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CAUSES OF THE ARMED CONFLICT IN CROATIA 1991. RESOLVING CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INCONSISTENCIES*

ABSTRACT: This text is intended to identify, clarify and resolve the most frequent examples of methodological inconsistencies found in the current literature by Serbian and foreign researchers, and to point to their conceptual, methodological and factual inconsistencies. This work follows the basic line of conceptual delimitation concerning the phenomenon of the breakup of Yugoslavia, on one hand, and of the violent conflicts in certain Yugoslav republics, on the other. It is based on the interdisciplinary analysis of the findings in the field of international relations and historical analysis, while relying primarily on the fundamental sources of historical material. Henceforth, this paper will address the issues of correct determining of the main and secondary actors, temporal determination and elements for making a clear and unambiguous definition of the armed conflict in Croatia.

KEYWORDS: Croatia, Yugoslavia, war, International Community, ideology, war studies, concepts

Numerous and contradictory reviews about the causes of Yugoslavia's breakup are still in circulation. How did Yugoslavia cease to exist? Did

* Rad je deo projekta *Srpsko društvo u jugoslovenskoj državi u 20. veku: između demokratije i diktature (177016)* koji finansira Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije.

it simply wither away, did it “commit suicide“, or was killed and by whom are the questions that various authors have provided different answers for. In the past two decades this topic has been dealt with in several hundred articles of academic magazines and in scientific monographs, numerous sources have been disclosed thereabout, and almost all significant protagonists of the Yugoslav crisis have left behind their memoirs about the disastrous events.¹

Just like the peaceful completion of the Cold War, the violent breakup of Yugoslavia has represented a sobering fact for numerous theorists and researchers of international relations. The events that rapidly followed at the international stage after 1989 have ensued appearance of some new theories and alternative explanations,² while compelling many analysts to revise their original theories, to waive the prognoses they have issued easily,³ and even made others to “celebrate” the alleged end of history.⁴ A series of civil wars, some of which kept unfolding simultaneously with the process of demolition of Yugoslav federation, whereas the other ones emerged as a direct result thereof, represented a burning issue for

¹ Major lines of explanations have been systematized by Dejan Jović, „The Disintegration of Yugoslavia. A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches“, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 4, 1, (2001), 101–120. Academic disputes between proponents of different explanations are scrutinized by Sabrina Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia. Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). An attempt to bring together differing points of views in Andrew Wachtel and Christopher Bennet, „The Dissolution of Yugoslavia“, in *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies: A Scholars' Initiative*, editors Charles W. Ingraio & Thomas A. Emmert (Washington DC: USIP & Purdue University Press, 2009), 12–47.

² This case relates to the rise of social constructivism on the stage of international relations theories. The most important contributions for this paradigm are found in: Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2 (Spring, 1992), 391–425; Martha Finnemore, *National Interests In International Society* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996); Nicholas Onuf, “A Constructivist Manifesto”, in *Constituting Political Economy, International Political Economy Yearbook*, vol. 10, editors Kurt Burch and Robert A. Denemark (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997); Christian Reus-Smit, “The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions”, *International Organization*, 51 (4), 1997, 555–589.

³ Ole Waever, “The rise and fall of the Inter-paradigm debate“, *International theory: Positivism and beyond*, editors Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 149–185; Steve Smith, “Hegemonic Power, Hegemonic discipline? The Superpower Status of the American Study in International Relations”, in *Global Voices: Dialogues in International Relations*, editor James Rosenau (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 55–82.

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992); John Lukacs, *The End of the Twentieth Century and the End of the Modern Age* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1993).

theorists, historians and analysts. However, in spite of intensive research, a large number of works by the national and foreign authors, and of qualitative and quantitative analyses, there still lack clear and unambiguous answers for the crucial issues that the mentioned processes have opened for the narrow and broad public.

One of the reasons for this is a lack of primary sources that are required for a reconstruction of events, and above all, the motives and interests of the most significant protagonists of Yugoslavia's breakup. Unavailability of sources has enabled a long survival of stereotypical representations that have also become a part of the academic literature. This frequently also has the effect of conscious or subconscious sidetracking of the existence of such testimonies or scientific works that contest or challenge the already created construction of the past.⁵

On the other hand, interpretations of politicians, pseudo-scientists and regime supporters have moved into the public discourse about these events of the last decade of 20th century, and they serve primarily to defend and justify the policies pursued on the soil of Yugoslavia in the era of its breakup. As noted by, Norman Naimark, Stanford historian who spent many years to analyze the histories of East Germany and Cold War, Yugoslav professional historians "kept quiet in a strange way" about the war and breakup of the country, particularly in the beginning. Those who did tackle the issue were either "the promoters of the Milosevic's wars" or they "did not hesitate to identify themselves with the creation of Greater Croatia and the Tadjman's regime".⁶

According to Naimark, the history of the Yugoslav breakup was primarily written and expanded by journalists and analysts, so that the actual picture of that past became vague and unrecognizable. In such conditions the Balkans were depicted in the works of western researchers as a location of constant crimes and marginal civilization, a place of ancient hatreds. He feels that the most influential book in that range is the Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*⁷ which seemed to have had a profound impact on the U.S. administration in understanding of the wars in ex-Yugoslavia.

The thesis of ancient ethnic hatreds is very popular in the published interpretations of the developments in Yugoslavia, including those of the western politicians who were in position to make influence on them. Dejan Jović rightly notices that, lacking any better answer, the simplest one for

⁵ Mile Bjelajac, „Nova svedočenja o razbijanju Jugoslavije i sukobima 90-ih“, *Tokovi istorije*, br. 1, (2010), 157.

⁶ Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case (eds.), *Yugoslavia and its Historians. Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

⁷ Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

the question why Yugoslavia broke up seemed to be perpetual hatred among its nations. This was somehow reinforced by an old thesis that Yugoslavia was “an artificial creation”, a product of the Versailles Peace Treaty after World War One. This thesis is used to explain the awkward turn democratization took in Yugoslavia - as soon as its nations were granted the freedom to “speak their mind” they chose war.⁸

This theory fully ignores responsibility of the political elites in power throughout Yugoslavia at the time of its breakup. Evolution of the history of Yugoslavia in one of the following directions depended greatly on the choices made by the ruling political elites of individual states: a) democratic integration of the country; b) peaceful separation of the integral states; or c) civil war. Like the other countries of the so-called “real socialism”, Yugoslavia became faced with the necessity to fundamentally change its political and economic order. Furthermore, in contrast to the East-European countries, Yugoslavia had to provide a response, at the same time, to a special kind of internal challenge that questioned its survival as a political whole. Still, crisis of its self-management system (the political monopoly of the Communist Party, suppression of freedoms and individuals’ initiatives in all fields of social practice, inferiority of the “accorded economy” in relationship to the market one, and the regime illegitimacy) did not inevitably lead to a civil war.⁹

Yet the aggressive insisting on “the real truth”, the perpetrators, victims and aggressors, swept across the public and scientific realm with deafening noise, leaving very little room for objective and scholarly analyses and interpretations of the breakup process in Yugoslavia and the wars waged in that area. That is why researchers are today faced with a long and difficult task of deconstruction of the existing presumptions, discovering of erroneous argumentation, and separation of valid conclusions from the false ones.

