articulated by secessionist movements in the former and intransigent political elites in the latter,

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[212] Gordon Wightman, "The Development of the Party System and the Break-up of Czechoslovakia," 59.

[213] Ibid., 60.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Ibid., 63-65.

[216] Jonathan Lemco, Political Stability in Federal Governments (New York: Praeger, 1991), 80.

contributed to the disintegration of these states. Any attempts to transform their respective societies to market oriented, democratic entities proved problematic as each national group became increasingly confrontational. In the case of Yugoslavia, the Croatian Republic was riding a wave of nationalistic fervour. This re-emergence of nationalism was fuelled by an ineffective federal system of government and by the parochial interests of internal and external political elites. In general, the re-emergence of nationalism in Eastern Europe can be attributed to the collapse of the communist monopoly of power and re-pluralization of the respective societies. In Czechoslovakia, nationalism was not popularly accepted by the Czechoslovak people. Slovak political elites established and developed their own political agenda on the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic. These elites, without popular support for secession, sought to use the secessionist card to strengthen Slovakia's position in the federation.[217] Nevertheless, one must examine what nationalism and secession are and how they may have interacted in both case scenarios.

[217] In fact most Czechs and Slovaks supported the continuation of the state. See Carol Skalnik Leff, The Czech and Slovak Republics. Nation Versus State (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 129-130.

2.2.2.1 The Conceptualization of Nationalism

Carlton Hayes in what is considered a classic work on the subject described nationalism as the fusion of patriotism with a consciousness of nationality.[218] A nationality, according to his view, is a group of people who speak a common language, are tied to a community, a set of historical experiences, and have a conscious awareness of themselves. E.J. Hobsbawm adds to Hayes' depiction of nationalism. According to Hobsbawm, nationalism is a rather vague phenomenon, and is often exclusionary, hostile, and lacking in objectives, while at the same time acting as a bond of common cultural characteristics.[219] Thus nationalism is characterized as an affinity to a single group, not necessarily ethnically identifiable, coupled with knowledge of that group's existence in contrast to other groups.

The aforementioned definitions provide an understanding of some key characteristics associated with nationalism. These characteristics, while not necessarily detrimental to multi-national, federal, or unitary systems, clearly can pose difficulties for these systems under certain conditions. Of particular importance are the characteristics of nationalistic movements. Such characteristics determine whether the movement will likely be detrimental to the existence of a particular state. Nationalism, particularly in

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[218] Carlton Hayes, Nationalism: A Religion (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), 2.

[219] E. J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism Since 1780 - Program, Myth, Reality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 167.

Eastern Europe, is not tied to the liberal idea of pluralism but to ethnicity.[220] Nationalism, for this reason, is important to this study because it can directly affect conflict and possibly secession.

2.2.2.2 Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict

One of the most notable features of nationalism in Croatia is its extreme nature as well as the manner in which political elites utilized the emotional attachment to the nation of Croatia after 1989.[221] The nationalism of Croatia after 1989 culminated in policies oriented toward the consolidation of the Croatian people as sole inhabitants of Croatian land. This was articulated in constitutional changes in 1990 whereby President Tudjman simply erased any mention of Serbian rights in the constitution as equal partners.[222] In this sense, nationalism found its way into the construction of the Croatian constitution which, in turn, caused problems between republics as the amendments were seemingly threatening toward a particular ethnic group.

Nationalism also found its way into neighbouring Serbia. A discussion of the effects of Serbian nationalism is necessary due to the problematic relationship between

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220 Popovski, "Yugoslavia: Politics, Federation, Nation," 128.

221 Woodward, Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War, 93-97.

222 Snezana Trifunovska, ed., Yugoslavia Through Documents From its Creation to its Dissolution (Boston: Martinus Nighoff, 1994), 251-280. See this text for reference to the Croatian constitution which removed the Serbs as equal partners of the state and rendered them a "protected minority" which may seem to be a dubious statement to some.

Croatia and Serbia. Once again, nationalist sentiments were fuelled by the election of Slobodan Milosevic in 1987. To reiterate an earlier premise, Milosevic utilized the emotional attachment to nationalism in Serbia by focusing on the plight of the Serbs during World War II and the threat posed by non-Serbs in Bosnia-Hercegovina, Kosovo, and Croatia. This articulation of nationalistic sentiment contributed to the fragile relations near the end of Yugoslavia's existence.[223]

In Slovakia, the attachment to nationalism by ethnic Slovaks was seen as emotional in orientation. Membership to the Slovak nation seemed more important than the support of the Czechoslovak federation, thus the interests of the Slovak people were parochial in nature.[224] While Slovak nationalism became intolerant during WWII, nationalism during the post-communist era was not extreme. However, the attachment to the Slovak nation did contribute to the dissolution of the state as it ignited the passions of the ruling elite despite the fact that only a minority of Slovaks supported secession.

2.2.2.3 Nationalism in Eastern Europe

Another aspect of nationalism relates to the question of secession as it is affected by divergent concepts of nationalism. In this context, the international community and

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[223] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 15. For her explanation of Milosevic's use of nationalism in Serbia to gain support in Serbia proper. Also, this use of nationalism especially exacerbated inter-ethnic relations because it guided Serbia's Kosovo and Krajina strategies, both of which led to pre-emptive measures in Slovenia and Croatia.

