THE ROLE OF CLEAVAGES IN THE 1941-1945 CIVIL WAR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

By
Vujo Ilić

Submitted to
Central European University
Nationalism Studies Program

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Mária Kovács

Budapest, Hungary
2012

Abstract

This thesis addresses the problem of the role of cleavages in civil wars. Wars are often coded as ethnic or ideological, based on the identification of the master cleavage. It argues against such practice of exogenous classification and instead explains the role of cleavages as endogenous to dynamics of the civil war and its basic feature, breakdown of sovereign authority. Cleavages are instrumental to the civil wars, not essential. It proposes that strategic considerations of warring parties inform patterns of ideological and ethnic cleavages, not the other way around. The research employs comparative historical analysis on the case of civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1941 to 1945. Relying on published primary sources, it compares instances of violent conflicts between the actors at the meso level of analysis to the ethnic or ideological framing of conflicts. The focus of analysis is on the dynamics of state repression and insurgency, conflict and cooperation across, and along master cleavages, and relation between combatants and non-combatants.

Acknowledgments

My interest in the study of civil wars, as well as the approach I'm trying to engage in this thesis, owes much to the 2010 summer seminar held by prof. Stathis Kalyvas and his passionate and rigorous attitude towards science.

In 2010/11 I assisted prof. Fotini Christia in research for her forthcoming book on alliance formation in civil wars. My understanding of civil wars and the interest in the events of the 1941-1945 Civil War in Yugoslavia were greatly influenced by her work. I thank her for the kind permission to use the rich material I was collecting while assisting her.

My thesis supervisor at CEU, prof. Maria Kovács, was extremely helpful, and especially patient with my struggle against the deadlines. The thesis workshop with prof. Rogers Brubaker was an encouragement to pursue the thesis in the direction I intended to. Two of my professors from the University of Belgrade, Radmila Nakarada and Vesna Knežević-Predić, have supported me when I needed it the most and I thank them for that.

Most of all, I'd like to thank my family, and friends who haven't seen much of me, while I was entrenched in the thesis war, but supported me all the time; and Amy, for company in the study room, computer lab, and elsewhere.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Partisan document from March 7 1942 describes a following proceeding of events in the village of Jeleč, near Foča, South-eastern Bosnia[1]. During the Ustasha pogroms of Orthodox civilians of late 1941, and during the beginning of the uprising, most of the Muslims, who were ¾ majority in the area, refused to join them and instead protected their Serb neighbours. When the Ustasha left the village, on November 30, local Muslims called for the Partisan Serbs in the surrounding mountains to descend to the village and many of them joined their ranks.

Soon enough, Serb Chetniks entered neighbouring Foča and started killing the local Muslim civilians. The Muslims of Jeleč were disturbed by this, but Partisans calmed them down and obliged to protect them. However, due to Chetniks victories in a war that erupted between them and the Partisans, a large-scale defection of Serbs from Partisan to Chetnik forces started. Almost all of Jeleč Serb Partisans defected to Chetniks and attacked the same Muslims they promised to protect, plundering and burning their houses. This led more than hundred Muslim soldiers to defect from Partisans and join the only army that could offer them protection – they joined Ustasha garrison in nearby Borač, the same one they refused to support at the onset of hostilities. The situation deteriorated further. When the Partisans regained the control of Jeleč, they did not trust the Muslims anymore and continued pillaging, just as Chetniks before them did, so most of the Muslims remained with Ustasha. The author of the report, Nusret Kaljanac describes an episode that happened in one of the houses of the village[2]: Serb Partisan entered a Muslim house, taking away two chicken eggs. When the woman confronted him and refused to take the money, asking him to leave the food, he replied:

---

[1] ZNOR, IV 3, 291-296. (Note on the referencing of collections of documents is in Chapter 5.2).
[2] Ibid., 293.

"Don't you think what you think; you think I'm Partisan! I am not. Come tomorrow, we could be Chetniks again, and your house might be in flames!"

What happened around Jeleč is an illustration of the problem the researchers of civil wars confront. The master narratives, constructed after the war, present warring parties as unitary actors, motivated by ethnic hatred or ideological goals. The narrative is typically straightforward: Fascist Croats assisted by Bosnian Muslims tried to exterminate Serbs, who rebelled, but were soon split between the two ideologically irreconcilable factions, and the Communist one eventually won the war. Why is this account problematic? As the events in Jeleč suggests, state's indiscriminate violence against Orthodox population did not have widespread support; one could argue, it was a way to mobilise it, rather than expression of popular will. How did the Muslim civilians respond? Protecting their local Serbs was perhaps an example of ethnic solidarity, but might also have been motivated by deterrence, knowing that Serb Partisans are in the mountains all around them. Did Chetniks mass violence have any instrumental value? Couldn't it be possible that the spread of fear among the civilian population and recruiting those who wanted to plunder worked in their military advantage? Further, there seems to be no indication that the mass defection from Partisan to Chetnik camps was caused by the change of heart; rather it was a chance to join the stronger party while there was still some benefit in it. Did Muslims from the village defect to Ustasha garrison because of ideology or because they feared survival? Most importantly, could the trust between Serbs and Muslims in the village and around it ever be established again, when, for Muslims all Serbs became Chetniks and for Serbs, all Muslims were Ustasha – first they heard about it, then they witnessed it themselves. Finally, the last episode raises the question of individual motivation and extreme volatility of allegiances in civil wars.

The issue this thesis raises lies between these two accounts. How much of what happens during civil wars can we understand if we rely on the narratives that obscure all ambiguities and

2

intricacies of these complex phenomena, and instead present the wars in binary terms, as conflicts between ethnic or ideological groups? I argue, not much. The practice of coding civil wars based on master cleavages, as ethnic or ideological should be challenged. I try to show instead that what motivates actors in the civil wars has to do much more with what happens during the war, than with any label: Serb, Communist, Muslim or Ustasha, which could be applied on them by outsiders before, during, or after the violence takes place. Civil wars are the most violent and destructive form of internal conflicts. The assumption that these extreme conditions do not fundamentally change the perceptions, motivations and actions of all involved puzzled me. Instead of abstract ethnic or ideological allegiances, could it be that the pursuit of security, epitomised in the notion of survival, is what drives the actors: after all, unlike in times of peace, the rationality of wartime decisions makes a difference between life and death.

Thus if we say civil war X is ethnic, we don't get to know anything about it except the fact that the actor's narrative exploited ethnic cleavages. If then we proceed to the wars Y, Z and N, which all have the same supposedly ethnic character and try to generalize about onset, dynamics or termination of "ethnic" wars, results might be statistically solid, but theoretically flawed. Dynamic of the war is endogenous process and to understand it, one needs to get down to micro level, explore intergroup dynamics, violent conflict in different time slots, and most importantly, to understand different conjectures of power, interests and motivations that drive the relations between the actors.

This thesis takes a comparative historical approach to explain the dynamics of civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1941 to 1945. It mostly relies on published primary sources and employs a method of comparison in order to draw inferences. The hypothesis is that strategic considerations are better predictors of motivations and actions of warring parties than ethnic or

ideological affiliations. This prompts the theoretical conclusion that coding of civil wars based on master cleavages is not a useful analytical framework.

The content is organized in a following way: Chapter 1 discusses complexity and ambiguity as inherent features of civil war, its conceptual autonomy from other forms of violence and operational definition used in this work. It is followed by an exposition of a new research program that is based on empirical and theoretical disaggregation, as well as emphasis on historical research. Chapters 2 and 3 describe two approaches to the role of cleavages in civil war and the ramifications the proposed mechanisms have on research agenda, and discuss the suggested specificity of ethnic or ideological wars and warfare. Chapter 4 introduces a basic feature of civil wars – breakdown of sovereign authority – as a framework for understanding motivations and actions of warring parties. Chapter 5 outlines the previous theoretical arguments and proposes two main hypotheses and three sub-hypotheses, as well as the methodology used in the research. Chapter 6 introduces the case, outline the civil war in B&H, as well as debate about its nature, and present main actors. Chapter 7 explains the repression and the onset of insurgency, in relation to the first sub-hypothesis. Chapter 8 deals with the conflict and cooperation between two insurgent groups, answering the second hypothesis through comparison of temporal and spatial variation in their relations. Chapter 9 encompasses two topics: it points to the role of ideological cleavages in Chetnik-Partisan relations and ethnicity in Chetnik-NDH cooperation. Chapter 10 brings in the Muslim civilian population and its relations with armed groups, partially answering the third sub-hypothesis (it is addressed in other chapters too). Chapter eleven describes the Partisan rise to power and explains the consequences it had using three cases: emergence of Muslim militias and their relations with other groups, defections to Partisans and the NDH and Chetniks disintegration.

1. Researching Civil Wars

In this chapter, civil war is first presented as both empirically and conceptually disputed phenomenon, focus is then moved towards the recent surge of academic interest and finally, implications of the definition of civil war used in the work are discussed.

1.1 Complexities and Ambiguities

Civil war, the most destructive and widespread form of domestic political conflict is notoriously complex and ambiguous phenomenon, partly because it is deeply endogenous:

> "Collective and individual preferences, strategies, values, and identities are continuously shaped and reshaped in the course of a war, while the war itself aggregates all kinds of cleavages from the most ideological to the most local.[3]"

Also, it is a phenomenon highly prone to semantic contestation[4] – the interpretation of violent conflict as civil war has significant political weight and the usage of the term is part of the conflict itself. Therefore the additional contestation about the meaning of conflict increases the complexity long after the violence has ended. Horowitz famously posited that "There is the conflict itself, and there is the meta-conflict – the conflict about the nature of the conflict"[5].

It should not be surprising that, in order to simplify the complexity and to erase all ambiguities and contradictions that mark civil wars, the winning parties always construct master narratives[6], which incapacitates the understanding of the ambiguities of the conflict. Although the main recipients of master narratives are domestic public, academics and researchers in the field are not immune from the often simplified and distorted images surrounding civil wars. In

---

[3] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 430.
[4] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Civil Wars," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, ed. Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 416.
[5] Donald L. Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 2.
[6] Kalyvas, 2009, 430.

order to understand the motivations of actors in civil war, one needs to compare the actions to the statements, or, to use Skinner's words, one need to exhibit the "dynamic nature of the relationship which […] exists between the professed principles and the actual practices of political life" [7].

1.2 The Renewed Interest

A new wave of scholarly interest[8] in civil wars started after the end of the Cold War, following the perceived decline of interstate armed conflict and the rise in the frequency of intrastate armed conflicts[9]. However, Sambanis rightfully assessed that in spite of the recent boom in research, civil war is still the most poorly understood system failure in the domestic political process[10]. The reason for that is not only empirical, but also conceptual. While during the Cold War, the study of revolutions was the favoured form of internal conflict for researchers, focus has shifted to the "ethnic conflict" following the breakup of socialist federations, but since mid-nineties, the advances in the field were propelled by the realization that both of these are part of a phenomenon formerly known as rebellion and now mostly called civil war[11].

Although civil or internal wars have for long been treated as social phenomena, it should be noted here that there is no clear consensus in social sciences on the conceptual autonomy of the civil war as distinct form of political violence[12]. Tilly and Tarrow[13], the towering figures of

---

[7] Quentin Skinner, "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action," *Political Theory* 2, no.3 (1974): 277.

[8] One of the indicators of the maturing of the field is the 1998 emergence of multidisciplinary journal "*Civil Wars*".

[9] Steven R. David, "Internal War: Causes and Cures." *World Politics* 49, no.4 (1997): 552–576.
Stathis N. Kalyvas, "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" World Politics 54, no.1 (2001): 99–118.

[10] Nicholas Sambanis, "A Review of Recent Advances and Future Directions in the Quantitative Literature on Civil War," *Defence and Peace Economics* 13, no.3 (2002): 215–243.

[11] Kalyvas, 2009, 417.

[12] Ibid., 418.