In this sense one of the most characteristic example is the armed conflict in Croatia that started in 1991. Almost all explanations provided hitherto are focused on just one of the possible reasons for the civil war in Croatia, briefly described as an aggression by Serbia and Yugoslav National Army (YNA) for the purpose of achieving the concept of “Greater Serbia”. It is overseen that it was a complex phenomenon affected by several, frequently quite contradictory, factors, so it is not scientifically justified to

⁸ Dejan Jović, „Razlozi za raspad socijalističke Jugoslavije: kritička analiza postojećih interpretacija“, *Reč*, god 8, br. 62, (jun 2001), 103.

⁹ Vladimir Goati, „Političke elite, građanski rat i raspad SFRJ“, *Republika*, br. 147 (1–15. septembar 1996).

make any analytical reductions concerning the historical process that led to the war in that former Yugoslav republic.

The exact intention of this paper is to reassess the existing explanations, assumptions and research results on the causes of the war in Croatia as a special and separate segment of the processes and events that took place on the territory of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The authors of this paper feel that the problem concerning most of the research about the civil war in Croatia lies in their imprecise, unfounded and/or wrong subject matter and theoretical starting point. Correct conceptual and methodological determination and targeting of a scientific work is of crucial importance for its scientific validity and acceptability, and thus the authors will primarily deal with the issue of definition of the armed conflict in Croatia.

In the first part of this text the authors will present the most significant conceptual inconsistencies occurring in the attempts to define clearly the subject matter of a research covering the events in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. We will also present our arguments for a belief that, for any research of this type, it is of crucial importance to separate in concept the process of Yugoslavia's breakup from the wars waged in these areas. In the second part of this text we will address the issue of defining the war conflict in Croatia. First, we will identify, using reliable arguments, the major and minor protagonists of the conflict in Croatia. Next, we will tackle the issue of its duration, which will ultimately take us to the guidelines for correct defining conflict in Croatia, its character and typological classification.

Conceptual and methodological inconsistencies in the research of the causes of the war in Croatia

Process of Yugoslavia's breakup triggered numerous events and set the conditions for emergence of various factors that further shaped, and still shape, the history of the Balkan Peninsula. Most of domestic and foreign authors keep their research focus on the breakup of Yugoslavia, while observing the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia only as a fraction of an overall process. By shaping their research in this manner numerous authors make a crucial methodological mistake by putting a sign of equality between the causes leading to the breakup and the causes leading to the wars. This way the causes of country's breakup are attributed *a priori* to the causes for the emergence of wars on the territory of former Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia did not break up on account of the wars, but rather the wars were the multi-cause and complex phenomena that have to be viewed and researched separately. Two basic arguments support our thesis for conceptual separation of breakup and war phenomena. *First one* is historical, i.e. factual, which shows that a country's breakup does not necessarily

require violence and war. Peaceful disintegrations of the Soviet Union (1991) and Czechoslovakia (1993), or the earlier separation of Norway from Sweden (1905), indicate that a country's breakup cannot be taken as a crucial variable explaining a violent conflict, and vice versa.

Peaceful transformation of two multi-ethnic communist federations verifies exactly the thesis that Yugoslavia also possessed a possibility for a different political outcome, that is, the civil war was not a result of a pre-determined "verdict of history", but rather of a series of factors and causes that have to be object of further research and presented to the public.¹⁰

On the other hand, certain scholars maintain that the factors of ethnicity, confession, and language differences have absolutely no association with survival or disappearance of the so-called "complex states". For example, Vimer, Cederman and Min feel that the key for stability of multi-national states is in the inclusion of ethno-political configuration of the power.¹¹ That is, the stable institutions enabling broad political representation of minorities are a good recipe for the coexistence of different ethnic, linguistic and confessional groups within a certain state.

Second argument is of theoretical–methodological nature. In the relevant literature on international relations and diplomacy the entries such as *war* and *state failure* stand separated.¹² Special groups of theories, analyses

¹⁰ In this regard, is also the question why in the 20th century the multi-national communist federations broke up, whereas the multi-national, multi-lingual and multi-confessional ones (e.g. Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and Great Britain), based on liberal democracy, did not. Both national and foreign literature contains different interpretations of these processes. According to Dejan Jović, this is so because of a domination of Marxist ideology that preaches "withering away of the state" since the socialist federations were thought to be "anti-states" that did not possess any mechanisms for their defense. In contrast thereto, the multi-national states of liberal democracy have never allowed with impunity any rebellion to be raised against them, or a civil war to be organized within them. See: D. Jović, „Razlozi za raspad socijalističke Jugoslavije“, 125; Cf. Dejan Jović, *Jugoslavija – država koja je odumrla. Uspon, kriza i pad Četvrte Jugoslavije (1974–1990)* (Zagreb: Prometej: Beograd: Samizdat B92, 2003).

¹¹ Andreas Wimmer, Lars-Erik Cederman and Brian Min, "Ethnic Politics and Armed Conflict: A Configurational Analysis of a New Global Data Set", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 74, no. 2, (April 2009), 316–337.

¹² Gary Goertz, "Concepts, Theories, and Numbers: A Checklist for Constructing, Evaluating, and Using Concepts or Quantitative Measures", in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, editors Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, David Collier (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 97–111; Mohammed Ayooob, "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure", in *Leashing the Dogs of War Conflict Management in a Divided World*, editors Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, Pamela Aall (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 95–114; Stein S. Eriksen, „'State failure' in theory and practice: the idea of the state and the contradictions of state formation“, *Review of International Studies*, no. 37, (2011), 229–47; David Carment, "Assessing state failure: implications for theory and policy", *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 3, (2003), 407–427.

and research are dedicated to them, exactly because different causes lead to their emergence or occurrence, so they require such conceptual, methodological and theoretical separation. For valid theoretical and methodological foundation of a research one has to correctly identify the issue and define the subject matter, since this entails also further theoretical and methodological choices. That is why it is very important to separate methodologically the concepts of a war and state failure and, thus, make them operational.

When it comes to the breakup of Yugoslavia as a process (or generally to any other similar process), a greatest degree of methodological association thereof with war may be achieved in the form of identification of certain factors created by such process that have, in turn, produced preconditions for the violent conflict to occur. It is a fact that a state breakup or failure can put into motion a series of additional events, factors and preconditions that might influence the emergence of a war. Weakening of the central power, incapacity to protect the territorial integrity, or to use the coercion means, open the possibilities for various secession movements. We find an almost exact example for this in the case Yugoslavia's breakup and the striving of country's individual states for independence. However, the *issue of delimitation* is what could be identified as the key precondition for the outbreak of war in Croatia, resulting from the process of Yugoslavia's breakup.