[224] Miroslav Kusy, "Slovak Exceptionalism," in End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European Press, 1995), 144.

the common perception of nationalism is often portrayed without an acknowledgement of how nationalism and secession are seen in Eastern Europe. To be precise, in Eastern Europe, the concept of nationalism is utilized in the understanding of sovereignty and self-determination. The common view rests on the assumption that self-determination, sovereignty, and secession are an extension of ethnicity and nationalism and this expression entitles a particular ethnic group to ownership of a state.[225] Consequently, national or ethnic identity is utilized in the larger objective of gaining statehood which is contrary to the western emphasis on popular sovereignty.[226] The Eastern European version of nationalism and secession ultimately complicates inter-ethnic relations as it contributes to the desire of a "collective" to pursue secession and state recognition. With the absence of homogenous nation state entities in Yugoslavia, the likelihood of violent conflict is significant. In summation, this view of nationalism contributes to the possibility of secession.

2.2.2.4 Constitutional Nationalism

To revisit the nature of nationalism in the former Yugoslavia, one must distinguish the nationalism of Yugoslavia to the nationalism that is found in other nation-

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[225] Peter Radan, "Secessionist Self-Determination: The Cases of Slovenia and Croatia," Australian Journal of International Affairs 48 (1994): 184.

[226] Ibid. The meaning here is that instead of the popular sovereignty that emphasizes individual rights in the United States, the predominant view in Eastern Europe is on group rights or group secession.

states. One can depict the nationalism of Croatia, for example, as "constitutional nationalism". The impact of this type of nationalism on secession is significant and merits discussion here.

As a new state in a democratizing Eastern Europe, Croatia needed to demonstrate to the international community that it was committed to democratic ideals and minority rights in order to garner support for independence and to be recognized by members of the international community. The problem that emerged in Croatia and the other Yugoslav republics for its political parties was the dual requirement of gaining political support among the electorate while at the same time appearing to be sensitive to democratic principles.[227] The concept of constitutional nationalism was utilized to achieve these dual objectives and it is characteristic of all of the former Yugoslav republics. In addition, it is clear that the concept and its adoption, especially in Croatia and Serbia, contributed to the alienation of minorities and the eventual use of violence.[228] To be precise, the Croatian government in 1990 utilized constitutional nationalism to create the legal basis for the discrimination against national minorities and to strengthen the position of the national majority.

Another characteristic of constitutional nationalism as characterized in Croatia is its emphasis, obviously, on the collective ethnically described group rather than on the western principle of the individual. As such, the constitution set out in its preamble to

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[227] Robert M. Hayden, "Constitutional Nationalism in the Formerly Yugoslav Republics," Slavic Review (Winter 1992): 655.

[228] Ibid.

relegate the national minority of the Serbs and to strengthen the ethnically Croat population by emphasizing the ethnic basis of the Croat nation (Hrvatski narod) rather than giving it a political basis. To rectify any negative impact that this racist principle would create in the international community, the text of the constitution included provisions for the protection of minority rights. However, the preamble allowed the Croatian government to exclude the Serbs and their demands for recognition, as Tudjman promoted the use of the formerly fascist coat of arms, the exclusive use of the Latin script and Croat language in the country, and the removal of Serbs from many bureaucratic posts.[229] Similarly, it is also arguable that Slovakia's leadership in the period since it gained its independence has adopted constitutional nationalism, but with less than dire consequences.

In essence, the preamble only reinforces the concept of constitutional nationalism regardless of the protections listed in the text.[230] This reliance on constitutional nationalism is an important part of the analysis of the Croat secession movement as it contributed to the alienation of the Serbs in Croatia by creating a state of fear and mistrust. Therefore, one can conclude that the constitutional nationalism of Croatia acted as a catalyst for the uprising of the Krajina Serbs and subsequent violence.

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[229] Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," 28.

[230] Ibid., 658.

2.2.2.5 Nationalism's Triadic Relationship

What is also important in the study of nationalism is the manner in which national minorities, nationalizing states, and external homelands interact with one another to facilitate secessionist movements. National minorities refers to minority ethnic groups within a state occupied by an ethnically defined majority. For example, the Krajina Serbs of Easter Croatia (prior to 1996) can be considered a national minority. Nationalizing states are those which have recently become independent through secession or are on the verge of seceding from a larger entity and which utilize nationalistic policies focused on ethnicity to unite the citizenry and isolate any opponents. The newly independent Croatia can be considered a nationalizing state. Finally, an external homeland is an ethnically defined state which may or may not share a border with another state which, in turn, is comprised of an ethnic minority that is in some way connected to the external homeland. In the case of Yugoslavia and Croatia, it is often assumed that the minority question in Croatia had to do with the relations between Croatia and Serbia proper. The relationship, however, is triadic and exists between Croatia, the Krajina Serbs, and Serbia proper or the homeland of the Krajina Serbs.[231] The existence of three parties complicated the relationship and served to create

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[231] Rogers Brubaker, "National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe," Theory and Society 23 (1994): 118.

intransigent positions in Croatia between the Croat majority and the Serbian minority.[232] Also, the triadic nature of the dispute created multiple secessionist movements with completely incompatible agendas. However, given the Czechoslovakia's demographic make-up, there was no basis for a triadic relationship because the number of Czechs in Slovakia was and continues to be minimal, with no territorial aspirations being apparent.