[13] Charles Tilly, The Politics of Collective Violence, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Charles Tilly and Sidney G. Tarrow, Contentious Politics, (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).

the study of contentious politics argue against treating civil war as a separate type of political violence, one with "distinct causal realm with its own laws"[14] and advocate instead recognition of multiple varieties of collective violence in different phases and segments of war, organized destruction being only one of them. However, majority of the scholars dealing with political violence do indeed approach it as a cohesive phenomenon[15].

1.3 Defining Civil Wars

So what is it that makes the phenomenon specific? Its defining characteristic is being, unlike interstate wars, typically bounded by single state borders. Although "internal wars" [16] would then be a better choice, "civil wars" has become an established term. Therefore it is war that is not led between two or more states. Yet, basic feature of Collier and Hoeffler's as well as Fearon and Laitin's definitions of civil war summarized by Sambanis[17] as "armed conflict between the government of a sovereign state and one or more organized groups that are able to mount effective resistance against the state" is that at least one participant in the conflict is a sovereign state. State is also inevitable partaker in other prominent definitions of civil wars. Small and Singer, the authors of the Correlates of War project, define civil war as: "armed conflict that involves (a) military action internal to the metropole, (b) the active participation of the national government, and (c) effective resistance by both sides"[18]. The Uppsala Conflict Data Project follows upon their definition: "Internal armed conflict occurs between the government of a state

---

[14] Tilly, 2003, 18.

[15] Nicholas Sambanis, "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004b): 814–858.

[16] Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal Wars," *History and Theory* 4, no. 2 (1965): 133–163.

[17] Nicholas Sambanis, "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War," *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 2 (2004a.): 261.

[18] Melvin Small and David J. Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816-1980*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982), 210.

and internal opposition groups without intervention from other states."[19] However, these definitions, formulated for operationalization in quantitative research of civil wars are too restrictive. Kalyvas widens the scope of civil war to an:

> *"armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities."*[20]

Therefore, civil wars are all militarized combats between actors inside state borders that may or may not involve a sovereign state. This differentiates civil war from many other forms of violence: crime, communal riots, terrorism or genocide[21], it includes conflicts between armed groups following state collapse, but also encompasses anticolonial rebellions or resistance against foreign occupation[22]. The definition provided by Kalyvas seems most appropriate for both theoretical and empirical reasons and it will be used in the analytical part of this thesis.

1.4 A New Research Program

Turning back to existing research on civil wars, recent years have witnessed a change in approach that is of relevance for justifying the approach taken in this thesis. The knowledge of civil wars has without doubt advanced thanks to a rise in quantitative Large N comparative research since the late nineties. International relations and security scholars, comparative political scientists, as well as economists have produced large bodies of literature[23]. However, in order to overcome methodological obstacles, a new research program has appeared in last decade, based on disaggregation and taking historical research more seriously. These two shifts in research will be briefly exposed in following passages.

---

[19] Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand, "Armed Conflict 1946-2001: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 5 (2002): 619.
[20] Kalyvas, 2006, 17.
[21] Kalyvas, 2009, 217.
[22] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Ethnic Defection in Civil War," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 8 (2008a): 1064.
[23] Sambanis, 2002. Kalyvas, 2009.

1.4.1 'Disaggregating Civil Wars'…

In an extensive review of literature on ethnic and nationalist violence, Brubaker and Laitin[24] pleaded for the disaggregation of heterogeneous phenomena, often lumped together under umbrella terms, such as "ethnic violence". This was one of the earlier, but far away from isolated calls for disaggregation of the research lying on the intersection of studies of ethnic conflict and political violence. It should not be surprising that a key feature of recent research on civil wars has also been theoretical and empirical disaggregation. Kalyvas, who spearheaded this new movement, suggested five dimensions of disaggregation that shaped the field[25]: space, time, levels of analysis, actors and violence.

Whereas macro level studies have focused on cross-country analysis of civil wars' onset, duration and termination, new research program dealing with the microdynamics of civil war called for the systematic collection and analysis of data at the subnational level[26]. Unlike the research on the macro level, a subnational focus allows for better quality of the data, for testing the theoretical microfoundations and causal mechanisms; it minimizes the gap between concepts and data, and allows controlling for few variables that can be held constant. On the other hand, the obvious drawbacks are the lack of external validity and exclusion of macro processes that are not traceable at the micro level[27].

Temporal disaggregation was a move towards sequencing of processes that precede, accompany, and follow violent conflict. Theories have for long time assumed fixed pre-war

---

[24] Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 423–452.

[25] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Internal Conflict and Political Violence: New Developments in Research," in *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, ed. Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), xii. Another problem that Kalyvas addresses is that of overaggregated variables, taken from macro studies, and their application in micro level research design.

[26] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Promises and Pitfalls of an Emerging Research Program: The Microdynamics of Civil War," in *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, ed. Stathis N. Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro, and Tarek Masoud. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008b).

[27] Kalyvas, 2008b, 398.

actors and preferences and used these to explain civil wars dynamics[28], but new shift in research took allegiances during the war as dynamic. Unlike outcome variation, that would help explain why the violence occurred in one place and not in the other, this approach focuses on violent conflict as a process – temporal variation allows examining causal mechanisms that led to violence, or emerged as its outcome.

The fact that local conflicts are mostly articulated and justified using the language of national cleavages, had made observes prone to miscoding them[29]. Disaggregation of levels of analysis and relating action at the *micro*, *meso*, and *macro* levels was a change in the research of civil wars that allowed insight into interaction between local and national, central and peripheral, elite and popular, for:

> "highly visible information, such as elite discourses or widely advertised atrocities, can be outwardly misleading and is less significant than hard-to-collect evidence about crucial but undertheorized and underresearched aspects of civil wars, such as the type of warfare and actors, the forms of resource extraction, and the patterns of violence"[30].

Therefore, agency is found on all levels of analysis, and the dynamics between these actors is an object of inquiry.

The research of violent conflict, especially ethnic conflicts was hampered by the assumption of unitary actors, especially by researchers coming from the disciplines that are already hard-wired to operate with such units, primarily international relations scholars. Organizations and populations they claim to represent were assumed to overlap and were bundled together into 'groups'[31, 32]. The move into the opposite direction, the disaggregation of

---

[28] Kalyvas, 2009, 430.
[29] Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam," *Politics & Society* 35, no. 2 (2007b): 209.
[30] Kalyvas, 2001, 118.
[31] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 207.

the actors involved in the process of civil war allows for research of internal group dynamics and the consequences it has on the dynamics of the war itself.

Finally, Brubaker and Laitin have pointed to unfortunate "highly aggregated explananda, as if ethnic violence were a homogenous substance varying only in magnitude"[33] in too much of social scientific work. Disaggregation of violent conflict means both conceptual disaggregation of different phenomena and also recognition of a range of strategic options available to actors to pursue during the conflict. Perhaps most importantly, violence in war, understood as deliberate infliction of physical harm on people, should be disaggregated into (at least) violence between members of armed groups and against non-combatants. These concepts, violence in civil war and civil war as a form of violent conflict, ought to be analytically distinguished and treated separately since they follow different logics and demand different explanations[34].

1.4.2 … And 'Bringing the History Back In'

Various authors have suggested a substantial difference between "new" and "old" civil wars, most notably Kaldor[35], but is there such a thing? After the Cold War, "old civil wars" were seen in retrospective as purely ideologically motivated and therefore easily coded in binary terms. Similarly, civil wars were labelled "ethnic" but, more recently, in the dominant paradigm of econometric literature, the new wars are "loot-seeking", fragmented and with obscure political

---

[32] Tajfel and Turner indicated a theoretical continuum between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour. The example near the intergroup conflict pole given by the authors is of soldiers in opposing armies during a battle. Ethnic or ideological conflict is suggested to be such, where groups are determined by the individuals' belonging to categories such as ethnic group, or class, and where individuals inside one or the other category are completely interchangeable. Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Pub. Co., 1979):34.

[33] Brubaker and Laitin, 1998, 446.

[34] Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 475. Kalyvas. 2006, 19-20.

[35] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

motivations, if not purely economic[36]. However, this distinction was eloquently challenged by arguing that the tendency to see fundamental differences between "old" and "new" civil wars is based on uncritical adoption of categories and labels, biased and incomplete information about on-going wars, and disregard for historical research on earlier wars[37].

Instead of objective conceptual differences between the wars over time, confronted with more available information about the wars, and lacking clear categories of ideology that had made possible an orderly coding of "old" civil wars, analysts have drawn a distinction between post–Cold War conflicts and their predecessors[38]. When unable to understand the motivations of combatants, wars, it was concluded, would be "about nothing at all", but this is only a segment of more widespread bias that equals the motivations of combatants and causes of wars[39]. Researchers who conducted fieldwork in war zones point to diverse and complex rebel motivations, which cannot be captured under single category[40]. Until recently mostly overlooked micro-level historical research, as demonstrated in the following passages, contributed to the development of the field by providing extensive evidence of disjunction between perceived causes of the conflict, articulated by political elites, and actions and motivations of combatants on the field.

---

[36] Paul Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (2000): 839–853. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): 563–595.
[37] Kalyvas, 2001, 99, 117.
[38] Ibid.
[39] The New Yorker reporter Philip Gourevitch, in his compelling account of the violence in Rwanda, rebutted description of today's civil wars as being "*about nothing at all*", saying that it "mistakes […] failure to recognize what is at stake for the nature of those events" (1999, 182). Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Civil Wars: From L.A. to Bosnia*, (New York: The New Press, 1995). Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, (London: Picador, 1999), 182.
[40] Kalyvas, 2001, 103-4.

The reason why the description of the approach is given so much space here is because the methodology of this research draws directly from these works that had shaped the field. Although it employs qualitative approach and fundamental comparisons, the conceptual underpinnings of disaggregation and historical analysis remain. Since the war explained in this thesis is under all definitions considered "old" it is helpful to imagine the possibility that some features of civil warfare could as well be unrestricted by historical periods. If the study of wars between the states has its foundation in observations made in ancient Greece, India, China or medieval Italy, why shouldn't wars inside the states be alike?

2. Cleavages: *faux amis?*

Civil wars are most often described and understood in binary terms, based on actors or goals, but also on the basis of what is perceived to be their master cleavage[41], defined as main "salient system of group classification in a society and its conflicts"[42]. If violent conflict is considered to be *about* master cleavages, observers tend to speak of ideological, ethnic, religious, or, if no cleavages are identifiable, fractional wars[43,44].

There appears to be a trend of interpretation and coding of civil wars by both participants and observers that corresponds to major shifts in world politics. End of the Cold War has apparently affected these tendencies – political classification based on ideology was abandoned in order to give way to identity as main aspect of the civil wars, and in recent years, criminal and economic aspects are clearly exaggerated[45]. Yet, the labels are far away from being analytically neutral. They imply causation, since civil wars are assumed to be caused and shaped by ethnic or class cleavages[46].

What are the consequences of this implication? For one, actors in those civil wars labelled as ethnic civil wars are identified as ethnic actors, and in ideological civil wars -

---

[41] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 3 (2003): 476. Kalyvas, 2009, 426.

[42] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 217.

[43] Civil wars motivated by religion are "ethnic" when they implicate ethnic religious "groups", and when centred on the religious–secular divide they are not. Ethnic civil wars are often referred to as "identity" civil wars, but nonethnic civil wars also revolve around identities. Lumping all nonethnic wars as *ideological* and *revolutionary* is also problematic since ethnic concerns are also ideological and may be revolutionary (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 217).

[44] Horowitz's definition of ethnic groups is employed in this work - it is "defined by ascriptive differences, whether the indicium of group identity is colour, appearance, language, religion, some other indicator of common origin, or some combination thereof" since extending ethnicity to include all ascriptive cleavages among people became a convention in political science literature. Horowitz, 1985, 17–18. Kanchan Chandra, "What Is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, no.1 (2006): 397–424..

[45] Kalyvas, 2001, 117. For a critique of conceptual foundations of proliferating economic theories of violent conflict, see: Christopher Cramer, "Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice and the Political Economy of War," *World Development* 30, no. 11 (2002): 1845–1864.