Namely, when it became clear to the local political elites that their common state cannot be held sustainable, the issue of preserving the territorial unity of Yugoslavia was replaced with the issue along which borders will it break up.¹³ Different interpretations of self-determination principle by the Serbian and Croatian political leaders is the basic precondition (but not a sufficient reason), created from the process of Yugoslavia's breakup, for the outbreak of violent conflict in Croatia. Croatian side was firm in defending the viewpoint that the existing borders between the constitutive republics ought to be the principle of delimitation between them, or rather between the new, independent states.

The issue of the character of such borders was for the first time opened at the session of Yugoslav Presidency dated 10 January 1991. Croatian President Franjo Tuđman said that they were unchangeable, whereas the Serbian President claimed that they were only "administrative" and, as such, they could not be "simply proclaimed as state borders, as they were not the frame of individual nations living therein". Serbian President made it clear that "separation of the Serbian people and their placing into the frames of different sovereign states" was unacceptable for him. Croatian President motioned then a new historical agreement of Yugoslav nations

¹³ Borisav Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ. Izvodi iz dnevnika* (Beograd: Politika, 1995), 159–161.

that implied transformation of the existing constitutional order into “a confederal union of sovereign republics”.¹⁴

However, the Serbian leadership claimed that the borders between the republics drawn at the session of wartime cabinet (AVNOJ in Jajce, 1943) did not reflect the actual ethnic structure of individual Yugoslav republics, so they considered the breakup of Yugoslavia a unique opportunity to have the ethnic issue within this area resolved once and for all. They firmly insisted that the nations, rather than the republics, were entitled to self-determination.

Serbian President Slobodan Milošević outlined this policy in the Serbian Parliament on 30 May 1991, when he said that the right of nations for self-determination in a multi-national country cannot be restricted territorially to the existing administrative borders of integral states, the more so in this case: “It is well-known that in the past they were drawn arbitrarily and without objective criteria, and missing to recognize either the ethnic structure of population or results of the genocide suffered by the Serbian people, or, for that matter, even the rules of international law. Right for self-determination cannot be reserved just for the majority population in a nationally complex state”.¹⁵

Crucial empiric argument in our claim that a conceptual and methodological separation of breakup phenomenon from the war phenomenon is necessary is the fact that war did not break out, in the case of Yugoslavia, in all its republics and provinces, although they were facing the identical processes and preconditions. The example of Macedonia can be quite illustrative. It remained protected from a war conflict out of fear that a possible war on its territory could spread beyond the borders of Yugoslavia. Dejan Jović believes that the Macedonian nationalism was so weak that Macedonia became an independent state to the least extent on basis thereof, and much more due to a weakening process in the leadership ranks of the Yugoslav National Army, which agreed to withdraw from its territory with relative ease.¹⁶

¹⁴ According to: Kosta Nikolić, Vladimir Petrović, *Od mira do rata. Dokumenta Predsedništva SFRJ 1991*, Tematska zbirka dokumenata, I (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Fond za humanitarno pravo, 2011), 32.

¹⁵ According to: Slobodan Milošević, *Prilog istoriji 20. veka* (Beograd: Treći milenijum; Udruženje Sloboda, 2008), 99–100.

¹⁶ D. Jović, „Razlozi za raspad socijalističke Jugoslavije“, 110. – More about this: Michael S. Lund, “Greed and Grievance Diverted: How Macedonia Avoided Civil War 1991–2001”, in *Understanding Civil War – Evidence and Analysis*, editors Paul Collier, Nicolas Sambanis (Washington DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2005), 231–258.

Next, the hostilities in the republics that experienced violent conflicts were different in character and had different actors, intensity and duration, which brings us to the second most frequent conceptual and methodological mistake found in the existing literature. The brief war in Slovenia was a conflict between Slovenia and the federal army, but it was considerably different than the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. The war in Croatia was a violent conflict between Croatian government and Serbian minority in Croatia, with additional involvement of YNA and Serbian and Croatian paramilitary units. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was even more complex, as it was waged between its constituent nations, in an internationally recognized country and with active participation of the International Community, as well as of Croatia and Serbia. This is why it should be considered an internationalized civil war.¹⁷

Inconsistencies and problems in defining the research subject

Disagreement among the authors concerning the real nature and essence of the conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia represents one of the most important obstacles in the understanding of their causes.¹⁸ In numerous researches dealing with the issue of Yugoslavia's breakup and violent conflicts on its territory the authors use the singular entries such as "the war in Yugoslavia" or "the violent breakup of Yugoslavia", as well as the plural entry "Yugoslav wars", or in some cases even more poetic "wars for Yugoslav succession". Incorrect and imprecise formulation of the research subject brings with it the consequences of vagueness and inapplicability of final conclusions. Thereupon, it is very important to clarify here the necessity to view and research the wars in former Yugoslavia as a set of conceptually different phenomena and processes.

Even though we deal with "a series of wars" which can be regarded as originated from a common source, the violent conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia need to be differentiated and researched as such. This is exactly the logic used by the most relevant databases of the world dealing with violent conflicts. Correlates of War (COW) and UCDP/PRIO are the databases that view the conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia separately: *War in Slovenia*, *War in Croatia*, and *War in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.¹⁹

¹⁷ Mirjana Kasapović, „Bosna i Hercegovina 1992–1995: građanski rat, izvanjska agresija ili oboje?“, *Politička misao*, br. 2, (2015), 53.

¹⁸ Miroslav Hadžić, „Moderatori nasilja – skrivena strana yu-rata“, u: *Nasilno rasturanje Jugoslavije – uzroci, dinamika, posledice*, urednik Miroslav Hadžić (Beograd: Centar za civilno-vojne odnose, 2004), 133.

¹⁹ Richard C. Hall (ed.), *War in the Balkans – An Encyclopedic History from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2014); Mere-

Three main arguments in favor of their methodological and conceptual separation are presented here: a) *Diversity of actors* in these conflicts, b) their *different time duration and intensity*, and as a result, c) Different types of war under the general theoretical classification of violent conflicts.

Determining main and secondary actors of violent conflict in Croatia

Correct and precise determination of major and secondary actors represents the first definitional problem of the studies dealing with the wars in ex-Yugoslavia region. The most commonly encountered case in the existing literature is setting national leaders for the central actors of conflict, while the true, main actors remain on the sidelines and completely unexplored. Regarding the war in Croatia, the most common mistake, usually made by local authors, is determining Serbia and Yugoslav Peoples' Army (JNA) as central actors, while truly major player of the conflict – the Serbian minority in Croatia – is left completely ignored or treated very superficially. On the other hand, numerous researchers see Serbia (later SR Yugoslavia) and Yugoslav People's Army as a unitary actor, using as the fact an unexplored assumption of their common and identical action in conflicts.²⁰

Besides obvious ignorance of the basic theoretical and methodological postulates, at least two reasons for this problem could be identified. The first one is *the formal political discourse*, especially in Croatia and then in the rest of the international community. Namely, the Homeland War, as a very popular, indeed officialized name for the war in Croatia, represents a very strong element of Croatian state and identity building.²¹ In Croatian public

dith R. Sarkees, Frank W. Wayman, *Resort to War – A Data Guide to Inter-State, Extra-State, Intra-State and Non-State Wars 1816–2007* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2010); Nils Petter Gleitsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg and Håvard Strand, "Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 39, no. 5, (2002), 615–637.