2.2.2.6 Self-Determination

The main problem of self-determination is that a state or group of states must recognize that right under international law. The most important political entities in this regard include the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations.[233] Because the concept is always in flux with the changing characteristics of the international community, the legalities of the right to self-determination and the recognition of that right are not fixed eternally. The problems for ethnic conflict are, thus, founded in the basis of recognition of the right to self-determination.

First, the international community was slow to react to the ensuing crises in countries such as Yugoslavia.[234] Instead of agreeing on new principles of recognition

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[232] Ibid.

[233] Ibid., 45.

[234] Ibid.

of the right to self-determination, the United States and the European Union continued to utilize dated principles of recognition. Specifically, this involved the continued usage of the principle of the inviolability of borders.[235] The implications of the usage of the principle in the Yugoslav case were significant. The fact that the existing boundaries in Yugoslavia did not in anyway reflect the ethnic composition of the republics posed problems immediately. The borders should have been modified in some circumstances, especially in relation to the Serbian dominated Krajina and Eastern Slavonia. It is true, however, that the redrawing of the territorial boundaries may have been impossible because of the intermixing of ethnic groups.

Second, the recognition of the right and the principles that were utilized in the recognition were not uniform and were inconsistent.[236] On the question of the principle of protecting minority rights, the United States and different European Union members, did not apply the protection of minority rights principle equally.[237] The clear violation of minority rights in Croatia in relation to the treatment of Serbs did not seem to weigh heavily on the minds of the Germans in their recognition of Croatian independence.[238]

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[235] Ibid., 45-48.

[236] Ibid., 46.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Radan, "Secessionist Self-Determination: The Cases of Slovenia and Croatia," 184. Radan provides a discussion of the European response to the Croatian attempt to receive recognition and the violation of the principle of minority rights.

The inconsistent application of the minority right requirement may have contributed to the premature recognition of Croatia.[239]

Finally, no enforcement principles have been developed which would allow those states who recognize self-determination to reprimand the receiving states in the event of a violation.[240] Newly independent states, such as Croatia, could possibly assert that they intend to recognize the principle of protecting minority rights. In fact, the Croatian case is interesting in that while it asserted its commitment to the protection of minority rights in the main text of its constitution, the preamble to the constitution indicated that the Croatian state was primarily for ethnic Croats.[241] However, enforcement seems to be a very unlikely venture and it is difficult to envision any mechanism which would allow one to enforce the requisite principles when newly independent states violate minority rights.

2.2.3 Response of Central Governments: Attempts to Prevent Secession

Because the Croat and Slovak secessions involve federal governments, it is necessary to determine what role if any the central governments in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia played in the maintenance of unity.

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[239] Halperin, Self Determination, 32-38.

[240] Ibid., 46.

[241] Trifunovska, Yugoslavia Through Documents From its Creation to its Dissolution, 251-280.

In the Yugoslav case, several federal government initiatives were launched to further the cause to retain the Yugoslav federation. As it has been mentioned earlier, the Federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic launched a series of economic and political reforms designed to stabilize the Yugoslav economy by making the Yugoslav dinar internationally convertible, getting inflation under control, and promoting privatization.[242] While Markovic enjoyed the luxury of being one of the most popular Yugoslav politicians regardless of ethnicity, his reforms were despised by republican leaders, especially in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia.[243] Even more problematic was the assumption by Markovic that economic reforms and the benefits of such reforms would stifle the emerging flames of nationalism and the imminent disintegration of the Yugoslav federation.[244] The emphasis on economic reforms reflected a misunderstanding of the emerging crisis. That is that re-emerging nationalisms of Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia were the result of an institutional crisis and collapse. There was no effective institutional mechanism that would enable the republican leaders to reach agreement on a renewed federal arrangement. However, it is arguable that with the election of nationalistic political parties in each of the aforementioned republics there was no intention or desire of any them to reach any agreement.[245] The reality of the Yugoslavia of the early

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[242] J. F. Brown, Hopes and Shadows - Eastern Europe After Communism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 234-235.

[243] Laura Silber and Allan Little, The Death of Yugoslavia (London: BBC Books, 1995), 183.

[244] Robert F. Miller, "The Pitfalls of Economic Reform in Yugoslavia," Australian Journal of International Affairs 45 (November 1991): 220.

[245] Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 183.

1990s was that its republics elected parties on strictly nationalistic platforms. These elections occurred before any pan-Yugoslav union elections could take place.

More problematic, however, was the absence of any effective central governmental authority in Yugoslavia prior to the war. By March 16, 1991, the Federal Presidency was no longer functioning and the respective republican representatives blocked the election of Stipe Mesic as Yugoslav President.[246] Thus Yugoslavia existed as a state prior to its dissolution with no functioning federal assembly, federal presidency, or federal party. This left a vacuum within which the parties gained additional power. Furthermore, the absence of any governmental authority left room for the JNA and its head Kadijevic to propose the usage of armed force to maintain Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. These precipitating events are discussed in the next section.