[46] Kalyvas, 2003, 481.

ideological, and it goes the same for the violence and motivations behind the actions. But this was repeatedly shown not to be the case: more often than not, civil wars are a complex and dynamic conjecture of motivations, identities and actions, which makes this characterization a significant conceptual problem[47]. The way to address this problem is not by denying any role to cleavages. The approach that perceives violent conflict as running from pre-existing animosities fixated around cleavages, ethnic or ideological, implies that cleavages are *exogenous* to the war. The other way to explain the role of the cleavages is through warfare, that may cause conflict or cooperation autonomously of pre-existing cleavages, thus a term *endogenous* cleavage model is suggested by Kalyvas and Kocher[48]. The first approach will be scrutinised in the following chapter, followed by explication of alternative way of understanding the role of cleavages in civil war.

2.1 Unpacking the Mechanism of Cleavages

The exogenous mechanism of cleavages situates agency at the top and causality directed towards the bottom. Overarching identity at the national level is implied to inform the actions on the ground. The causal link is explained in literature by several microfoundations: centralized organization, common preferences, fear, or coordination around focal points[49]. It could be argued that these mechanisms might have analytical value in explaining the onset of the conflict. Nevertheless, dynamics of civil wars inherently leads to further dissolution of state sovereignty which also means that when war is on the way, the geographical space of single polity gets fragmented and local dynamics become much more salient, complicating the straightforward top-bottom approach. Yet this is overshadowed by narratives that are constructed both during and

---

[47] Ibid., 2003, 476.
[48] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 204.
[49] Kalyvas, 2003, 486.

after the war. The master cleavages that justify rebellion are articulated and promoted by elites, which leads observers to erroneously code them as actually mobilizing popular support *along them*[50], which is usually not the case. After the wars end, "master narratives" *based on cleavages* are constructed in order to offer more simplified and streamlined interpretation of often messy and contradictory conflict[51].

It seems that automatically linking cleavages and violence in the war in this way is theoretically questionable for several reasons. Kalyvas and Kocher[52] suggest several. First of all, in the absence of systematic individual-level data, it extrapolates from the aggregate to individual level. From the polarization around the cleavages at the macro level, all individual acts of violence are supposedly caused, which makes it justifiable for observer to, for instance, explain specific act of violence by ethnic motives[53]. But what is deficient in this approach is the understanding of the motivation of actors, especially of those who order the action. Also, the approach cannot explain the variation of violence – why were some "ethnic" or "ideological" enemies attacked, while the others were not. Thus the main contribution of various micro-level historical studies is in providing evidence that labels and identities inferred from master cleavages mean little on the ground and that the distribution of individual and local allegiances cannot be directly implied from the master cleavage[54]. They offer guidance to resolving conceptual problems related to identities and actions of the actors, as well as their allegiances and motivations, that are central to understanding dynamics of civil wars[55] and for which the

---

[50] Kalyvas, 2001, 111.
[51] Kalyvas, 2003, 487.
[52] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 206.
[53] Brubaker, 2004. Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 206.
[54] Kalyvas 2003, 476.
[55] Ibid., 475.

interpretations of violent conflict, that infer from the master cleavage, cannot offer significant explanatory leverage.

2.2 Consequences of Endogeneity

The other approach is identifying cleavages as phenomena endogenous to civil wars. It suggests that they are not external to the conflict, fixed or stable, and as far as the dynamic of the conflict is concerned, are not its cause, but the consequence. The proposition is that there is a disjunction between identities and actions at the central or elite level and the local, mass, level, that takes two forms[56]: local actors take advantage of the war to settle conflicts that have little to do with the causes of war, and the actions on the ground do not seem related to the war's master cleavage. Thus it becomes possible to observe how diverse set of local cleavages, as a consequence of the war, produce misleadingly uniform *aggregate cleavages* which are nevertheless under *constant reformulation*[57]. It follows that the relationship between cleavages and violence is far from unidirectional, and instead has specific histories that are endogenous to the warfare[58]. What kind of insight into the role of cleavages in dynamics of civil war can we assume if these should be approached in the framework of the "new research program" outlined in the first chapter?

Allegiances in civil wars are informed less by impersonal, ethnic or ideological discourses of the elites, and more by fluid, shifting, and often locally based cleavages[59]. Since rebellions are rarely, if ever, based on widespread popular support, the coercion of population is

---

[56] Ibid., 476.
[57] Kalyvas, 2001, 112–113.
[58] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 214.
[59] Kalyvas, 2001, 110.

extensively used mechanism of securing it[60]. Not only is violence in a function of gaining popular support, but often the political entrepreneurs provoke the violence against the people they claim to represent in order to generate polarization that wasn't there to start with, indicating the autonomy of violence in the war from the cleavages, but not from the conflict[61]. Since the adoption of ideological claims by insurgents is largely superficial and local considerations consistently trump ideological ones, deducing the motivations of rank-and-file members from their leadership's articulation of the ideological messages is also an unjustified assumption[62]. If we go back to the case of Jeleč from the Introduction of this thesis, the explanatory leverage of applying mechanisms informed by the endogenous model of cleavages, combined with the methodological approach described in Chapter 1, seems to have some potential. Thus, to conclude, there is a basis to assume that individual and group motivations, allegiances, identities and ideologies in civil wars are not determined by master cleavages. This assumption in turn challenges the notion of simple binary conflicts between organizations expressing popular grievances along stabile and defined cleavages – or what we call ethnic or ideological civil wars[63].

---

[60] Ibid.
[61] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 208.
[62] Kalyvas, 2001, 107.
[63] Ibid., 113.

3. Ethnic Wars: One Step Too Many?

If cleavages are indeed endogenous to the war itself, and not a determinant of its dynamics, than what is the role of ethnicity and ideology in civil wars and more importantly, is there such a thing as 'ethnic war?' There are opposed opinions on the matter.

Different traditions in social sciences have developed rich literature explaining ethnic identities and conflicts, yet as much as these theories have informed research of nationalism and civil wars, most do not explicitly address the dynamics of the war[64]. Essentialism was the first explanation that emphasized primordial quality of ethnic allegiance, undermining all other allegiances, as a source of salience of ethnic identities. As a response to this view, constructivist literature emerged, becoming a dominant point of view, showing ethnic identities are products of modern age, as opposed to antiquity, and cleavages as constructed, and not inherent. Third perspective, instrumentalism, emerged to explain conflict as a product of rational decision making, and ethnicity as merely a tool for masking some other interests[65]. Having in mind that it is impossible to synthesize conclusions of this overwhelming body of literature, it could be provisionally said that the theoretical foundations of authors that emphasize exogenous salience of cleavages in civil wars fall under the essentialist framework, while those arguing for other explanations, could be described as constructivists, rationalist or instrumentalists. Whatever they are labelled, what they have in common is the assumption that conflict is not ethnic but somehow

---

[64] Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, ed. by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 274–295.
[65] Donald P. Green and Rachel L. Seher, "What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 6, no.1 (2003): 509–531.

ethnicized, and that the purpose of the research is to show *how* and to explain *why* this happens[66].

3.1 Ethnicity, Ideology and Civil War

One of the features of the renewed interest in civil wars is indeed focus on ethnic competition as one of its causes[67]. Large N quantitative studies have mostly discarded high level of social or ethnic polarization as a variable that significantly influences onset of the war and focused instead on instrumentalist explanations. Although this has been a disputed issue[68], it remains largely methodological, and focused on the onset of civil wars in cross-national studies, so it bears only indirect significance to the argument developed in this research, which deals with dynamics in a single country case.

However, the authors that emphasize the role of cleavages, especially ethnic, or draw upon the distinction between ethnic and ideological civil wars has been considerably represented in literature[69]. The later point of uniqueness of ethnic war has most notably been explicated by Kaufmann[70], whose arguments will be examined in more detail. Kaufmann's argues that ethnic cleavages produce "ethnic/intercommunity" civil wars and ideological cleavages create

---

[66] Brubaker and Laitin, 1998. Brubaker, 2004.

[67] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75–90.

[68] Collier and Hoeffler, 2000, 2004. Fearon and Laitin, 2003. Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 no. 3 (2001): 259–282. Daniel N. Posner, "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (2004): 849-863. José G Montalvo and Marta Reynal-Querol, "Ethnic Polarization, Potential Conflict, and Civil Wars," *American Economic Review* 95, no. 3 (2005): 796–816.

[69] e.g. Horowitz, 1985. Michael E. Brown, ed. *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, eds. *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998b). Barbara F. Walter and Jack L. Snyder, eds. *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). Sambanis, 2001. Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). More recently and policy relevant: Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon" *Foreign Affairs,* March/April (2006).

[70] Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20, no. 4(1996a): 136–175. Chaim Kaufmann, "Intervention in Ethnic and Ideological Civil Wars: Why One Can Be Done and the Other Can't," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1(1996b): 62–101.

"ideological/revolutionary". The difference is that in the latter, insurgents and incumbents are competing for the loyalties of the same pool of people, whose identities are malleable, while in the "ethnic war" this is not the case: the groups are mutually exclusive and the defection between the sides is close to impossible. In this interpretation, the cleavages of ethnicity supposedly run deeper than any other in society, which makes the causal patterns different than nonethnic, and the intensity of violence during the war is supposedly higher in ethnic wars.

There are also authors that would point in the other direction. Licklider empirically showed that there is no statistical significance to support claim ethnic wars are different than nonethnic[71]. More recently, Kalyvas and Kocher[72] argued that the extrapolating the nature and depth of cleavages to the dynamics of the war is conceptually problematic, because the dynamics of "ethnic" and "ideological" civil wars are practically indistinguishable. Instead, they argue, it's the fragmentation of the state that determines the dynamics of the transformation of cleavages.

Wimmer, Cederman and Min[73] proceed in a similar tone, and go beyond the debate whether ethnicity causes conflicts or not, by showing that different configurations of power and ethnic politics are more likely to produce violence[74]. They proceed to explain three causal mechanisms: states that exclude large portions of the population on the basis of ethnic background will more likely be militarily challenged; if large number of competing elites share power in a segmented state it increases the risk of 'infighting' violence; and finally: non-

---

[71] Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993," *The American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 681–690.
[72] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 184.
[73] 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* 74, no.2 (2009): 316–337.
[74] Hale, in another recent work on the relation between ethnicity and ethnic politics, based on psychological approach, explain the former as a mechanism of reducing the uncertainties and the later as being about maximization of interests, most fundamental being life chances. The explanations of ethnic politics, he argues, should be divorced from motives and related to the strategies that are about choice of actions that maximize life chances. Henry E. Hale, *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*. (New York: Cambridge University Press 2008).

cohesive states with a short history of direct rule are more likely to experience violent secessions. They conclude that ethnic politics is not a cause of conflict itself, nor is it possible to ignore it altogether, it is also not exclusively a "struggle to rectify the grievances of minority groups"[75], but it is more fundamentally about the distribution of state power along ethnic lines. In another innovative research, Wimmer and Min[76] recorded the outbreak of wars in fixed geographic territories from 1816 to 2001, and found that the institution of nation-state, which spread in this period, is a major cause of the war. They explain it by nation-state creating incentives for political elites to privilege members of the national majority over ethnic minorities, and for minority elites to mobilize against such political discrimination. Thus again it is above all the power struggle, in the nation-building process, over the ethno-national character of the state that is a cause of civil wars.