²⁰ "Whole story about the JNA is shaped around Slobodan Milosevic, and in that way the abuse of the army for grandiose state goals of the Serbian power elites is used as an assumption and as a conclusion in the same manner". (M. Hadžić, "Moderatori nasilja – skrivena strana yu-rata", 135). See also: Nikica Barić, *Srpska pobuna u Hrvatskoj 1990–1995* (Zagreb: Golden marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2005).

²¹ Vjeran Pavlaković, "Fulfilling the Thousand-Year-Old Dream: Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in Croatia", in *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in South Eastern Europe*, editor Pål Kostø (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Albert Bing, "The Past in the Present: Post-communist Croatia", in *Confronting the Past: European Experiences*, editors Vjeran Pavlaković, Davor Pauković i Višeslav Raos (Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja, 2012), 129–162; Vjekoslav Perica, "Ethnic Diaspora as Political Actor and National Myth", in *Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and Successor States – A Shared Narrative*, editors Darko Gavrilović i Vjekoslav Perica, (Dordrecht: Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation and Republic of Letters, 2011), 58.

discourse it received a status of unquestionable “myth”.²² Key argument that Croatian public discourse promotes is that the Homeland war was a defensive action against an armed aggression made by Serbia with Slobodan Milošević as its President with the assistance of Yugoslav Peoples’ Army, with territorial expansion and creation of “Greater Serbia” as the main goal.

Domination of such discourse tracks back to the intention to justify the official German policy during the breakup of Yugoslavia, and then taken by numerous researchers working on the topic of Yugoslav breakup and wars on its territory. More precisely, that policy included the imposition of Croatian and Slovenian accelerated recognition to the German partners in European Community. Unlike Germany, Britain and France asserted that quick, selective and uncoordinated recognition of Slovenia and Croatia could make a significant impact to the conflict spreading in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²³ The European Community adopted the Declaration about Yugoslavia on December 17th 1991 and called upon all Yugoslav republics to apply for recognition until December 23rd (Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, also known as “Badinter Commission” was appointed to consider the applications). Despite the official politics of European Commission, Germany recognized the independence of Croatia and Slovenia on December 19th 1991, provided that the recognition comes into force on January 15th next year. On that date, the other European Community countries recognized the independence of Croatia and Slovenia also (The Vatican did it on January 13th).

A key role in promoting the German attitude towards Slovenian and Croatian recognition had German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher. Genscher, who’s Democratic Party (FDP), participated in the government of Helmut Kohl, devoted one chapter of his memoirs to this topic. Genscher defended German insistence on the prompt recognition of western Yugoslav republics with an argument that the cessation of fighting in Croatia happened precisely because of the EC’s decision to recognize Slovenia and Croa-

²² In March 2015, local newspapers published an interview with the President of the County Court in Zagreb, Ivan Trudić, who stated that denying the nature of the Homeland war should be introduced as a criminal offense. According to him, anyone who claims that the Homeland War was a civil war and that the military operation Storm was ethnic cleansing must be punished with imprisonment up to 5 years. (Source: <http://www.jutarnji.hr>, Accessed 20. 01. 2016). Earlier, in March 2013 during an official visit to Finland, Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović made a statement that was interpreted as an attempt to determine the Homeland War as a civil war. Therefore, the Prime Minister faced several days of judgment by the “Croatian defenders”, and various associations of former soldiers who participated in the war on the Croatian territory during the 1990s. His resignation at the position of Prime Minister was also requested.

²³ Mirjana Cupek Hamill, *Konferencija o miru u Jugoslaviji i raspad jugoslavenske federacije* (Zagreb: LEYKAM international, 2008), 95; James Gow, *Triumph of the lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 169–170.

tia, creating in that manner the pressure on warring parties towards negotiations.²⁴

Issue of Slovenian and Croatian recognition took part in the memoirs of the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, as well. He emphasized that German involvement in the Yugoslav crisis was a result of the German obligations under the principle of self-determination and the abundance of Croatian expatriates in Germany. Kohl also claims that the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia contributed to the settlement of the conflict, and increased the pressure on warring parties to negotiate.²⁵

Identical explanation was given by Michael Libal, then the head of the Department for Southeastern Europe at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He points out the fact that the German diplomats considered such decision crucial for demonstrating a rejection of the Belgrade's strategies by international community. Libal, who regarded Serbian side as the only one culprit for the Yugoslav conflicts, represented the position of Croatian and Slovenian recognition by the European Union as crucial for the conflict pacification early 1992.²⁶

Consequently, the "official" versions of Croatian war consider Serbia and Yugoslav Peoples' Army not only as unitary actor, but also completely deny and obscure the fact that the Croatian Serbs and their leaders should be viewed as one of the major players in these processes. Henceforth, only the marginal role of pawn is allocated to the Serbian minority in Croatia, and their decisions are posited as simple and manipulated by the official Belgrade. The latest study of Harry Jack Hayball, who researched the relationship between Serbian minority in Croatia and the government in Belgrade, demonstrates quite the opposite and dismisses this assumption and conclusion as empirically repudiated.²⁷

²⁴ Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Sjećanja* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada; Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1999).

²⁵ Helmut Kohl, *Erinnerungen 1990–1994* (München: Droemer Knaur Verlag, 2007).

²⁶ Michael Libal, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991–1992* (Westport, Connecticut; London: Praeger Publishers, 1997). – Similar, often identical views expressed in his memoirs Alojz Mok (Alois Mock), Austrian Foreign Minister, also. The former Austrian Chancellor Franz Vraniciki (Franz Vranitzky) had a slightly different approach: he did not shift all the responsibility on Serbia, and he did not perceive the official Belgrade as "incarnation of communism", as Mok for example. He criticized the behavior of Croatian authorities towards Serbian minority, and he doubted the potential of the democratic regime of Franjo Tuđman. (Read more about it: Petar Dragišić, „Nemački i austrijski memoari o krizama i ratovima na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije devedesetih godina 20. veka“, *Istorija 20. veka*, br. 2, (2009), 173–174).

²⁷ Harry Jack Hayball, *Serbia and the Serbian Rebellion in Croatia 1990–1991*, Doctoral thesis (Goldsmiths University of London, 2015). Available at: <http://research.gold.ac.uk/12301/>

However, the fact which arises and reveals the true nature of the "official" scientific explanations and methodological frameworks is *blurring* the true essence of the violent conflict in Croatia. According to international law, military aggression can only be performed by a state or a group of states against another state, not by its own citizens, which Serbs in Croatia *de facto* and *de jure* were. In the first years after World War II, Serbs in Croatia were the main proponents of restoring the Yugoslav state based on the ideology of "brotherhood and unity". Affirmed as bearers of the anti-fascist struggle in Croatia, Serbs were holding a status of the constituent nation, recognized on the Third Session of the Croatian Communist Assembly (National Anti-Fascist Council of Croatian National Liberation) in May 1944.