In Czechoslovakia during the 1991 and 1992, the atmosphere at the federal level of government was much different than what was evident in Yugoslavia. The federal government, the federal presidency, and the federal assembly were all functioning under a pluralistic mode of government. However, while this reflected a desire to embrace democratic political ideals, the response of the federal government to the emerging Slovak momentum towards secession was not entirely adequate. In essence, the federal presidency and federal government sought to pursue economic reforms at the expense of

[246] Ibid., 139.

dealing effectively with the concerns of the Slovak Republic.[247] The primary concerns of Slovak citizens rested on the asymmetrical effects of the economic reforms on the Slovak Republic and the subsequent rise in the level of unemployment in that republic. The Czech leader, Vaclav Klaus, was determined to pursue rapid economic reforms at virtually any cost. In doing so, the federal government placed less priority on the preservation of the state than on the goal of economic reform.

The worsening relations between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic as well as the eventual dissolution of the common state can be attributed to several factors regarding the manner in which the federal government responded to the crisis. Much has been said about the dominance of the Czechs in federal politics. The general feeling among Slovaks was that the welfare of the Slovak people was not high on the list of importance in the state capital Prague, giving way to economic considerations which highlighted Czech arrogance, and in the case of President Vaclav Havel's handling of the crisis, Czech neglect.[248] And by the time Havel demonstrated the political resolve to place the Slovak question on the political agenda, the crisis reached a point of no return, with each republic becoming more intransigent in their positions.[249] The continued position of the Czech leadership, including Klaus, was that the state would exist as a

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[247] Bruce Garver, "Human Rights in Czech and Slovak History," in Human Rights in the New Europe - Problems and Progress ed. David P. Forsythe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 90.

[248] J.F Brown, Hopes and Shadows - Eastern Europe After Communism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 56.

[249] Ibid., 56-58.

federation and nothing else.[250] The loose confederal model preferred by the Slovak leader Meciar was not considered seriously by Klaus and there was no desire to accommodate the Slovaks in this regard.[251] Realizing that a referendum would not yield the results that Klaus desired, the Czech leadership opposed any such democratic mechanism arguing that the nature of such a referendum would not rectify any of the difficulties related to federation.[252]

In summation, the federal entities in both federations were clearly incapable of achieving the maintenance of the state. In Yugoslavia, the inability rested with rapid devolution of power to the republics, the incapacity and collapse of the federal presidency and LCY, and the emergence of the JNA as the arbiter of Yugoslav unity. In Czechoslovakia, the federal government was incapacitated by an ineffectual and dysfunctional constitution and the desire of federal officials to place economic reforms ahead political unity in importance. In both circumstances, the reasons for secession rest primarily with domestic or internal factors. There is a relationship between the structure of the respective federations and the stability or longevity of the states involved. External factors, especially in relation to the Soviet Union and the decline of communism in other Eastern European states, also facilitated the further weakening of both the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav federations.

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[250] Ibid., 59.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid.

2.3 DIRECT PRECIPITANTS OF SECESSION: Confrontational Developments

Most of the emphasis of the thesis is placed on the preconditions of secession in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. At this juncture, we briefly discuss the events that precipitated the secession and created the perception that there was no other option but to pursue secession. Because of the violence associated with the Croatian secession, the precipitants to its secession are far more readily identifiable. The reader may also discover some overlap when reading this section as the information provided here is also pertinent in other sections.

2.3.1 Precipitating Events and the Croatian Secession

Precipitating events refer to a period of time just prior to the break-out of violent conflict in Yugoslavia in 1990 and 1991. Several events eventually acted as catalysts in the secession of Croatia. First, the collapse of the LCY, the federal presidency, and the federal assembly in 1990 and 1991 left a power vacuum at the federal level. This resulted in a further devolution of power to the republics and the appearance of chaos at the federal level.[253] The ramifications of this collapse is that it allowed the JNA and General Kadijevic to pursue an interventionist option aimed at seizing territorial defence

[253] Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 139.

garrisons in the republics.[254] This move was seen as being very provocative and as a direct challenge to the declarations of sovereignty in the republics of Croatia and Slovenia.

Second, as it has been mentioned earlier, the Croatian constitutional emphasis on Croatian ethnicity and its denial of a recognition of a Serbian minority further exacerbated the situation during 1990.[255] The subsequent removal, beatings, and firings of Serbian civilians and police officers also acted as a catalyst to the emergence of intransigent positions in Serbia proper.[256] From this inter-ethnic conflict within Croatia emerged an additional problem: an unwillingness of the JNA and Serbia proper to recognize the right of Croatia to exercise its right to self-determination.

Third, one must examine how events in the international community may have acted as a precipitating event in the Yugoslav crisis. The creation of the Yugoslav federation by AVNOY (The Anti-Fascist Peoples Army of Yugoslavia) in 1945 was based on the desire to unite the peoples of the Balkans into a single nation against the dangers of external control.[257] However, the existence of the Yugoslav state not only depended on a delicate balance of internal political, social, and economic interests, it also depended on a balance with the conditions of the outside world. In other words, the

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[254] Ibid., 114-115.