Mueller points that the "whole concept of 'ethnic warfare' may be severely misguided"[77] and instead it closely resembles non-ethnic warfare[78]. The resemblance is that civil wars are waged by small groups of combatants or groups that purport to fight and kill in the name of some larger entity. Yet, Muller goes on to state that "ethnic war" is a condition in which a mass of ordinary people can unwillingly come under the vicious and arbitrary control of small groups of armed thugs. However, Muller does not clarify the role of ethnicity, or its appeal. The ethnic and looting motivations in his account are not discernable, which makes his approach similar to economic approach on civil wars that emphasizes non-political motivations of actors[79]. Subsequently, not only ethnicity, but also ideology becomes overemphasized. Kalyvas points to

---

[75] Wimmer, Cederman, and Min, 2009, 317.
[76] Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min, "From Empire to Nation-State: Explaining Wars in the Modern World, 1816–2001," *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 6 (2006): 867–897.
[77] John Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic War'," *International Security* 25, no. 1(2000): 42–70.
[78] "Specifically, insofar as it is taken to imply a war of all against all and neighbour against neighbour - a condition in which pretty much everyone in one ethnic group becomes the ardent, dedicated, and murderous enemy of everyone in another group - ethnic war essentially does not exist" (ibid., 42).
[79] Mueller, 2000. Kalyvas, 2001.

an epistemic bias in favour of the assumption that old civil wars (as well as their participants) were motivated by grand ideological concerns, which leads to overstatement of the importance of ideology in actors' motivations[80]. What repeatedly follows from these disagreements is the need to reinterpret the basis for findings that ideology, or ethnicity, are useful causal variables of violent conflicts[81].

3.2 Warfare in Civil War

If we want to understand the dynamics of the war, than observing the warfare becomes unavoidable. Warfare is not synonymous to a war. We speak of Second World War, not of Second World Warfare. Warfare is the way war is pursued, which could be conventional, nonconventional, guerrilla, etc. Yet warfare has largely been absent from the study of civil wars. The research has focused, not surprisingly, on social and political factors that affect the onset or termination of the wars. Military and strategic literature had, on the other hand, reduced wars to the thorough treatment of their military details, ignoring their political and social content. As a result, the approach to the study of civil war that focuses on dynamics of the war, and explores the politics embedded in and shaped by armed combat has been relatively rare[82]. However, warfare structures politics; it shapes the incentives and defines political actors to a large degree, by involving more constrains, less consent, and hugely raising the stakes for the individuals and groups[83]. Instead of treating the phenomena of collective action, mobilisation and violence as linked to the pre-war conditions that are suggested to have caused the conflict, a focus on warfare enables the understanding of civil war's endogenous effect on both the identities and

---

[80] Kalyvas, 2001, 105.
[81] Kalyvas, 2009, 424.
[82] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Warfare in Civil Wars," in *Rethinking The Nature Of War*, ed. Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom, (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 89.
[83] Ibid.

strategies of the involved actors[84]. So, in order to understand the dynamics of the civil war, or whether there is a fundamental difference between proposed types of wars, one has to examine the way in which war is organized and sustained[85].

3.2.1 Is There Such Thing as "Ethnic Warfare"?

The ideal type of ethnic war model suggested by Kaufmann[86], based on deep and stabile cleavages would imply[87]: irrelevance of territorial control for the warfare, since sides can mobilize only from one pool of population; conventional war with clear frontlines; public information about the identity of population; and impossibility of defection. This model of warfare would lead to highest degree of violence in the intermixed areas that would be contested by sides claiming to represent the population, since the goal would be to capture the territory and "cleanse" it of people belonging to the "enemy" groups. This would quickly turn it into clear case of conventional war with clear fronts, resembling wars between the states, and since control of territory is suggested to be possible to derive from census data, every change in control of territory would strongly affect the ethnic composition of the population[88].

Instead, as the research in this thesis shows, this is not always the case, and for several reasons. Territorial control is endogenous to the war and does not strictly follow population patterns, the war be irregular as well as conventional; individual behaviour and group actions are shaped by the warfare and not by group affiliation[89]; and geographical factors usually trumps pre-war allegiances[90]. The defection is also possible in supposedly ethnic wars, as long as at least

---

[84] Ibid., 90.
[85] Kalyvas, 2009, 427.
[86] Kaufmann, 1996a, 1996b.
[87] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 210–211.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., 211–212.
[90] Kalyvas, 2009, 424.

24

one side, insurgent or incumbent is soliciting it and trying to reach out to the population 'bundled' with the other warring party[91]. Ethnic and ideological identities are strong, but they do not disappear through defection, instead they change, through adding qualifiers that justify the change in allegiance[92]. Intragroup violence is significant part of overall violence in the war, indicating that the organizations cannot be assumed to have automatic support from the groups they claim to represent, but instead they use violence in order to determine the behaviour of population[93].

Taken these insights about the war is waged into account, again it seems that ethnic or ideological cleavages seem to have very low explanatory leverage for the dynamics of civil war. If this is the case, as mentioned through the previous chapter, there are other distinct features of civil war, which need to be considered, most importantly the disintegration of state sovereignty.

---

[91] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 212.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

4. Civil War and the Breakdown of Authority: Enter Anarchy

An alternative framework for explaining the course of the war should start with a basic feature of civil wars, the fragmentation of sovereign authority and the change of locus of agency. Kalyvas[94] points to two basic interpretive frameworks that inform the perceptions of civil wars: "Hobbesian" that stresses ontology of civil wars characterized by breakdown of authority and anarchy that follows, bringing to the surface all sorts of motivations and "Schmittian" outlook on the other hand, that emphasises the fundamentally political nature of civil wars, therefore substantiating the arguments about ideological or ethnic conflicts. If we could say that "Schmittian" argument corresponds to the outlook of those theories that emphasize the essential role of ethnicity and ideology in civil war, presented above, than "Hobbesian" framework needs to be explicated, and it will be argued that the conditions of anarchy after the breakdown of authority allows for better understanding of the dynamics of the war, than the political considerations of the former, that insists on ideological polarization and political division as determinants of intensity of conflict[95].

The key feature of a civil war is the violent physical division of the sovereign entity into rival armed camps, and the type of conflict constitutive to civil war is related to the effective breakdown of the monopoly of violence through armed internal challenge[96]. The situation in which the civil wars occur is one of dual, or divided sovereignty – concept developed by Tilly to describe a situation in which there is an:

---

[94] Kalyvas, 2003, 475.
[95] The approach taken here differs from Kalyvas' in so much that he sees the microfoundation of role of cleavage in the interaction between the centre and periphery, the political and private, whereas the historical case observed in this thesis suggest the direction from local/periphery towards the centre and *anarchy informing the political* and does not take into consideration the interplay of private and political.
[96] Kalyvas, 2006, 16-17.

"[…] appearance of contenders or coalitions of contenders, advancing exclusive alternative claims to the control over the government."[97]

These theoretical assumptions may have far reaching implications for the role of cleavages in civil wars, because the consequence of breakdown of authority, vividly put by Kalyvas, leads to situation of:

> "[…] imperfect and fluid aggregations of multiple, more or less overlapping, smaller, diverse, and localized civil wars, entailing Byzantine complexity and splintering authority into 'thousands of fragments and micro-powers of local character'."[98]

4.1 Breakdown of Authority and the Role of Cleavages

Shifting the focus of agency from the purportedly homogenous state to de facto autonomous local level actors opens up a new perspective for research. If master cleavages do not offer an account for the dynamics of the war, than perhaps local dynamics, that are not related to the meta-narratives of the civil war can. All politics is after all local.

In conditions of state's collapse, territorial control and power considerations gain prominent role. Civil wars are political contexts in which violence is used both to challenge and to build order[99]. Rebellions have an almost inherent state-building character, because even rebel organizations that are often dismissed as mere criminal gangs, develop a complex apparatus of rule in the areas they control[100] and the type of sovereignty, as well as the extent of territorial control, determines the dynamics of collaboration and defection, not the other way around. In the long run, Kalyvas[101] suggests, military resources, best proxied by geography, tend to trump any existing pre-war allegiances. In these circumstances, role of local cleavages become

---

[97] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, (Reading: Longman Higher Education, 1978), 200.
[98] Kalyvas, 2003, 479.
[99] Kalyvas, 2008b, 406.
[100] Kalyvas, 2001, 105.
[101] Kalyvas, 2008b, 406.

multidirectional. If they are not in alignment with master cleavages, than factional conflicts emerge among actors that are supposedly homogenous to the observers[102]. And from the dynamics of local level cleavages, as well as the logic of territorial control, Kalyvas[103] draws following theoretical implications: actors in civil war cannot be treated as unitary; identity labels created at macro level can be misleading when generalized on local level; motivations at the local level cannot be derived from the identities at the macro level.

The evidence that can support this stance can nevertheless be only anecdotal. The systematic studies of the dynamics of civil wars at the local level, as well as measures of local cleavages are, if not in a state of development, then non-existent[104].

4.2 Mechanisms of Survival under Conditions of Anarchy

If we try to develop further an alternative explanation of motivations of actors in the war, then the basic feature of civil war, challenged sovereignty, must be addressed at large. Disappearance of state authority emulates conditions of anarchy that resemble the relations between states. Theories of international relations have developed various explanations of states' actions in the absence of overarching authority and it is not surprising that insights from this field have influenced the study of civil war, at least since the early nineties. What they have in common is a perspective that sees actors as rational decision makers, in pursuit of power or survival, and only instrumental role of cleavages[105]. However, there are several proposed causal mechanisms, which mostly rely on perceptions of (dis) balance of power and threat.

---

[102] Kalyvas, 2003, 481.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 479.
[105] James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414.

A basic concept from the realist paradigm of international relations, the security dilemma, was introduced to civil war studies by Posen[106]. Posen was not convinced by the claim that the release of "age-old antipathies" account for violence in civil wars since it could not explain the variance in observable intergroup relations[107]. Instead, realism that explicitly addresses the consequences of anarchy - the absence of a sovereign authority – could. After the state collapse there is a host of groups of different cohesion that start paying attention to the first thing that states do - the problem of security - even though these groups lack many of the attributes of statehood. So what the groups do is trying to strengthen their own positions and that makes other groups weary of the their offensive capabilities, since the relative power is difficult to measure and is often subjectively appraised[108]. There are several conditions that make 'security dilemma' a powerful predictor of outbreak of 'preventive violence'[109]. First of all, it is inability to distinguish offensive from defensive capabilities, which are accessed in terms of other group's cohesion and its past military record. Then there's strategic superiority of offensive over defensive action - states will choose the offensive if they wish to survive. Geography is an important factor here, especially territorial concentration of group members that create "islands" across the nominal territory of another group. Isolated ethnic groups can produce incentives for preventive war if one side believes to have an advantage that will not be present later. When central authority has recently collapsed, the emerging groups calculate their present relative position and consider it in the future. If the group with greater advantages expects to remain in that position, then they may see no window of opportunity but if opposite is the case, they have

---

[106] Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no.1 (1993): 27–47.
[107] Posen 1993, 27.
[108] Ibid., 28.
[109] Ibid.

incentive to act pre-emptively. Finally, expectations about outside intervention also affect the decision to engage in preventive war.

Observable implications of security dilemma for the dynamics of civil war, according to Kalyvas[110] are threefold: violence is most likely where populations are most intermixed, it is to be launched by minorities that are weak enough to feel threatened and strong enough to launch an attack and, finally, under conditions of anarchy, violence is the only possible outcome. He does not find significant empirical evidence in favour of it, and instead suggests that when violence breaks out, it is driven by groups that have a clear power advantage at the local level and are seeking to consolidate it, rather than to reverse an unfavourable power balance[111]. It should be noted again that power relations between the parties, on a state[112] or sub-state level is a matter of perception.

This is not the only causal mechanism proposed in this framework. Problem of credible commitments is also one of them: Fearon argued that when groups find themselves without a third party that can guarantee agreements between them (such as the state), their commitment to peace becomes less credible[113]. In that sense, strategic considerations, such as this, are fundamental in ethnic conflict. In a similar tone, Lake and Rothchild[114] argue that when state weakness disables it from arbitrating between the groups or providing guarantees for security, it is insecurity and fears that start the cycle of violence.

---

[110] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Fear, Preemption, Retaliation: An Empirical Test of the Security Dilemma," in *Intra-State Conflict, Governments and Security: Dilemmas of Deterrence and Assurance*, ed. Stephen M. Saideman and Marie-Joëlle Zahar, (New York: Routledge, 2008c), 20–32.

[111] Ibid., 20.