Furthermore, the second reason for methodological mistakes concerning proper definition and distinction of main and side actors in the war in Croatia could be found in the intention of some respective authors *to clearly define the one and exclusive "culprit" for the violence*. To put it differently, those researchers have one specific aim of offering some kind of "scientific alibi" for the rest of actors, their decisions, operations and actions in the events in Croatia, and former Yugoslavia more generally. When it comes to the issue of the Yugoslav breakup and violent conflicts which followed, partial explanations, one-sided conclusions and choosing an easy way in the process of answering the crucial question why the violence occurred, almost became the rule of operating in academic and international community. Tonči Kuzmanić for example, describes those scientific anomalies as "deafening and stultifying self-evidences", aiming to portray allegedly unquestionable, non-falsifiable and easily accessible explanations of violent conflict causes.²⁸

It seems that hidden and forgotten actors of the war in Croatia, whose role was very important, if not crucial for the violence uprising, represent a distraction or surplus for the elegant and simple explanations made by the majority of authors. Moreover, Miroslav Hadžić warned that those scientific solutions do not serve to the truth and real causes for violence discovery, and additionally greatly contribute in the process of hiding very important factors, participants and events, such as, for example, paramilitary formations.²⁹

Tragedy of the Serbian people during the World War II made a great impact on the formation of Croatian Serbs' national identity. Crimes committed by the Ustasha regime against Serbs in Croatia during the first

²⁸ Tonči Kuzmanić, „Raspad SFR Jugoslavije i nasljedstvo: narodnjaštvo – a ne nacionalizam“, u: *Nasilno rasturanje Jugoslavije – uzroci, dinamika, posledice*, 81.

²⁹ M. Hadžić, „Moderatori nasilja – skrivena strana yu-rata“, 135.

formation days of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) caused the Serbian commitment to Partisan movement in Croatia. Great sacrifices filed for the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia after the war, in fact, rooted the exceptional commitment to the “achievements of the national liberation struggle” within Serbian minority in Croatia. This precise commitment was one of the primary features of Serbian identity in the Yugoslav breakup period.

In the post-war Croatia, the Serbs were in constant demographic decline. According to the census of 1948, there were 543.795 (Croats 2,975,399); the highest number of Serbs was registered in 1971 (626.789), until the last census of 1991 with 581.663 of Serbs (Croats 3,736,356), mainly due to assimilation.³⁰ This means that the number of Serbs in the range of 43 years increased only slightly more than 38,000 people.

The widespread feeling of fear among the Serbs in Croatia was not only a product of propaganda from Belgrade, the official Croatia considered, and still considers. On the contrary, populist and explicitly nationally defined program of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) has caused great concern among the Serbs in Croatia. Thus, at the first general convention of the HDZ, held in Zagreb on 24 and 25 February 1990, in his opening speech Franjo Tuđman said that Independent State of Croatia (NDH) was not only a “quisling creation”, and a “fascist crime”, but also the expression of “historical aspirations of the Croatian people for their own independent state, and the realization of international factors, the government of Hitler's Germany in this case”.³¹ Accordingly, “the NDH was not a mere whim of the axial forces, but the outcome of quite specific historical factors”.³²

To Serbs in Croatia, Tuđman's speech was an attempt to deny the fact that the NDH was a fascist state in which the genocide against them was committed, and that could call into question their future in Croatia. Serbs could interpret even worse Tuđman's statement that “he was happy that his wife is neither a Serb nor a Jew”.³³

Shortly before the elections, Tuđman published a book on Croatian history during World War II. It reduced the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust at a million and claimed that the historical data on Jasenovac were “inflated”. Tuđman wrote that in Jasenovac graves (in the area of Gradiška-Jasenovac) could be found the bones of post-war prisoners also,

³⁰ *Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava, stanova i poljoprivrednih gospodarstava 31. ožujak 1991* (Zagreb: Republički zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske, 1992), 7.

³¹ *Odluke I općeg sabora HDZ. Programске zasadе i ciljevi HDZ. Statut HDZ. Izborni proglašenje, izborna tijela HDZ* (Zagreb: 1990), 10.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Pre-election rally of HDZ in Dubrava, April 1990.

since the camp was supposedly existed until 1947. He also wrote about the alleged participation of Jews in the liquidation of Roma in the camp, accusing the Jews to have taken the “preparation initiative”, causing in that way not only the “individual atrocities but also the mass slaughter of non-Jews, communists, partisans and Serbs”.³⁴ Therefore it is not surprising that many Serbs believed that the 1941 is back.

With the adoption of the new Croatian Constitution on 21 December 1990, the Serbs lost their status of a constituent nation in Croatia.³⁵ Their status was reduced to the national minority, because minorities did not have the right to self-determination. The official Croatia considered that, if Serbs retain their constitutive nation status, they will then start “the dismemberment of Croatia” and perform the “merge” with Serbia.³⁶ The use of the Cyrillic script was also banned from the new Croatian Constitution. Not a single amendment made by the Serbian deputies in the Assembly was accepted (16 deputies of the Party of Democratic Change, the former Croatian Communist Party and the Socialist Party of Croatia; and two representatives of the Serbian Democratic Party).³⁷ New Croatian Constitution was voted by all representatives of the Party of Democratic

³⁴ Franjo Tuđman, *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti, Rasprava o povijesti i filozofiji zlosilja* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1989). – Immediately after the proclamation of the Independent Croatian State (NDH), in Zagreb's bookstores appeared a luxuriously equipped, leather-bound edition of this book. Tuđman's positions very quickly became the official views of Croatian politics, and in a good part, the new Croatian historiography also. The *Bespuća* are printed in English language as: F. Tuđman, *Horrors of War, Historical Reality and Philosophy. Revised Edition* (New York: M. Evans and Company, inc, 1996), and German language: F. Tuđman, *Irrwege der Geschichtswirklichkeit, Eine Abhandlung über die Geschichte und die Philosophie des Gewaltübens* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1993). From the English version the anti-Semitic attitudes and points were erased, while retained at the luxurious German edition.

³⁵ The demand for erasing the notion of Croatia as state of the Serbian people as well from the Croatian Constitution was submitted for the first time in the Croatian Assembly (in the old, one-party legislature) in 22 June 1989, but it was not accepted. – Срђан Радловић, *Судбина Крајине* (Београд: Дан Граф, 1996), 13.

³⁶ The answer to the question why Serbs can no longer be a constituent people in Croatia, gave Šime Đodan, a member of the ruling HDZ party and a former leader of Maspok movement. He believed that there was not such a constitution in any European country that gave “so many concessions” to an ethnic minority: “Serbs in Croatia do not have the right to be a constitutive nation because they would have the right to break Croatia, which we will never allow. Serbs in Croatia were given greater concessions than they would get in any country of Europe. It must be known that the Croatian people have the limit of patience; and those who are engaged in tactics and strategy, especially those who are never satisfied with received concessions, should always have that in mind”. (According to: *Политика*, 22. 12. 1990, 8).