[255] Trifunovska, ed., Yugoslavia Through Documents, 229.

[256] Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 116.

[257] Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 30.

domestic order and survival of Yugoslavia hinged on its place in the international system.[258]

Yugoslavia's legitimacy internally was based on its ability to defend the republics from the ominous Soviet-bloc and the west. The Soviet threat had been utilized on numerous occasions by then President Josip Broz Tito to enhance the credibility of the communist party and the continued existence of the south slav entity. Membership with the non-aligned movement and with the underdeveloped world also enhanced its position internally.[259]

However, the year 1989 saw the very rapid collapse of communism in much of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union released its grip on the Warsaw Pact, exposing the remaining countries and their respective reform movements. With the Warsaw Pact gone and with the rest of Eastern Europe embarking on political and economic reform, the Yugoslav state became less legitimate and useful. Its existence depended on a delicate balance of internal and external forces.[260] And coupled with a deteriorating internal environment, the absence of a foreign threat created the right environment for dissolution.[261]

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[258] Ibid., 328.

[259] Ibid., 29.

[260] Ibid., 15.

[261] Ibid., 15.

Fourth, one must also consider what impact elections may have had on the secession of Croatia from Yugoslavia. Specifically, the sequence of elections may act as precipitators to secession and even violence. Most problematic in the secession of Croatia and the dissolution of Yugoslavia is the fact that both were in a period of flux or transition. As such, the legitimacy of the state was in question. By 1990, Yugoslavia's legitimacy was in question, especially in Croatia as the country was very weak and in transition. With the transition period already commencing, the emergence of a pluralistic society was in motion. Multi-party elections were being sparked in Croatia and Slovenia first, followed by the remaining republics. The key here is the nature of the elections. The characteristic of the transition period when the Yugoslav state was losing legitimacy included the formation of several ethnically based political parties.

Furthermore, pluralization of federal politics was behind that of the republics. The argument posed here is that the precedence of republican political elections and the tardiness of federal or all-union elections contributed to the rise of secessionist movements and acted as catalysts to the dissolution of the state.[262] That is the sequence of elections further hindered the legitimacy of the federal government. It is possible that had all-union elections occurred prior to republican elections the eventual collapse of the state may have been at the very least postponed. Coupled with this reality, the absence of a sincere commitment to democratization and the difficulty in creating cross-cultural

[262] Juan J. Linz, "Political Identities and Electoral Sequences," Daedalus (Spring 1992): 125.

political entities allowed republican elites to exploit regional grievances and subsequently undermined any commitment to Yugoslavia as a whole.[263]

The transition period also put another stress on the viability of Yugoslavia. The collapse of the communist system and the only cross-cultural party created what can be called a vacuum in the political system. The existence of a well-established civic society comprised of a middle class and educated elites was lacking, contributing to the rise of nationalistic parties in Croatia and the culmination of constitutional nationalism which further undermined the Yugoslav state and gave fuel to republican elites' nationalistic drives.[264]

2.3.2 Precipitating Events and the Slovak Secession

The Czechoslovak situation did not involve precipitating events of this nature. The primary events to consider are associated with the nature of the party formations in each republic. Essentially, the existence of two diametrically opposed political parties in the Czech and Slovak republics precipitated the eventual secession of Slovakia.[265] As mentioned earlier, the desires and aspirations of the Slovak and Czech parties (Meciar and Klaus) reflected divergent economic and political realities in each republic. The

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[263] Ibid.

[264] Vesna Pusic, "A Country by Any other Name: Transition and Stability in Croatia and Yugoslavia," East European Politics and Societies 6 (Fall 1992): 253.

[265] Prihoda, "Mutual Perceptions," 136.

desire for increased republican autonomy by Meciar and the desire for greater centralization and a continuation of rapid economic reforms by Klaus were mutually incompatible. Czech citizens and elites were becoming aware that the continuation of the union was hindering the opportunity for success in the Czech lands.

Most importantly, the recalcitrant position of Vladimir Meciar and his party the Movement For a Democratic Slovakia set the stage for the collapse of the state.[266] Coupled with Meciar, Vaclav Klaus and his Civic Democratic Union party sought to move further to the right and continue the economic reform program.[267] However, prior to 1992, Klaus and Meciar made several attempts to reconcile their differences and set forth to reach a compromise. With the continuation of the conflict, Klaus made a conscious decision to avoid any compromise with the Slovaks on the basis that further negotiations would harm the progress of Czech economic reforms.[268] In essence, both republican leaders made the decision to deliberately avoid any further alteration in their respective positions on a renewed federation. At this juncture, the nature of the secession crisis reached its peak. Even Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel seemed to give way to the emerging belief that no compromise could be reached to maintain the federation.[269] To add to the key political figures and their hardening of positions, one

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266 Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, "Czechoslovakia: The Creation, Federalization, and Dissolution of a Nation-State," 90-93.

267 Ibid.

268 Robert A. Young, The Breakup of Czecho-Slovakia, 9-10.

269 Kirschbaum, op., cit., 90.

must also look at the decision to set a deadline for a resolution. By virtue of establishing this deadline, they left little room for compromise or additional negotiations which may have surpassed this deadline period.[270] Arguably, the establishment of a deadline may have precluded further heated debate and possibly even violence.[271] Paradoxically, the deadline acted as a precipitating event in that it set in motion the process of dissolution and secession.