[112] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

[113] James D. Fearon, "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict," in *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, ed. David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 107–126. Robert Powell, "War as a Commitment Problem," *International Organization* 60, no.1 (2006): 169–203.

[114] David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, "Spreading Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict," in *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, eds. David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998a), 3–34.

Once violence is on the way, other mechanisms are also at work. Revenge, as a response to past violence, with largely retrospective logic is important factor[115]. Yet another mechanism imported from the study of interstate relations, that hinges on the prospects of the future, mutual deterrence[116], suggests that fear that one side would be able to retaliate immediately and effectively is a leading factor behind absence of violence. When armed groups exercised violence, a rift would occur between them and local collaborators who protected the local enemies, because if they didn't, it would have been them who would pay the price of retaliation, not the armed group[117].

Conflict and cooperation between the armed groups follows a logic that might also be found in rationalist/realist framework. What makes armed groups in civil wars cooperate, often across master cleavages, is a question that resembles one of alliances in relations between states. Walt defines alliance as a "formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states"[118]. In contrast to traditional balance of power theorists, Walt showed that states ally to balance against threats rather than against power. In his work, he proposed balance of threat theory as a better alternative than balance of power, with level of threat affected by geographic proximity, offensive capabilities, and perceived intentions. Important for this thesis, he also showed that ideology is less powerful than balancing as a motive for alignment. He explained this on examples of many apparently ideological alliances that were in fact a form of balancing behaviour[119]. Wilcox's study[120] tested two mechanisms of alliance creation in civil wars: relative power considerations and ideological considerations, and found that relative power

---

[115] Kalyvas, 2006.

[116] Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence,* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[117] Kalyvas, 2008c, 28.

[118] Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 1.

[119] Ibid., 5.

[120] Richard M. Wilcox, "*The Politics of Transitional Anarchy: Coalitions in the Yugoslav Civil Wars 1941-45 and 1991-95,*" PhD Thesis, (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000).

31

theory performs better than ideational theory at explaining coalition preferences. His "transitional anarchy" theory argues that change from a hierarchical state monopoly on violence towards unipolarity and multipolarity is a key to predicting alliance preferences. In unipolarity, the centre can choose to align as it pleases; as is the case when decline from hierarchy to anarchy is slow, but when the decline from hierarchy to anarchy is rapid, the relative power politics can be expected to dominate quickly, which he tests on wars in Yugoslavia of 1941 and 1990. Christia's[121] analysis, also partially based on wars in Yugoslavia, shows that alliance formation in civil wars follows the same rationale in ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars, suggesting that strategic choices relating to dynamics of the wars, such as alliance formation, are independent of the character of war.

However, realist explanations either treat anarchy as dominant feature of the war, refuting agency to the sovereign authority, or treat state as neutral actor, but is this a valid assumption?

4.3 State's Strength, Repression and the Dynamics of Insurgency

The state hardly ever disappears from the stage, and its strength and presence can vary both spatially and temporally. Several studies have pointed to a state weakness as a factor in onset of the wars[122], yet not many have explored the impact it can have on the dynamics of the war. Factors such as repressive state capacity and the conditions that favour rural insurgency, especially mountainous terrain, play significant role in enabling the insurgents to exploit the weakness of the state[123]. The state's police, military, and administrative presence in more

---

[121] Fotini Christia, "The Closest of Enemies : Alliance Formation in the Afghan and Bosnian Civil Wars," PhD Thesis, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2008).
[122] Brubaker and Laitin, 1998. Sambanis, 2002.
[123] Fearon and Laitin, 2003. Kalyvas, 2009.

inaccessible parts of the country is low and when the insurgency erupts, the state will more likely respond with indiscriminate violence, thus propelling the insurgency, instead of stopping it[124].

Kalyvas and Kocher's causal mechanism of state repression[125] is based on the security vacuum left after fragmentation of the state, which opens the doors to political entrepreneurs to instrumentalise violence in order to reshape the politics of war, including the politics of cleavages[126]. They treat state's strength as an independent variable that explains dynamics of warfare. Strong states use violence in two ways: they have the power to repress population and avoid war, or when militarily challenged, are capable of mobilizing population against insurgents. Strong states should be able to eliminate weak challengers and avoid the model of "ethnic war". But weak and fragmented states cannot, so both insurgents and incumbents are forced to dig into the most available pool of resources, including ethnic networks. Thus fragmentation of state can lead to the strategy of indiscriminate violence towards ethnic or ideological groups. This makes it difficult if not impossible for the state to gain compliance from these groups, and individuals belonging to it are better of joining the insurgency, an explanation that fills the gap of collective action problem in civil wars[127].

This chapter has suggested that the conditions of the breakdown of state authority offer a range of mechanisms that explain the dynamics of civil wars, including actors on state, sub-state and micro level. The next chapter will build upon these conclusions and present hypotheses.

---

[124] Kalyvas, 2009, 422

[125] The direct relationship between repression and violence is not clear and undisputed. Besides works mentioned in this thesis (Tilly, 1978; Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007a), some notable arguments relating repression to rebellion developed in the meantime can be found in: Mark Irving Lichbach, "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 2 (1987): 266–297. Edward N Muller, and Erich Weede, "Cross-National Variation in Political Violence A Rational Action Approach," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34, no. 4, (1990): 624–651. Will H. Moore, "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 3 (1998): 851–873. Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[126] Kalyvas and Kocher, 2007b, 215.

[127] Stathis N. Kalyvas, and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics* 59, no.2 (2007a): 177–216.

5. Hypothesis and Methodology

5.1 Hypotheses

This thesis opens with an argument that civil wars, defined as *armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities[128]*, are inherently complex and ambiguous phenomena, obscured by narratives that rely on master cleavages. The main question raised in it is how exactly ethnicity and ideology factor with motivations and actions of actors *during* the civil wars and what implication this has on our understanding of civil wars.

This thesis argues that discourse about ethnic or ideological civil wars, besides being politically and historically problematic is not analytically neutral. When civil wars are classified according to the master cleavages, this implies a causality that is empirically hard to prove. The argument of this research is not to simply say that the wars are complex and ambiguous, nor to show that ethnicity and ideology are not important factors in civil wars, they are. But ethnic and ideological cleavages are neither the cause of the conflict, nor can they be used to predict the motivations and actions of the warring parties during the war. I argue that insurgency, conflict or cooperation between actors in the war, as well as their relations with non-combatants cannot be explained by cleavages and that therefore there is essentially no difference between ethnic and civil wars or warfare. My main argument is that:

> H1: Classification of civil wars based on master cleavages should be changed in favour of more appropriate explanatory framework.

Instead of the exogenous mechanism, that informs our understanding of the war dynamics from aggregate level downwards, I argue that that the role of cleavages, both ethnic

---

[128] Kalyvas, 2006, 17.

and ideological, is dynamic and endogenous to the war. It is instrumental rather than essential, and mostly directed from the local level upwards. Throughout the war, the role of cleavages changes and it is the warfare that informs and ultimately produces cleavages, not the other way around. The salience of ethnicity and ideology is a consequence of, instead of a cause of, conflict and its dynamics. The endogeneity of the war imposes different logic that allows for both violent conflict along and cooperation across these cleavages.

The underpinning of the concept of conflict between groups, in this case confined by ethnicity or ideology is interchangeability of individuals inside these groups. However, during the wars, this is a variable, not a constant, as conflict and cooperation in civil wars go beyond any group attributes. Both on the individual, group and state level, master cleavages do not determine motivations and actions of actors in the war. Therefore I propose an alternative explanation to the role of cleavages. Cleavages are informed by strategic considerations that determine the dynamics of the civil war by making groups, defined in ethnic or ideological terms, interchangeable, depending on factors which have less to do with the attributes of these groups and more with the endogenous processes of the warfare. The main reason for this is found in conditions similar to anarchy caused by the dissolution of state sovereignty and the geographical fragmentation that follows, which gives much higher importance to local strategic considerations. Therefore, the second hypothesis that I suggest is that:

> H2: Strategic considerations have higher explanatory value for the dynamics of civil wars than ethnic or ideological allegiances.

I operationally define strategic considerations as "planning intended towards the accomplishment of a specific war related goal". Their main characteristic is rational assessment of the ways to minimise threat to survival and to enhance position vis-à-vis other actors, on any level of analysis. They are dynamic, based mostly on local considerations and endogenous to the

35

course of war. The focus of research is on the conflict and cooperation between armed groups and the role of cleavages, but I also observe these in two other spheres, showing that the dynamics between state repression and insurgency, as well as relations between combatants and non-combatants are also better explained by mechanisms that fall under strategic considerations than by master cleavages.

In case of 1941-1945 civil war, the indiscriminate violence that led to insurgency was at the surface motivated by ethnic and ideological hostility. I argue that, when we take a closer look, it becomes clear that it was actually driven by state weakness and the logic of pre-emptive action. On the other hand, the armed groups that launched insurgency were those representing population that was weak enough to feel threatened by state repression and strong enough to support the launch of an attack. It follows that:

> h2a: State repression and dynamics of insurgency is better explained by strategic considerations than with ethnic or ideological allegiances.

The primary motivations that informed relations between different warring parties during the Civil war in Yugoslavia were their survival and balancing the power of other groups. What influenced these relations was not the cleavages, but perceived threat and offensive capabilities of other groups, their geographic proximity and perceived intentions that are, again, informed by the specific history of already on-going violence. The defections between armed groups show that ethnicity and ideology were equally malleable indicators of allegiances. Instead of these group attributes, identities were amended and shaped by the extent and quality of territorial control by armed groups. Therefore:

> h2b: Conflict and cooperation between warring parties during civil wars are better explained by strategic considerations than with ethnic or ideological allegiances.

Finally, actions directed towards the civilian population were intended to ensure collaboration along lines of cleavages and prevent defection to the other sides, proving their instrumental value. Coercion of population and provoking the violence from the third side indicate superficiality of ethnic and ideological claims by the armed groups. Mechanisms of revenge, but also of deterrence – protecting the local enemy if enemy troops are close – show the importance of strategic considerations in combatant – non-combatant relations. Consequently:

> h2c: Relations between armed groups and non-combatants are better explained by strategic considerations than with ethnic or ideological allegiances.

5.2 Methodology

Approach taken in this research treats study of civil war as phenomenon autonomous from other forms of collective violence. Civil war is disaggregated from national level to lower, subnational level, shifting a focus on regional agreements and differences, together with sequencing time into periods before, during and after the violent conflict takes place. Disaggregating actors is another step – violence does not happen between groups, but between specific organizations and populations, therefore focus will mainly be on violent conflict between combatants, while other forms of violence are considered separately. The argument is based on the assumption that "Old" and "New" civil wars are not substantially different and that historical analysis opens an opportunity to understand motivations and actions on the ground. Methodology of the research will be addressed in the following passages.

Following Lijpart's[129] dictum, after specifying 'what', the 'how' part of comparative analysis needs to be addressed. First of all, the research is designed as empirical analysis of single historical state – Independent State of Croatia during Second World War – and its specific

---

[129] Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682–693.

region, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reason why Bosnia is chosen is twofold – it was the most ethnically heterogeneous region of Yugoslavia and it was a theatre for most of the armed conflict, thus offering biggest variation in terms of conflict and cooperation during the war, relative to other parts of Yugoslavia. Research will use historical data collected from published sources in a comparative analysis, following, in its widest form, the approach closest to the post-positivist school in social sciences[130]. As indicated in previous passages, the reasons for the research are twofold. The first reason is the testing of hypothesis H2, aiming to show that particular explanation of events and actor's motivation is more valid than the other. The second reason follows as problematization of existing classifications of civil wars - the goal is to show that existing usage of master cleavages as main indicators for classification is not satisfactory and should be modified or abandoned – H1. In the analysis, the research will employ qualitative method; it will deal with several aspects of a small number of cases and take a comprehensive account of the units. The research will not employ cross-country comparison, but assumption is that the underlying mechanism explained should be generalizable to some extent. In order to do so, it will reach into several anecdotal historical examples to indicate the external validity of the hypothesis towards the end of the thesis.