³⁷ http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1990_12_56_1092.html. (Accessed: 02. 02. 2016).

Change as well (from 1992 it changed name into Social Democratic Party of Croatia – SDP), even though the majority of Serbs in Croatia voted precisely for them.

That the thesis of the “Serbian menace” was merely the product of Croatian xenophobia confirms the fact that the Serbian Democratic Party in 1990 advocated cultural autonomy for Serbs in Croatia, and not any kind of territorial particularity. Moreover, Serbian democrats in Croatia were against founding their party on ethnic principle exclusively: “Ethnic character of the political party is the source of all forms of repression, ethnic repression in particular. That’s why every ethnocentrism is inhuman, intolerant and impatient. We are a universal democratic party. Our options are federal, and our practices are democratic”.³⁸

When Serbs in Croatia realized what is going to happen, prior to the adoption of the new Croatian Constitution, a joint session of the two most important political institutions of Serbs in Croatia, the temporary Presidency of the Union of Municipalities of Northern Dalmatia and Lika and the Presidency of the Serbian National Council, held in Titova Korenica on 12 December 1990. The conclusion of this session was the adoption of the “Statute of the SAO Krajina”. The proposed Statute was adopted in Knin on 19 December 1990. Those Serbian autonomous provinces, named SAO Krajina, did not have any legislative competences and their main aim was to defend the equality of Serbs in Croatia in those regions where Serbs were in majority, but in other areas of the Republic of Croatia as well.³⁹

The process of creating territorial autonomy of Serbs in Croatia began no earlier than 1991, if we put aside the Log Revolution in August 1990 which goal was for the Serbs in Croatia to express their dissatisfaction towards newly elected Croatian government. Conversely, they were clearly formulated in demands for a secession after the referendum in Croatia (19 May 1991), the declaration of independence (25 June 1991) and the beginning of armed conflicts. Hence, the first element necessary for the clear and unambiguous definition of the research subject in terms of determining the main actors in armed conflict leads us to the conclusion that the war in Croatia fought between the Government of Croatia (as an integral part of Yugoslavia, and also later as an independent subject of international law and international relations) on the one hand, and the Serbian minority in Croatia (later organized as the “Republic of Serbian Krajina”), on the other. Correspondingly, violent conflict in Croatia belongs to the intra-state or civil war group.⁴⁰

³⁸ According to: *Javnosti. Srpska demokratska stranka*, Knin, 17. februar 1990, 6.

³⁹ *Політика*, 20. 12. 1990, 8.

⁴⁰ M. R. Sarkees and F. Wayman, *Resort to War*, 345.

Temporal definition of the violent conflict in Croatia

The second problem which arises is correct temporal or time frame definition of the war in Croatia. The exact start date of this conflict is also subjected to disputes between scientists and researchers. Bearing in mind substantial differences in official state discourses of then warring parties and the fact that the official declaration of war was never made (which is the key element in defining international conflicts, for example), this problem comes as no surprise and represents a direct consequence of the first one, explained in the previous section.⁴¹

Serbian side takes the 17 August 1990 and the beginning of the so-called “Log Revolution” as start date, while Croatian side considers 22 February 1991 to be a start date, when the first armed incident between members of the Croatian police forces and rebelled Serbs in Pakrac occurred. In the process of defining the exact start date of conflict, COW and UCDP/PRIO databases rely on Small and Singer: “Even in the absence of a declaration, the sustained continuation of military incidents or battle, producing the requisite number of battle deaths, is treated as a war, with the first day of combat again used for computing duration”.⁴²

However, the disagreement about the start date could be noticed even in those databases.⁴³ UCDP/PRIO database records the July 10th, 1991 as the date when the war in Croatia begun, and July 27th, 1991 as the date when the conflict reached 25 battle-related deaths. On the other hand the COW database takes May 2nd, 1991 as start date, when the battle in Borovo Selo took place (12 casualties). Given the uneven intensity of the armed conflict and the methodology that takes into account the number of victims in the course of one year the COW and UCDP/PRIO databases split the war in Croatia on two or more separate conflicts.

The COW database identifies two conflicts in Croatia: 1) From May 2nd, 1991 until January 2nd, 1992 – *The Croatian Independence War*; and 2) From May 5th, 1995 until November 11th 1995 – *The Croatia–Krajina war*.⁴⁴ Both conflicts had a character of intrastate war over local issues. UCDP/PRIO database takes slightly different approach, splitting the war in

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴² Melvin Small and David J. Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816–1980* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 66.

⁴³ See Appendix 1, Table 1 “UCDP/PRIO the Intra-State War Database” and Table 2 “The Correlates of War (COW) Project The Intra-State War Database.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 2: Correlates of War (COW) Database Wars v. 4.0, 1816–2007, “CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ALL WARS”, www.correlatesofwar.org (Accessed 9. 2. 2015). Similar in UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia. <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=41®ionSelect>

Croatia in three different conflicts. The first one, named *Croatian secession from Yugoslavia*, lasted from July 10th, 1991 until December 31st, 1991, and by nature was an internal armed conflict. Codebook definition states that “internal armed conflict occurs between the government of the state and one or more internal opposition group (s) without intervention from other states”.⁴⁵

Furthermore, the second conflict began April 29th, 1992 and ended December 23rd, 1993. The location of this conflict now changes from Yugoslavia to Croatia while warring parties were the Government of Croatia on the one side, and Serbian irregular forces (later the Republic of Serbian Krajina) and the Republic of Serbia (Yugoslavia) on the other. Because the position of the main actors changed due to the official end of Yugoslavia, in this period the conflict in Croatia transformed from an internal into internationalized internal armed conflict. Codebook states that “internationalized internal armed conflict occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group (s) with intervention from other states (secondary parties) on one or both sides”.⁴⁶ And lastly, the third conflict started on May 1st, 1995 when it transformed again into internal armed conflict. The warring parties were the Government of Croatia and the Republic of Serbian Krajina, while Yugoslavia did not participated. The end of the war in Croatia UCDP/PRIO database dates on November 12th, 1995 when the Erdut Agreement was signed.