[270] Young, op., cit., 22-31.

[271] Ibid.

3.0 EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DIVERGENCE IN SECESSIONIST METHODS

A poll conducted in the former Yugoslavia during 1990 by the polling organization Dela indicated that 52% of the Croatian population was in favour of confederation, 28% was in favour of total secession, while 8% was in favour of a continuation of the status quo.[272] Polls conducted in Slovakia during 1992 indicated that only 16% was in favour of a formal separation while most Slovaks were receptive to a confederal arrangement with the Czech lands.[273] With such a perceived commitment to continued relations, why was the secession so utterly violent in Croatia? Why was the dissolution of Czechoslovakia so peaceful? It is clear that the momentum of institutional disintegration and the role of political elites influenced the outcome of secession. But, this important subject should be looked at more closely.

Lenard Cohen offers some general observations on the basis for violence in the Croatian secession and the Yugoslav collapse. According to Cohen, the animosities between ethnic groups were extremely persistent and well established, there was a desire of Yugoslav citizens to act upon retaliation against atrocities committed during WWII, and the nationality policy of the communist federal government failed to resolve long standing inter-ethnic problems and develop a basis for inter-ethnic tolerance.[274]

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[272] Milica A. Bookman, "War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia," Journal of Peace and Research 31 (1994): 176.

[273] Ibid., 177.

[274] Cohen, Broken Bonds, 328.

Yet, the violence could have been avoided. Based on the realities in the conflict, the use of violence became "inevitable" only when certain conditions were not met and certain "problems" with the secession were not adequately answered. Specifically, the fact that the secession of Croatia and Slovenia were constructed in haste and in a unilateral manner contributed to the likelihood that the use of violence was probable.[275]

There are several factors that directly contributed to the likelihood that the secession would be violent. First, the existence of a large number of Croatian Serbs in the eastern frontier region of the Krajina made the secession a challenge at best. At the time of the secession, nearly 11.6% of the Croatian population was Serbian in origin and a large number of these Serbs inhabited the Krajina. The constitutional amendment by Croatia which relegated the Croatian Serbs to the status of a protected minority and the subsequent uprising of the Krajina Serbs to create the SARK (The Serbian Centre for Arts and Culture) created an atmosphere of mistrust and fear.[276] The result is a collective feeling that one's ethnic group is in danger of serious harm or death. The Croatian government viewed the Serb uprising as an extension of a Serbian plot to divide Croatia and establish a Greater Serbia while the Serb minority viewed the Croatian leadership's actions as an indication of intolerance or a reflection of past historical treatment.[277] In any event, the actions of both parties made the likelihood

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[275] Rusinow, "The Avoidable Catastrophe," 14.

[276] Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia," 67.

[277] For Serbian and Croatian political elite perceptions on events in 1990, see Ian Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," 26-35; and Ivo Banac, "The Fearful Asymmetry of War: The Causes and Consequences of Yugoslavia's Demise," Daedalus (Spring 1992): 153.

of violence probable, placing the emphasis on pre-emptive measures rather than on negotiations.[278] Second, the reason for violence can be found in the role of political elites and the role of the JNA in Croatia and the subsequent events leading to its secession. The politicization of the JNA by Milosevic created a tense environment in Croatia where JNA forces were seemingly acting as a buffer between the Krajina Serbs and the Croatian paramilitary. The JNA, due to its disarming of the territorial forces and its pro-Serbian stance, was seen as an occupational force in Croatia.[279] Once again, the mobilization of forces on both sides reflected an unwillingness to engage in a constitutional divorce. Political elites lacked a common trust in the process of discourse and the actions of both the Croatians and Serbians reflected a desire to utilize pre-emptive measures. The conflict between Croatia and Yugoslavia, including the JNA and the Krajina Serbs, began in 1991 and continued sporadically until 1995.[280] With the August 1995 capture of the Krajina by the Croatian Republic, the use of violence was once again witnessed. The territory divided Croatia nearly in half and precluded much personal and commercial transport. The Krajina problem extends back to the settlement of Serbs near the Knin area as military personnel used to fight the Ottomans. Their continued presence was not resolved until 1995 when nearly all Serbs in the region had been removed through force. The remaining region of Eastern Slavonia is also

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[278] Banac, "The Fearful Asymmetry of War," 167.

[279] Milivojevic, "The Armed Forces of Yugoslavia," 67-68.

[280] Silber, The Death of Yugoslavia, 101-137.

problematic yet recent moves towards the normalization of relations with Yugoslavia may yield results through non-violent means.

The absence of violence in Slovakia was due primarily to the patient, negotiated process of a legalistic separation. However, the absence of serious territorial issues and any significant mutual minority problems between the Slovaks and Czechs led to a peaceful and negotiated settlement.