The research is founded in comparative historical analysis approach[131]. The basic feature of this approach is that it explores the past using primary documents and makes inference using comparative methods of social science. The goal is not to offer any novel interpretation of past events, which would be historian's job, but to examine causal relationships and explain processes

[130] Donatella Della Porta, and Michael Keating, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[131] James Mahoney, and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). James Mahoney, and P. Larkin Terrie, "Comparative-Historical Analysis in Contemporary Political Science" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, ed. by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 737–756.

over time, based on the results of comparative analysis. Therefore, in this research, relying on primary sources for data, the spatial and temporal variation in conflict and cooperation is accounted for, especially in case of h2b. The method of comparison is derived from Mill's[132] joint method of agreement and difference, in order to test the hypothesis and establish causal relationship. Since the role of the qualitative study is to point to the downside of assuming, rather than testing causal mechanisms, if not proving hypotheses, than at least demonstrating the complex dynamics of variables will be attempted. The dependent variable is change in relations between the actors and three independent variables are ethnic, ideological and strategic considerations.

The research design is trying to focus on *meso* level by disaggregating the "actorhood" as much as possible, while keeping away from losing the grounds in a quagmire of individual level of analysis, having in mind geographic and historical scope of the research. Therefore, the unit of analysis is found from individual to *macro* (system) level. Although *micro* level approach implies observation of individual actors and this analysis is partially based on the motivations of decision makers of armed groups that operated autonomously in separate war theatres, what matters for the research is, in case of h2b, how the armed factions in particular region acted, and decisions or military leaders are only indicator of this. On the other side, taking only *macro* level analysis approach would lead to loosing from the sight the variance in dependant variable which had different values on subnational level.

The basic unit of analysis for h2b is historical period in single war theatre. Although the research is intra-state, it shouldn't be equated with single case. What is being compared are

---

[132] John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation*, (New York: Harper, 1846).

specific cases of change in relations between the groups so it is a Small N research that observes values of the variables in a number of cases that is above 2 but under 20.

As stated before, there is one dependent variable – change in relations between the actors and three independent or explanatory variables. The independent variables are assessed by their relevance in actors' documents. That means that the values of observations are mainly verbal. The hypothesis is that the two variables, ethnicity and ideology don't explain the dependent variable, but that doesn't mean that their values are constant. On the contrary, the value of ethnic and ideological considerations varies, but, according to the hypothesis, it should change only after the change of dependent variable and not before. That means that the actors will change the narrative in order to accommodate new allies or new enemies that came to be because of strategic considerations. Consequently, whether the emphasis in the documents precedes or follows the changes in dependent variable is a way of suggesting causality.

Therefore, measuring values of three independent variables before and after the historical occurrence of dependent variable, it should be possible to establish, using the method of agreement and difference, the causal relation between these factors. The only way the validity and reliability of causal relationship can be addressed throughout the narrative is by offering different, contradicting, descriptions of the events and "triangulating" sources where possible in order not to fall under selection bias.

The main sources of data are published primary documents from the historical archives of the Second World War.

- "*Collection of Documents and Data on the National-Liberation War of the Peoples of Yugoslavia*" consists of primary sources in a 15 tome set comprising some 173 volumes published in Belgrade by the Military History Institute of

Yugoslavia between 1949 and 1986. The documents are primarily Partisan, but also include NDH, German, Italian and Chetnik collections. The abbreviation used for the sources is **ZNOR**, Roman numeral indicates tome, and Arabic that follows it volume[133].

- "*Archive of the Communist Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina*" is a collection of primary sources published from 1950 to 1953 in Sarajevo by the Historical Department of the Communist Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Same as with ZNOR, the abbreviation used for these sources is **SK BiH**, Roman numeral indicates tome, and Arabic that follows, volume[134].

Secondary sources used to infer the value of variables include two derivative - temporal and spatial - accounts of the War that were published by the Military History Institute of Yugoslavia, the "*Chronology of National-Liberation struggle of the Peoples of Yugoslavia*", day-by-day overview of the war based on archival data from the Archive[135] and the "*Historical Atlas of the Liberation War of the Peoples of Yugoslavia*", a detailed geographic account of the war[136].

The specific circumstances of the publishing of these primary sources are also taken into account. There are several possible cases of bias, ideological being only one of them, but perhaps the most important. Although there is still no authoritative study on the ideological bias of this gigantic collection of documents it is evident in the occasional redaction commentaries of the documents, or in their titles: they are portraying the events and actors of the war in obvious

---

[133] Vojnoistorijski institut*, Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije,* tomes I, II, IV, V, XII, XIII, XIV, (Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske (narodne) armije).
[134] Istorisko odjeljenje CK KP BiH, *Arhiv Komunističke Partije Bosne i Hercegovine*, tomes I, III, (Sarajevo: Istorisko odjeljenje CK KP (SK) BiH).
[135] Vojnoistorijski institut, *Hronologija oslobodilačke borbe naroda Jugoslavije 1941-1945,* (Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske narodne armije, 1964).
[136] Vojnoistorijski institut, *Istoriski atlas oslobodilačkog rata naroda Jugoslavije 1941-1945*, (Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske narodne armije, 1952).

ideological terms, presenting the "other side" as traitors or villains. However, there are two limitations to this bias. First of all, the commentaries tend to change during the decades and are becoming "more neutral" after the first decades of publishing. The second limitation is that there is no doubt about the overall authenticity of the published documents. The redaction commentaries frame the documents in certain ideologically correct way, but as far as consensus goes, there are no cases of documents itself being modified in any way. Overall, the events of the war are only partially available for triangulation: not all events have several angles, or different sources to be compared. But, the most important ones for the research do. The changes in relations between the parties are similarly described in the sources from Croatian State, Partisan or Chetniks origin and German and Italian documents offer significant "outsider" insight.

6. Bosnia and Herzegovina in World War Two

Second World War started in Yugoslavia on April 6 1941 with the invasion of Axis powers. The swift and effective "April War" ended eleven days later with unconditional surrender of the Royal Yugoslav Armed Forces. Kingdom of Yugoslavia was to be dismembered by the victors. Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and Hungary occupied or annexed parts of the country and three new entities, puppet governments were formed: Serbian government of Milan Nedić, under German Military Authority, Kingdom of Montenegro, an Italian protectorate, and Independent State of Croatia, divided into German and Italian zones of influence[137].

The Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH) was proclaimed on April 10 1941 in Zagreb[138]. Although in the beginning, it did not have clearly defined territory or government, it soon established itself on most of the contemporary Croatia (except Istria and Central Dalmatia that were occupied by Italy and Međumurje and Baranja, annexed by Hungary), Srem, today part of Serbia, and whole contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its government was led by Ustasha *Poglavnik* (leader, or headman) Ante Pavelić. NDH government was based in mixture of nationalist and fascist ideology and had introduced racial laws and measures against the population, mainly Jews, Serbs, and Roma, some twenty days after the establishment: Legal provision on Citizenship, Legal Provision on Protection of Aryan Blood and Honour of Croat People and the Provision on Racial Affiliation[139].

Bosnia and Herzegovina, part of newly established state was populated by Serbs, Muslims and Croats. Population census from 1931 showed that 2 323 555 people lived on its territory. The religious groups' breakdown shows that 1 028 134 or 44.25% were Orthodox

---

[137] Map 1, with zones of control is in the Appendix.
[138] Mladen Colić, *Takozvana Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941,* (Beograd: Delta-pres, 1973), 411.
[139] Ibid., 418–420.

Christians (Serbs), 718 079 or 30.9% were Muslims[140] and 547 948 or 23.58% Catholics (Croats). The remaining 29 330 or 1.27% were mostly Jewish or belonged to other Christian or Muslim denominations[141]. Distribution of ethnic groups was, very crudely, as follows: Serbs were the largest group in Western Bosnia, or Bosnian Krajina and Eastern Herzegovina; Croats were the largest group in Western Herzegovina and Muslims in Cazin Krajina. Central Bosnia had mixed population of Croats and Muslim, with almost no Serb inhabitants, Eastern Bosnia was Serb-Muslim populated, with almost no Croats and Posavina was allocated between Croats and Serbs. Northeast Bosnia had all three groups present[142].

The ethnic heterogeneity of the population led the newly established NDH to attach highest importance to its military presence in B&H. Until November 1 1941, three Home Guard, NDH regular army, Division Areas were in Mostar, Sarajevo and Banja Luka, and two were in Croatia proper (Zagreb, Osijek). After the reorganization of November 1 1941, the Territory of NDH was divided in three HQ areas, two located in Croatia proper and one in B&H. Under these were six Home Guard land army divisions, of which four were located in B&H (Bihać, Doboj, Mostar, Sarajevo), and only two in Croatia proper (Bjelovar, Vinkovci)[143].

6.1 'Civil War?' – An Outline and Debate

The majority of the 1941-1945 Civil War took place on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina - it's most mountainous and ethnically heterogeneous region. The establishment of the new state, divided into Italian and German zones, was followed with widespread repression and

---

[140] Name for Bosniak ethnic group used in Yugoslavia.
[141] Đorđe Pejanović, *Stanovništvo Bosne i Hercegovine*, (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1955), 54. Note that censuses in pre-war Yugoslavia included data on religion, not ethnicity. Although this could be a topic for separate research, for this thesis, the religious affiliation is taken to overlap with ethnicity.
[142] Map 2 indicating regions of Bosnia is in the Appendix.
[143] Colić, 1973, 202, 236-238, 238-239.

indiscriminate violence against it Orthodox population. Thus the civil war started in 1941 as a 'Serb' insurgency against the 'Croat' state. During 1941, two groups differentiated from once homogenous insurgency – Communist 'Partisans' and Royalist 'Chetniks', whose ideology could be labelled as Nationalist. The two groups cooperated until the end of the 1941, when conflict between the two erupted and lasted until the end of the war. Chetniks in Bosnia soon started cooperating with NDH authorities, forging an unintuitive alliance between 'Nationalist Serb' and 'Fascist Croat' groups that also lasted through the war. NDH policy was initially embracing Bosnian Muslims as integral part of the Croat nation, but through the war, and especially since NDH-Chetniks rapprochement in 1942, different 'Muslim' militias started acting autonomously, cooperating with Communist Partisans, also largely inclusive towards Muslim and Croat recruits, but in some areas also with Chetniks, who otherwise pursued policy of indiscriminate violence towards Muslim civilians. Partisans defeat in 1942 incited massive defections to Chetniks, which led them to abandon ideological aspirations and move their army towards the west, where they established a socialist republic and gained significant force. The fall of Italy was a definite turning point in the war: NDH and Chetniks troops were since then in retreat and defections to Partisans gained in numbers, while Muslim militias established their presence in Muslim populated areas, turning towards cooperation with the new rising power.

Even in this short outline, the ambiguities of the war in Yugoslavia seem far-reaching. Yet, the post-war (victorious) socialist narrative was built upon binary classification: on one side, antifascist Partisans, vanguard of socialist revolution, have led a war of national liberation, supported by the peoples of Yugoslavia[144]. The other side was the Occupiers (Axis powers) and their local collaborationist – united in their counter-revolutionary pursuit. As far as official historiography was concerned, both civil war and ethnic conflict was not the desired framework

[144] Milovan Djilas, *Revolucionarni rat*, (Beograd: Književne novine, 1990).

of interpretation. Yet with the demise of socialist ideological hegemony in mid-eighties, another narrative started appearing, that reinterpreted the memories of ethnically framed violence (conflated with conflict) to ascertain the claim of "ancient hatred" between nations, and especially in Serbia, of ideological civil war among the Serbs. The debate among historians about the nature of the war[145] has never ended since. However, this issue will not be pursued further than stating that the master narrative about the 1941-1945 war has shifted in a similar way to shifts in classifications of civil wars in general. During the Cold War, ideological interpretation prevailed, but the end of it meant the end of Yugoslavia too, and new interpretations, based on ethnicity, appeared to dominate the memories of the war[146].