Interestingly, this database temporal determination of the war in Croatia coincides with the International Court of Justice judgment upon Croatian claim for alleged Serbian (then Yugoslavia) genocide committed during the war. The biggest dilemma in this process was whether Serbia could be held responsible for genocidal acts before April 27th, 1992. On that day, Yugoslavia officially ceded to exist and new, “the third Yugoslavia” was created. As a successor state, during the new Constitution proclamation, Yugoslavia signed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG).⁴⁷ The Court rejected the Croatian claims and judged that the Genocide Convention cannot be applied retroactively, and that, respectively, Serbia cannot be blamed for the acts of genocide committed before April 27th, 1992.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ N. P. Gleditsch et al., „Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset“, 9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Goran Jungvirt, „Odbačene tužbe za genocid Hrvatske i Srbije, zločini potvrđeni“, *Slobodna Evropa*, 3. 2. 2015. <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content>

⁴⁸ ICJ, *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia)*, no. 2015–4, 03. 02. 2015. The greatest dilemma for 17 international judges was – whether Serbia is responsible for genocidal acts before April 27th 1992. Most of the 11 judges, as opposed to six of them – decided that it was not, and rejected the

On 27 June 1992 in Lisbon, in Declaration of the European Council, the international community used the term “the former Yugoslavia” for the first time. The Arbitration Commission announced on 4 July 1992 in Pars that Yugoslavia ceased to exist because most of the newly formed states form the former Yugoslavia mutually recognized its independence.⁴⁹ Thus, they provide that “the exercise of any federal state government in the areas of newly created states is finished”. In addition, the joint federal authorities in which all the Yugoslav republic participated and were represented ceased to exist.⁵⁰

Although UCDP/PRIO database displays a certain continuity of the war in Croatia, due to the absence of precise information, the columns StartPrec and EpEndPrec are labeled by 1 (not precisely enough).⁵¹ The outbreak of the war in Bosnia moved the focus of military operations from Croatian territory and the JNA army did not militarily operate in that region.⁵² After the truce in Sarajevo on January 2nd, 1992 almost every military operation was mainly unilateral. The incidents like Maslenica, Medački džep and Peruća were conducted by the members of the Croatian military forces with the main goal of taking over the control. Therefore, authors of this text consider data in the COW database more relevant for the actual situation on the battlefield.

Defining the conflict in Croatia

And ultimately, we came to the third, definitional nature problem of the most studies and researches dealing with the war in Croatia – conflict definition and classification into one of the existing categories.⁵³ The existing literature identifies at least nine conceptually different definitions

argument of Croatia – that Serbia was committed to respecting at all times the Genocide Convention, as one of the successor to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had previously signed. “There is no indication that the purpose of the Convention was to call up states on retroactive liability. The history of negotiations on the Convention indicates that the intent of its application was aimed at punishing genocide in the future, and not to be applied to events that have already occurred, such as World War II or other events of the past”, explained Peter Tomka, the presiding judge. See more in Goran Jungvirth, „Odbačene tužbe za genocid Hrvatske i Srbije, zločini potvrđeni“. (In *Radio Slobodna Evropa*. <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/hag>. Accessed 19. 03. 2016).

⁴⁹ Opinion No. 9 of the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia of 4 July 1992, reprinted in (1993) 4(1) *EJIL* 88, p. 89.

⁵⁰ According to: Miroslav Tuđman i Ivan Bilić, *Planovi, sporazumi, izjave o ustavnom ustrojstvu Bosne i Hercegovine 1991–1995* (Zagreb: 2005), 106–107.

⁵¹ See Appendix 1.

⁵² *Croatian memorial-documentary center of the Homeland War*, “The Chronology of the Homeland War“, <http://centardomovinskograta.hr/wp-content>.

⁵³ See: M. R. Sarkees and F. W. Wayman, *Resort to War*, 46.

of the armed conflict in Croatia, which makes it the unique case in modern war history.⁵⁴ This fact makes the job for researchers dealing and grappling with this very sensitive and multicausal subject even more difficult.

A distinctive “terminology determinism” represented in the existing literature and official, ex-Yugoslav states discourses, creates a very paradoxical situation for researchers. Namely, opting for one of the existing definitions and determinations of the war in Croatia, a researcher takes a serious risk of automatically discrediting and labeling itself and his work.⁵⁵

Following the logic and methodology of already mentioned COW and UCDP/PRIO databases, International Court of Justice in the processes of deciding upon mutual lawsuits of Serbia and Croatia on the genocide issues, as well as numerous distinguished foreign researchers who focus on the Serbian minority in Croatia as the main actor in this conflict, the authors of this text claim that the violent conflict in Croatia should be defined as Intra-State War.⁵⁶

Bearing in mind that the Socialist Yugoslavia, created in 1945 as federal state composed of six federal states (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia), officially existed until April 27th, 1992 the war in Croatia is defined as intrastate armed conflict.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Henceforth, in the literature about the conflict in Croatia we can find the following titles, conceptual determinations and definitions: “Croatian Homeland War”, “Croatian War for Independence”, “Greater Serbian aggression”, “War in Krajina”, “Civil war in Croatia”, “War for the Yugoslav succession”, “Armed rebellion”, “War for preservation of the Yugoslav sovereignty and territorial integrity”, “Ethnic conflict in Croatia”.

⁵⁵ See: Marina Ilić, „Teškoće pojmovnog određenja sukoba u Hrvatskoj 1991–1995“, u: *Srpsko-hrvatski odnosi: suočavanje sa savremenim problemima*, urednik Darko Gavrilović (Novi Sad: Centar za istoriju, demokratiju i pomirenje, 2012), 61–70.

⁵⁶ Some of the mentioned studies and researchers are: Barry R. Posen, „The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict”, *Survival*, vol. 35, no. 1, (1993), 27–47; Rui J. P. De Figueriedo and Barry Weingast, „The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict”, in *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention*, editors Barbara Walter and Jack Snyder (Ithaca, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 261–302; John Mueller, „The Banality of Ethnic War”, *International Security*, vol. 25, no. 1, (2002), 42–70; Mieko Kurabayshy, „Consideration of Non-ethnic Causes in the Yugoslav Conflicts – Case study to focus on Croatia“, *Rikkyo Journal of Social Design Studies*, no. 8, (2009), 111–121; Thomas Lindemann, „Des dénis de reconnaissance à l’extermination: La logique symbolique des guerres civiles“, *Res Militaris, an on-line social science journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, (2012).

⁵⁷ By the time the war broke out, Croatia still was one of the constitutive republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Croatian independence was declared on June 25th, 1991. Soon after the war broke out in Slovenia, the European Community delegation (Jacques Poos, Gianni De Michelis and Hans van den Broek), following the Brijuni Agreement concluded on July 7th, 1991, and made a three-month moratorium on all activities stemming from the Slovenian and Croatian declaration of independence. Croatia officially became a member of the UN on May 22nd 1992. Yugoslavia officially ceased to exist on April 27th, 1992.

The intrastate wars are “those between or among two or more groups within the internationally recognized territory of the state”.⁵⁸ Or more precisely: “Intrastate wars involve sustained combat involving organized armed forces capable for effective resistance, resulting and a minimum of 1,000 battle related combatant fatalities within a twelve month period”.⁵⁹

This definition encompasses wars that predominantly take place within the recognized territory of a state.⁶⁰ Intrastate war category is an element of the new, enlarged typology of wars given in *Resort to War 1816–2007*, and as such, corresponds to the category of civil wars in the traditional typology.