What can one say about violent conflicts and secessions in general? A conflict of interest is not necessarily sufficient for the emergence of violence. Slovakia and the Czech lands clearly had a conflict of interest but did not resort to the use of violence to resolve that conflict. To explain the existence of violence, one can assume that there is the desire to exert a pre-emptive strike against an opponent. This pre-emptive strike is utilized because of a perception of a threat. While conflict is often perceived as being a foregone conclusion in this case, one must consider what events increased the likelihood of violent conflict and how those events may have compounded upon a previously peaceful series of disagreements to create a heightened level of conflict and the emergence of violent conflict.[281] In the case of Croatia, the use of the JNA to interfere in the Croatian independence movement, the Croatian commitment to a racist pursuit of constitutional nationalism, and the uprising of the Serbs in the Krajina (SARK) all acted as pre-emptive measures, feeding off one another and tipping the conflict from

[281] Russel Hardin, One for All-The Logic of Group Conflict (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 142-179. Hardin discusses the desire to pre-empt in a conflict and the manner in which violence acts as a catalyst to further violence.

one that was peaceful to one that became violent.[282] Stability is shattered in this instance and dialogue is no longer seen as a legitimate means of resolving the conflict.

More can be said about the absence of violence in the Czechoslovak case. Robert Young's case study of Czechoslovakia's break-up offers a very concise and succinct assessment of why the Slovak secession was peaceful.[283] Young also published an article that provides a general comparative analysis of historical examples of peaceful secession in "How Do Peaceful Secessions Happen?" in the Canadian Journal of Political Science.[284] This assessment may be applied to other cases.[285]

Several common elements in conjunction with one another may increase the likelihood of a peaceful secession. One should refrain, however, from assuming that these elements are causal in nature or that they are sufficient for a peaceful secession. First, a peaceful secession often involves protracted negotiations.[286] Initially, the Czechs and Slovaks were involved in constitutional negotiations which spanned a period of two years and which included several attempts by all parties to resolve their

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[282] Ibid., 143.

[283] Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia, 18.

[284] Robert A. Young, "How Do Peaceful Secessions Happen?" Canadian Journal of Political Science XXVII (December 1994): 773-792.

[285] Young's use of the case-study method suggests that Arend Lijphart's well-known methodoligcal discussion which classifies six categories is incomplete. Lijphart identified a theoretical interpretive, hypothesis-generating, theory-confirming, theory-infirming and deviant case studies. Young, a Canadian scholar concerned over the possible break-up of the Canadian state, engaged in a case-study analysis with the purpose of drawing lessons from examples of peaceful secessions which might be applicable to the Canadian case. Lijphart's article which appeared first in the American Political Science Review is reprinted in Comparative Politics-Notes and Readings. See A. Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," in Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings eds. Roy C. Macridis and Bernard E. Brown (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press), 62-66 for an overview of case-study methodology.

[286] Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia, 18.

differences on the future of the federation. In contrast, the Yugoslav experience indicates an absence of protracted negotiations and an almost immediate use of force to strengthen respective positions.[287]

Second, in a peaceful secession, the successor state declares its intentions for the future.[288] Initially, the Slovaks were clear in their desire for increased autonomy and later in their attempts to draw up provisions for an independent Slovakia.[289] In the latter stages of negotiations, the Czechs were arguably as committed to secession as the Slovaks. Czech leader Vaclav Klaus apparently became intent on pushing Vladimir Meciar of Slovakia to go for the independence option.[290] In Yugoslavia, each side declared their intentions eventually but this seemed to have the opposite effect. Instead, the positions of the main antagonists were hardened and acceptance of republican positions on the future of Yugoslavia was not forthcoming.[291]

Third, the predecessor state accepts the principle of secession and negotiations to complete that secession follow.[292] While this acceptance was not immediate in the

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[287] From the beginning of 1990, negotiations for a renewed Yugoslavia were not drawn out, perhaps because of pre-emptive measures by leaders in Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia which would enhance their respective positions in the event of a state collapse.

[288] Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia, 24.

[289] Ibid., 25.

[290] According to Robert Young, Klaus was concerned with the impact uncertainty would have on the future of the Czech republic. The protracted negotiations yielded little in terms of a new framework, thus Klaus appeared to coerce the Slovak leader to decide on the future Slovakia.

[291] Branka Magas, The Destruction of Yugoslavia (London: Verso, 1993), 10. Magas provides a discussion of the positions of the parties to the conflict in Yugoslavia in 1990.

[292] Young, The Breakup of Czechoslovakia, 29.

Czech lands, the protracted negotiations and the economic and political instability that resulted in the Czech lands may have led the Czech leadership to accept the reality of a Slovak secession.[293] The secessionist intentions of the Croats and Slovenes were not accepted in Serbia even though its republic was still suffering from the economic stagnation of the previous years of hyperinflation.[294] The politics of the day may have precluded the Milosevic government from such an acceptance. Although his motivations are questionable they will not be discussed here.

Fourth, governmental negotiators and the parties involved are strengthened on each side and there is an emphasis on solidarity. Of any of Young's contentions, this one is the weakest. First of all, solidarity was weak in the early part of negotiations because the nature of the political arena in the country was fluid.[295] Political solidarity would later be realized just prior to the eventual dissolution of the state. Second, solidarity seemed apparent in the Yugoslav republics because the Croatian and Serbian governments did not permit the articulation of any groups which differed in opinion on the political crisis whether those groups were Croatian or Serbian.[296] It is arguable, however, that the existence of so many different parties in the Yugoslav conflict, may

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[293] Ibid.