Unsurprisingly, the warring parties themselves participated too in this meta-conflict, propagating classifications of war to suit their political agenda. Unlike NDH government that treated the hostilities in terms of counter-insurgency against communist rebels[147] and Partisans who saw the war as national liberation from foreign occupation[148], Chetnik and German documents offer different perspective. German General in Zagreb, Glaise-Horstenau treated events south of Sava River as on-going civil war[149]. Chetnik leader Jevđević, describing in 1942 how many complete Partisans units have changed their insignia overnight and became Chetniks, concluded: "[…] as in all other civil wars, these masses are fluid and tend to join the stronger side."[150]

---

[145] Miloš Minić, *Oslobodilački ili građanski rat u Jugoslaviji 1941-1945*, (Novi Sad: Agencija Mir, 1993). Branko Petranović, "The Forms of the Civil War," *Filozofija i Društvo* no. 4 (1993): 160–167.
[146] Valère Philip Gagnon, "Historical Roots of the Yugoslav Conflict," in *International Organizations and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Milton Jacob Esman and Shibley Telhami,. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 179–197. Valère Philip Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia And Croatia in the 1990s*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).
[147] ZNOR, XII 1, 328-330.
[148] Ibid., II 7, 112-119.
[149] Ibid., XII 2, 162-176.
[150] Ibid., XIV 1, 468.

Nevertheless, Kalyvas' definition undoubtedly allows treating events in Bosnia 1941-1945 as a civil war. Parties have been subject to the common (Yugoslav) sovereign authority both before and after the Second World War, and they also entered armed combat inside recognized state borders – either those of NDH, that was recognized by twelve states, members of the Tripartite pact, and had established diplomatic relations with eight of these[151] – or of Yugoslavia whose government in exile was still recognized by the Allies. If this is the case, then, based on narratives and coding practices, it could be argued that war was ideological, and ethnic. Then again, how much does this have to do with what happened on the ground?

6.2 *Dramatis personae* - 'The Actors' of Civil War

During the war in Bosnia, there were at least five local warring parties and two international (Bosnia was occupied and divided into zones of control by German and Italian armed forces). However, it is difficult to classify local combatant groups in Bosnia because they significantly differed in level of homogeneity at the onset of the war and changed in different directions of centralization towards its end.

Regular army of NDH was *Domobrani,* or Home Guard, established on April 10 1941 and consisting of enlisted men[152]. It operated parallel, but often in conflict[153] with *Ustaša*, pl. *Ustaše,* (meaning rebels, insurgents, anglicised Ustashas) which predated the war as a fascist movement, but at its outset incorporated as militia into state structure and ran directly by NDH *Poglavnik* Pavelić. Ustasha Ideology was articulated in 1933 in Seventeen Principles by Ante

---

[151] Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule In Occupied Europe: Laws Of Occupation, Analysis Of Government, Proposals For Redress*, (Clark: The Lawbook Exchange, 2005), 252.
[152] Colić, 1973, 412.
[153] ZNOR, XII 2, 162-176.

Pavelić, that, as noted before, was a mixture of fascism and nationalism[154]. The Partisans (*Partizani*) were irregular, guerrilla units operated by Communist Party of Yugoslavia[155]. Throughout the war they have changed the organizational structure, as well as official name (most notably *Narodnooslobodilačka vojska*, NOV - National Liberation Army) but steadily evolved into a regular army, becoming Yugoslav Army on March 1st 1945[156] and were led by Marshall Josip Broz (Tito). All three armed groups had relatively strong military structure.

On the other hand, Chetniks and "Muslim Nationalist" did not show the same level of coherence. *Četnici* (lit. members of *četa*, unit or band, anglicised Chetniks) were guerrilla units of Serbian insurgents formed at the beginning of the war, that were partially under the command of Dragoljub (Draža) Mihailović, who was a captain, and then general of "Yugoslav Army in the Homeland" (*Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini*, JVuO) and Minister of War in the Yugoslav government in Exile. Chetniks have somewhat integrated during the war, from a cluster of non-connected units throughout B&H, to groups that formally recognized Mihailović supreme leadership, but kept their autonomy of action. Partisan reports suggests Mihailović arrived in Bosnia with only 300 Chetniks that were directly responsible to him[157], and that he had to exert authority over Chetnik units that were already established. Bosnian Chetniks did not appreciate this and serious internal divisions in the movement occurred during 1942[158]. In August 1942 the two competing Chetnik Bosnian HQ met, recognized Mihailović as supreme commander, but wanted to preserve their right of posting local commanders[159]. As late as February 1943, shortly

---

[154] Danijel Crljen, *Načela Hrvatskog Ustaškog Pokreta*, (Zagreb: 1942).
[155] ZNOR, II 1, 19-25.
[156] Ibid., II 1, 623.
[157] Ibid., I 1, 322-323
[158] Ibid., XIV 1, 433-435.
[159] Ibid., XIV 1, 552 – 554.

before the whole organization started to disintegrate, Germans reported that Mihailović still did not manage to put all Chetniks units in Bosnia under his command[160].

Finally, suggesting there was a homogenous warring party that would fit umbrella term 'Muslim Nationalists' is a conceptual stretch[161]. Nevertheless, various Bosnian Muslim irregular militias operated throughout the country, especially from 1943, and mainly pursued different policies of local leaders (e.g. Miljković in Cazin, Hadžiefendić in Tuzla, Pandža and Topčić of Green Cadre in NE Bosnia, see Chapter 11).

Civil war did happen on the territory of Yugoslavia, regardless of the debates among contemporary historians. One could say that the conflict about the nature of the conflict is as alive now as it was during the war. The warring parties also struggled to frame the conflict in different ways (for instance, NDH depiction of the insurgency in Chapter 7) but in their internal documents, they did speak of civil war. The newly established Independent State of Croatia occupied the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, ethnically the most diverse, but also the most disputed region during the war, where all parties invested the most of their muscle. It is worth noticing that the unity of the armed groups vastly differed, which verifies the importance of the methodological notion of disaggregating actors as much as possible.

---

[160] Ibid., XII 3, 79-84.
[161] Enver Redžić, *Bosnia And Herzegovina In The Second World War,* (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

7. 1941: Repression and Uprising

Besides fascist and anti-Semitic elements of the ideology of newly created NDH, its nationalist policies towards two largest non-Croatian ethnic groups in Bosnia significantly differed.

Shortly after its establishment, NDH government had introduced legislation that targeted it's Serbian population[162]: Law on loyalty to the state (April 10), Legal provision on protection of people and state (April 17), Legal provision on so called volunteer's immobility (mostly Serb owned land gained after WWI, April 18), Legal provision on prohibition of Cyrillic (April 25) and Legal provision on religious conversion (May 3). The indiscriminate violence directed towards Serb, Jewish and Roma population by most accounts had taken a character of genocide, nevertheless, the policies targeting Serbs also included forced religious conversion and deportation[163]. Viktor Gutić, NDH official in Western Bosnia reportedly conveyed this policy[164]:

> „These Serbian Gipsies will be sent to Serbia, part by trains, part by Sava, without boats. The unwanted elements will be rooted out by erasing their traces and the only thing that will remain will be the evil memory of them. All Serbian pests older than 15 will be killed and their children will be put to monasteries and made into good Catholics."

On the other hand, the ideological underpinning of NDH policy towards Bosnian Muslims was based on claim on Bosnia as historical Croat land and Muslims as an integral part of Croat nation. Pavelić's radio speech of April 6, the day of the Axis attack on Yugoslavia addressed "Croatian soldiers, Catholic and Muslim"[165]. He famously proclaimed Muslims the "Flowers of Croatian people"[166]. In a similar tone, Slavko Kvaternik, who, acting in name of

---

[162] Colić, 1973, 414-422.
[163] Marko Attila Hoare, *Genocide and Resistance in Hitler's Bosnia: The Partisans and the Chetniks, 1941-1943*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[164] Cited in: Dragoje Lukić, *Rat i Djeca Kozare*, (Beograd: Književne novine, 1990), 13.
[165] Colić, 1973, 97-98.
[166] SK BiH, III 1, 131-135.

Pavelić, proclaimed the independence on April 10, made several other public proclamations, one of which addressed Dalmatian Croats and Bosnian Muslims:

> "Hitler and Mussolini are guaranteeing NDH on all Croat historic and uninterrupted national area" and called them all to comply with their new commanders as "the most fundamental [*korjenit*] and noble part of Croatian nation."[167]

> Publication from 1942 popularising 17 Ustasha Principles states that:

> "Especially heavy attack on Croatian name was suffered by our Muslims in Bosnia, which were named Serbs […] and where Greater Serbian propaganda did not succeed, attempts were made to establish the name of Bosnians, claiming that our Muslims are neither Serbs […] nor Croats […] but something third."[168]

Various NDH reports from B&H from 1941 and 1942, presented Muslims as integral part of Croat people, although with specific religious identity. Report on insurgency from October 1941 does not even mention Muslims separately of Croats[169], report from December 1941 talks of Croats and Muslims only in religious terms[170], whereas report on uprising in Herzegovina in July 1942 makes distinction between "Real Croats" and "Muslim Croats"[171] and one from June 1942 mentions "Croats", "Muslim Croats" and "Orthodox Croats"[172].

NDH Government also included several prominent Bosnian Muslims: its first vice-prime minister was Osman Kulenović, whose office was moved to Banja Luka in Bosnia, and Hilmija Beslagić, who run ministry of transport and public works in Zagreb[173]. However, Osman resigned and was replaced by his brother, Džafer-beg, on October 1, whose office was later returned from Banja Luka to Zagreb[174].

---

[167] Colić, 1973, 93.
[168] Crljen, 1942, 12.
[169] ZNOR, IV 2, 336-350.
[170] Ibid., IV 2, 538-544.
[171] Ibid., IV 6, 349-363.
[172] Ibid., IV 5, 433-437.
[173] Ibid., IV 2, 430.
[174] Ibid., IV 2, 430-433, also Colić, 1973, 105, 155.

7.1 Start of the Uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Local uprisings emerged in two theatres – June 24 in Herzegovina[175] and month later, on July 27 in Western Bosnia[176]. Indiscriminate violence in Herzegovina, attributed to Ustasha, caused the insurrection in Gacko area already on June 6 and the *mass* uprising started in Lukavac on June 24[177]. The state responded by additional indiscriminate violence. Early NDH report from Herzegovina blamed civilian Orthodox Serbs for the uprising:

> "Most of the men from these municipalities, age 16-50, if not imprisoned, immediately after the breakdown of former Yugoslavia, got their hands on weapons and ammunition and took for forests and mountains. Under the leadership of prominent Orthodox Serbs, it appears, they gather and organize for further demonstration and violent actions against soldiers […] or civilian Croats and Muslims."[178]

It started arming "reliable Croats" – formations known as "Wild Ustasha"[179], who were largely self-organised groups, not part of regular Ustasha units, with notorious reputation. After the experience of Herzegovina uprising, during July, NDH started preparing for the uprising in Western Bosnia[180]. It came as a shock to the state, with rebels capturing cities of Drvar and Grahovo already on July 27[181]. NDH had soon informed Germany they cannot handle the uprising alone[182], a sign that the intensity of uprising was far from expected.

7.2 Cleavages, Repression, and Insurgency

What role did ideology and ethnicity have in the start of the uprising, and how much of the dynamics of the insurgency could be attributed to strategic considerations?

---

[175] ZNOR, IV 1, 513-514, 524-526.
[176] Ibid., IV 1, 527-528.
[177] Ibid., IV 1, 513-514, 524-526.
[178] Ibid., IV 1, 511.
[179] Ibid., IV 1, 511-513.
[180] Ibid., IV 1, 523-524.
[181] Ibid., IV 1, 527-528.
[182] Ibid., XII 1, 251-253.