Following Kubo it is important to distinguish between revolutionary wars (civil wars over the control of central government) and secessionist wars (where one of the warring parties tries to secede from the country) when dealing with intrastate war origins.⁶¹ The intrastate war in Croatia had a character of “war over local issues”.⁶² War over local issues, or secessionist or state formation wars are synonyms used to describe the war that „centers on the form or shape of the state itself and generally involves particular regions of a country fighting for a greater measure of autonomy or for outright secession”.⁶³

Secession as a core concept in political science and international law has many different definitions. According to Pavković and Radan, “secession involves a process of withdrawal of a territory and its population from an existing state and the creation of a new state on that territory”.⁶⁴ Key elements of this definition are a bounded territory within an existing state; a population within that territory; proclaimed independence of a new

⁵⁸ Meredith Reid Sarkees, Frank W. Wayman, David J. Singer, “Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816–1997”, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 1, (2003), 59.

⁵⁹ M. R. Sarkees and F. Wayman, *Resort to War*, 1–2.

⁶⁰ N. P. Gleditsch et al., „Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset“, 9.

⁶¹ Kubo Keiichi, “Do men Rebel because the State is Weak? A Critique of the Fearon-Latin Model”, *The Waseda Journal of Political Sciences and Economics*, 359, (2005), 95.

⁶² M. R. Sarkees and F. Wayman, *Resort to War*, 455.

⁶³ Ernie Regehr for example gives a more expanded typology of intrastate wars: state control wars, state formation wars and failed state wars. The first two are corresponding to the revolutionary/secessionist intrastate war typology, but the third one, failed state wars “typically involve spreading domestic chaos and armed violence, sometimes brought on by persistent and debilitating state control and/or state formation wars”. (See Ernie Regehr, “Armed Conflict: Trends and Drivers, Appendix I: Types of War” (New York: The Simons Foundation”, 2011) <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/sites/all/files/Armed%20Conflict%20.pdf>).

⁶⁴ Aleksandar Pavković and Peter Radan, “Introduction: What is Secession”, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Secession*, editors Aleksandar Pavković and Peter Radan, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 1.

state and attempting to gain recognition of that independence by other states and international organizations.⁶⁵

A proper definition of war and its further typologization is important due to the fact that conclusions drawn from the independent variables might not be appropriate for all types of intrastate wars, which will be the subject of our following text in this edition.

Conclusion

The complex nature of the events that took place in the former Yugoslavia in the beginning of the early nineties of the XX century requires carefully construction of theoretical and methodological research framework, capable to probe into the essence and detect otherwise not-so-obvious factors that cause them. A large number of existing contributions on these issues did not provide satisfactory results that would help to really understand these events and processes. We believe that main problem primarily lies in their conceptually and methodologically imprecise research design, which primarily reflects on the very problematic research subject definition, pre-determinations and reductions.

Firstly, authors claim that it is of crucial importance to conceptually separate the breakup of Yugoslavia and wars which occurred in several Yugoslav republics, because they represent two very different phenomena and processes of international relations, and as such, they have very different causes and origins. Secondly, authors try to identify crucial reasons and explain why some authors completely neglected the most important elements, which when implemented, ensure the solid basis for the good and high-quality research on causes of the Intra-State war in Croatia, and Intra-State wars in general.

And lastly, the authors in this paper presented three crucial elements for making a clear and unambiguous definition of the armed conflict in Croatia, and armed conflicts in general, and focused on the correction of methodological and conceptual mistakes found in the literature about this topic. Ultimately, this paper tried to point out on the fact that the irresponsible "scientific" behavior of some researchers created layers of prejudice, which, in time, turned into the self-implied axioms and myths. Under those circumstances, the authors wanted, as much as possible, to facilitate job for some future researchers, and at the same time, encourage them for new contributions in identifying the key causes for the emergence of the Intra-State war in Croatia.

⁶⁵ A. Pavković and P. Radan, "Introduction: What is Secession", 3.

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UZROCI ORUŽANOG SUKOBA U HRVATSKOJ 1991. RAZREŠENJE KONCEPTUALNIH I METODOLOŠKIH NEDOSLEDNOSTI

Rezime

Nasilni raspad Jugoslavije predstavljao je veliki izazov za brojne teoretičare i istraživače međunarodnih odnosa. Serija građanskih ratova, od kojih su neki tekli paralelno sa procesom raspada jugoslovenske federacije, a neki nastali kao njegoza neposredna posledica, predstavljala je goruću temu za mnoge teoretičare, istoričare i analitičare. Međutim, uprkos intenzivnoj istraživanosti, velikom broju radova domaćih i stranih autora, kvalitativnim i kvantitativnim analizama, još uvek ne postoje jasni i nedvosmisleni odgovori na suštinska pitanja koja su navedeni procesi postavili pred užu i širu javnost.

U ovom tekstu autori na prvom mestu kategorizuju postojeća objašnjenja uzroka oružanog sukoba u Hrvatskoj data od strane domaćih i inostranih istraživača i ukazuju na njihove teorijske, metodološke i činjenične nedoslednosti. Zatim, rad prati osnovnu liniju konceptualnog razgraničenja fenomena raspada zemlje sa jedne, i nasilnih sukoba sa druge strane i zas-

niva se na interdisciplinarnom naporu nalaza iz oblasti međunarodnih odnosa, odnosno teorija unutardržavnih sukoba, i istorijske analize oslanjajući se prvenstveno na primarne izvore istorijske građe. Grupisanje objašnjenja u tri osnovne kategorije izvršeno je po principu odgovarajućeg teorijskog pripadanja njihovih argumenata.

KLJUČNE REČI: Hrvatska, Jugoslavija, rat, međunarodna zajednica, ideologija, studije rata, koncepti

LES CAUSES DU CONFLIT ARME EN CROATIE 1991. RESOUDRE LES INCOHERENCES CONCEPTUELLES ET METHODOLOGIQUES

Résumé

La désintégration violente de la Yougoslavie représente un grand défi pour de nombreux théoriciens et chercheurs des relations internationales. La série des guerres civiles, dont certaines, se déroulèrent parallèlement au processus de décomposition de la fédération yougoslave, et d'autres apparaissant comme sa conséquence immédiate, constitue un sujet brûlant pour beaucoup de théoriciens, historiens et analystes. Or, malgré des recherches intensives, le grand nombre de travaux d'auteurs nationaux et étrangers, les analyses qualitatives et quantitatives, les réponses claires et sans équivoque aux questions de fond que les processus mentionnés ci-dessus ont posées au grand public et aux spécialistes n'existent pas.

Dans ce texte, en premier lieu, les auteurs catégorisent les explications données par les chercheurs nationaux et étrangers aux conflits armés en Croatie et relèvent leurs incohérences théoriques, méthodologiques et factuelles. Ensuite, l'article suit la ligne principale de la délimitation conceptuelle entre le phénomène de la dissolution du pays d'un côté et le phénomène des conflits violents de l'autre. Il se fonde sur un travail interdisciplinaire qui utilise les apports des relations internationales, en fait des théories des conflits à l'intérieur des Etats, et de l'analyse historique de sources primaires. Le regroupement des explications dans trois catégories de base sur le principe de l'appartenance théorique des arguments énoncés.

MOTS CLES: Croatie, Yougoslavie, guerre, communauté internationale, idéologie, études de guerre, concepts