[294] Mark Almond, Europe's Backyard War - The War in the Balkans (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1994), 174.

[295] Young, The Breakup of Czecho-Slovakia, 38.

[296] Young, The Breakup of Czecho-Slovakia, 38.

have only contributed to the emergence of violence. The next element of a peaceful secession points to this contention.

Fifth, a peaceful secession involves few participants in the negotiation process.[297] The benefit of such conditions is that the meetings are concentrated between only two parties and not several different parties with competing interests. The talks that occurred between the Slovaks and Czechs were between the leaders of the Christian Democrats in the Czech lands and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia.[298] As such, the level of concentration was high and the parties quickly agreed on a timetable to either resolve the differences of the republics in the form of a new constitution or amendment or to dissolve the state.[299] The Yugoslav crisis, on the other hand, involved Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and eventually Bosnia-Hercegovina, each with divergent interests and objectives which probably made agreement on anything nearly impossible given that three of the antagonists were already committed to use force.[300]

Sixth, another key to a peaceful secession is the attainment of a rapid settlement after the initial negotiations.[301] Once again, the parties to the Czechoslovak crisis were

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297 Young, The Breakup of Czecho-Slovakia, 40.

298 Ibid.

299 Ibid.

300 Cohen, Broken Bonds, 328.

301 Young, The Breakup of Czecho-Slovakia, 41.

very reluctant to drag out the proceedings because of the negative effects of uncertainty on each republic, especially in the Czech lands.

Seventh, the mark of a peaceful secession of course involves the use of constitutional measures to bring about the end of the secession.[302] There was mutual agreement in the Czechoslovak case that a constitutional answer was necessary to resolve their differences and neither the republics nor the federal presidency wanted to act unconstitutionally.[303]

Again, while these elements are not causal and are not sufficient for a peaceful secession, they systematically identify the main elements that guided the Czechs and Slovaks to a peaceful separation. Not all of Robert Young's elements are as applicable, yet his conditions provide a starting point to identify the most salient aspects of the Slovak secession. The absence of certain elements in the Yugoslav case also reveals points where it is discernable that violence would become probable.

To conclude, the Slovak situation lacked most if not all of the qualities described in the Croatian case. The Slovaks and Czechs were pre-occupied with the necessity of formulating a procedure for secession - both sides recognized the need for this and they recognized the probability that the secessions would occur. Neither side had significant mutual minority problems, except perhaps for the Slovaks who have a significant Hungarian minority where some level of animosity exists. However, neither side has any

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[302] Ibid., 52.

[303] Ibid., 53.

interests in protecting the minorities in the other republic. Also, neither republic allowed the conflict to reach the level whereby pre-emptive measures would be utilized. In essence, while the Czechoslovak society was in transition and its institutions were weak, the constitution was functioning and discourse was commonplace. Moreover, it has been shown that the commitment to secession was not forthcoming in either republic on a mass scale. The mobilization of hatred-bound nationalities in the former Yugoslavia more or less precluded a peaceful secession.

3.1 Conclusion

We have utilized the framework by John Wood to provide a systematic explanation for the secessionist events in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. However, one should be cautious before assuming that this framework is sacrosanct. The framework fails to take into account the importance of the demonstration effects of developments in one state upon those in another. The collapse of communist power in East Europe and the disintegration of the Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, and Soviet states was a remarkable process involving interrelated developments. It is arguable, for example, that the events in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary influenced events in the former Yugoslavia. Likewise, it is arguable that the horrifying violence in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina affected decision-makers in Czechoslovakia who were pondering secession and

dissolution. Their preoccupation with avoiding anarchy and a chaotic divorce arguably stemmed from what they had witnessed in the former Yugoslavia.

Similarly, Robert Young's framework is not entirely applicable to the case studies. The framework does not discuss the issue of momentum or external events in relation to possible effects on the existence of violent or non-violent secession. It fails to take into account circumstances such as demographics, pre-emptive measures by groups, or various forms of nationalism. Because of these weaknesses, the thesis has sought to incorporate other issues into this chapter in order to provide a balanced approach to explaining the secession process and the existence or absence of violence.

One must also examine the secessionist events which occurred throughout the world previous to the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak crises. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing secession of the Baltic states set the stage for the aforementioned crises. As Jacques Rupnik points out, the Baltic secessions "delegitimized the federal state."[304] The communist and previously communist multi-ethnic states of Eastern Europe recognized the problematic nature of these federations and the Baltic secessions acted as a catalyst for similar political movements in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. With such momentum, the secessionist platform was seized by national groups in the transition federations of Eastern Europe.

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[304] Jacques Rupnik, "The International Context," in The End of Czechoslovakia ed. Jiri Musil (London: Central European Press, 1995), 273.

The dissolution of the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak federations and the subsequent secessions of the Croatian and Slovakian republics were fundamentally divergent in terms of the foundations for collapse and the existence or absence of violence. The study here cautions against assuming that the failures of the two states were inevitable. In fact, their failures reflect the value of studying the structural and processual aspects of federalism as they interacted with the phenomenon of nationalism. Institutional and structural objects were critical but contingency and the role of individuals were singularly important in both cases.

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