Secret German Report, sent from Zagreb on August 27 1941 about political situation in NDH, offers a detailed account on causes of insurgency and the failure of counter-insurgency[183]. The 'gravest mistake' of NDH authorities was ignoring the fact that the new state was multinational and consisted of only 50% Croats. Attempt to forge a Croat nation-state through the use of force against Serbs or by claiming Muslims as Croats was doomed from the start. The results of such unrealistic politics of Ustasha regime, the report continues, were catastrophic. It speculated that numbers of killed Serbs might already have been 200 000 and that many cities in Bosnia were cleared of Serb men. In revenge, Serb rebels started treating Muslims and Croats in the same way. When it became obvious that Croatian government cannot crush the rebellion, it called for Serbs that fled to the mountains to surrender and guaranteed the security of life and property. The only way this could have worked, the report states, is if the agreement would have been guaranteed by a party that Serbs could trust, which could not have been NDH government. The report continued by criticizing attempts of NDH authorities to justify the indiscriminate violence as actions against Communists, because:

> "Serbian peasant is no more inclined to Communism than Croatian," instead, "if there were no Ustasha atrocities, no propaganda could have recruited Serbian peasants to risk their lives for Communist goals"[184].

The author of the report ends it with an assessment that the existing political regime is not viable and that 90% of the population, irrespective of ethnicity, does not have confidence in it.

Also in early August, NDH Home Guard report on uprising in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina identified its causes and dynamics in a similar way[185]. After the proclamation of independence and the first days of a new state, 75% of Serbs were fired from public security services and were replaced by more inexperienced Croats from other regions. The defences of

---

[183] Ibid., XII 1, 328-330.
[184] Ibid., XII 1, 329.
[185] Ibid., IV 1, 545-548.

villages were not organized and the rebellion of Serbs, who are the majority in the area, was not anticipated. But more importantly:

> "Nothing was done, or even tried […] to draw Serbs towards the new state and to make them, if not patriots, then at least loyal citizens. Everything was done to alienate them from their new homeland and to make them sworn enemies."[186] Once the insurgency had started, "only then the first, thoughtless actions started […] Instead of open combat with the rebels, their villages were burned and looted and families killed. As a consequence, resistance grew stronger and even those who never had such an idea joined the rebels."[187]

What report suggested should be done was to: offer amnesty to the refugees and guarantee basic rights, terminate policies of killing civilian hostages, put Ustasha units under Home Guard control and ensure rule of law and equal treatment of population of different religions. The changes that accommodated this kind of demands indeed came soon after the realization in the NDH government that insurgency cannot be contained. Glaise-Horstenau's report from August 1941 mentions Pavelić's attempt to contain Ustasha, his search for wider political support of Croat political parties and even Pavelić having meeting with prominent Serb representative from Croatia[188].The legislation was issued prohibiting activities of "Wild Ustasha" in August already[189].

Independent State of Croatia was an emerging state, which was intrinsically weak. The vast territory was inhabited by population which was an obstacle to its nation building project. Having in mind the polar opposite treatment of its Serbian and Muslim minorities, one is led to assumption that, if NDH wanted an ethnically clear Croatian state, both groups would have been targeted. Why Serbs and not Muslims? Rhetoric of hatred put aside, the fact that NDH

---

[186] Ibid., IV 1, 546.
[187] Ibid., IV 1, 547.
[188] Ibid., XII 1, 299-301.
[189] Colić, 1973, 281.

54

authorities' plans for the Serbs included deportations and assimilation indicate that the purpose of this might have been the destruction of perceived potential challenger to the state, not of ethnic group as such. Also, if policy towards its Serb population could, to a small degree, change, then what have caused it? As the first sub-hypothesis suggests, weak state would irrespectively of its ideology engage in pre-emptive violence against the population it perceived as a threat, again, irrespective of its ethnicity. The reasons for it might have been different, but the reported low levels of support of Croat population would spur the government to pursue politics among ethnic lines as a mobilizing factor. Indiscriminate violence would automatically create fear of retaliation among Croat civilians and power could have been sustained on basis of ethnic politics.

However, the extent of the uprising was not expected by the NDH authorities. Why did Serbs rebel and why Muslims did not? Response to indiscriminate violence is certainly a strong factor. Muslims did not accept the new circumstances open heartedly (Chapter 10), but since they have not experienced state repression, there was no insurgency - only after the violence does ethnicity starts factoring in motivation. Speaking in *groupist* terms, Serbs were the group weak enough to feel threatened and strong enough to launch insurgency, while Muslims were not strong enough launch to insurgency and did not feel as threatened. Why joining communists? Civilians have been joining rebellion as a consequence of conflict, not because of the ideological affiliation. It was mechanism of fear that pushed Serb peasants to join communists, not their approval of their ideology.

Finally, counter-insurgency measures, based on retaliation on civilians and more violence were flawed, since these were bound to lead even more civilians into joining insurgency. Calls for rebels to surrender in exchange for amnesty were in vain, because there was no authority that

55

would ensure credible commitment. NDH measures of repression and counter-insurgency were nevertheless framed in ideological terms, as anti-communist measures, pointing to the instrumentalisation of ideology. Finally, when the insurgency spread beyond control, attempts to publicly draw conciliatory moves towards Serbs show that ethnic cleavages are also instrumental, and depending on political and strategic circumstances.

8. 1941: Partisan-Chetnik Cooperation and Conflict

The rebellion against NDH was only the first aspect of the civil war in Yugoslavia. It was followed by a differentiation of insurgents according to ideological affiliation, period of cooperation and a conflict between the two insurgent groups that had far-reaching consequences.

The rebels in Western Bosnia consisted of several thousand mostly peasant Serbs[190] that supported political options, Royalists and Communist. During the capture of Doboj, the rebels were heard shouting both: "Long live Soviet Russia!" and: "Long live King Peter!"[191] NDH reports accurately present the nature of rebellion as joint Communist-Chetniks enterprise[192]. The rebellion was based more on ethnic, than ideological cleavage. As late as September 1941, changing allegiance between groups that became known as Partisans and Chetniks was quite unproblematic and common[193].

Yet in this period, Partisans acknowledged the need to differentiate from Chetniks, by ending the use of terms "Guerilla" or "*Cheta*" units, in order not to be confused with them[194]. This was partially motivated by Muslims being alarmed because of Chetniks violence. Partisans' rationale was that, although Muslims were dissatisfied with NDH, fearing violence from the Serbs prevented them from joining the rebels[195]. In Herzegovina, at the onset of the insurgency, Communists were weary of "Anglophile elements" in the uprising (term they used for Royalists or Chetniks[196]), fearing they would hijack the insurgency and turn it into "crusade against

---

[190] SK BiH, III 1, 16-17.
[191] Ibid., III 1, 85-86.
[192] ZNOR, IV 1, 655-658, 735-745.
[193] SK BiH, III 1, 77-81.
[194] Ibid., III 1, 82.
[195] ZNOR, IV 1, 158-160, 456-457.
[196] SK BiH, III 1, 23-25.

Muslims"[197]. Therefore the split between the two factions in B&H might have been partially caused by the different policies of mobilizing insurgents, and perhaps less by ideological differences.

8.1 Ethnicity and Ideology

Partisan and Chetniks policies towards ethnic mobilization could not have been more different at the onset of the insurgency. Since the beginning of the war, Partisans were actively petitioning Croats and Muslims civilians to join their ranks and soldiers to defect[198]. In December 1941, Partisan local Council in Rudo, Eastern Herzegovina, announced that encouraging ethnic hatred was punishable by death[199]. When early in the war Partisans liberated non-Serb populated cities, they actively tackled the reversal of roles, sanctioning the revenge of local Serbs[200]. Partisans also strongly differentiated between Ustasha and Home Guard: they did not seem to solicit defections from Ustasha units, but Home Guard was often called to defect, and communication with them was almost permanent[201]. The ethnic composition of the Partisans thus changed during the course of the war. During 1941, Serbs formed vast majority of Partisans[202], while early 1942 German report indicates most rebels are still Orthodox, but that both Muslims and Croats have started joining them[203]. NDH report from April 1942 noted that Partisans in Central Bosnia consist of 70% Serbs, 20% Muslims, 5% Jewish and 5% Catholics, while political officers are "Orthodox" with few Muslims[204].

[197] Ibid., III 1, 67-77.
[198] SK BiH, III 1, 30-37, 82-84. ZNOR, II 3, 343-344. ZNOR, II 7, 361-362. ZNOR, IV 2, 90-95.
[199] SK BiH, III 1, 146-149.
[200] ZNOR, II 5, 307-310.
[201] Ibid., II 3, 404-409. Ibid., II 7, 361-362. Ibid., II 10, 18-19. Ibid., IV 2, 68-71. Ibid., IV 3, 181-184, 209-211.
[202] Ibid., II 7, 112-119.
[203] Ibid., XII 2, 162-176.
[204] Ibid., IV 4, 328-330.

Chetniks ideology on the other hand was based on Serbian nationalism and Conservativism/Royalism. Their political platform was set forth in several documents throughout the war. Already on June 30 1941, Stevan Moljević's widely accepted, but unofficial, program of "Homogenous Serbia"[205] foresaw future federal Yugoslavia consisting of three units. Besides Slovenian and Croatian, Serbian state was supposed to include all territories inhabited by Serbs but also other important territories, by means of population transfers. Cleansing of minorities became one of the goals in December 20 1941 Mihailović Instruction to Montenegro Chetniks, outlining ten objectives of Chetnik movement that demanded:

> "1) Struggle for freedom of our whole nation under the sceptre of HRH King Peter II 2) Creation of Great Yugoslavia and Great Serbia in it, ethnically clean in borders of Serbia – Montenegro – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Srem – Banat – Bačka […] 4) Cleansing the state territory of all national minorities and non-national elements 5) Establishing borders between Serbia and Montenegro […] by cleansing Sandžak from Muslim population and Bosnia from Muslim and Croatian population […]"[206]

In a similar way, December 2 1942, Chetnik Youth Conference in Šahovići set their program of unitary Yugoslav Monarchy, with Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and no minorities[207]. Therefore, in the context of Bosnia, ideology of Chetniks envisaged no future for Muslims and their units consisted almost exclusively of Orthodox Serbs. But their ethnic composition, as well as political programs will change as war progresses, as will be described in Chapters 10 and 11.

8.2 The Agreements and Hostilities

The two rebel armies in the beginning draw support from practically the same pool of population – rural Orthodox Serbs. In spite of stark ideological differences, they have established cooperation, in both Serbia and Bosnia under NDH, yet with significantly different dynamics.

---

[205] Ibid., XIV 1, 10, 101-103.
[206] Ibid., XIV 1, 93 – 100.
[207] Ibid., XIV 1, 736-739.

Autonomous but vulnerable, Chetniks in Eastern Bosnia under Aćim Babić established the first informal Partisan-Chetnik cooperation body on September 1 1941[208]. In Drinjača, Eastern Bosnia, representatives of Bosnian Partisans and Chetniks signed 11-points Agreement on October 1 1941[209]. This document was signed by three Chetnik and three Partisan representatives, and it included provisions on Joint Temporary Headquarters (The Command of Bosnian Military and Partisan Units, "*Komanda bosanskih vojnih i partizanskih odreda*"), that was to consist of equal number of commanders from both sides. They have issued a Joint Proclamation, calling for "Serb brethren" to overcome their differences and unite against the enemy of Serbs, and Muslims and Croats to join Serbs in Bosnia "who seek not revenge but right to live freely in the land of their ancestors".[210]

During the same period, in Serbia, on 8 September 1941, Tito was informed of negotiations with various Chetniks, and he was advised to proceed into negotiations with Mihailović, who seemed more credible than the other Chetniks groups[211]. On October 20, Tito had sent a platform for agreement to Mihailović (no references to ethnic or ideological issues) and on 27 October in Brajići, Western Serbia, Chetniks accepted eight out of twelve proposals[212]. During this period, the two parties had fairly neutral assessment of each other[213], although the relations were stressed with suspicion. In different areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Partisans reported encounters with various highly autonomous Chetnik groups during October 1941, which included both conflict and cooperation[214].

---

[208] SK BiH, III 1, 52-53.
[209] ZNOR, XIV 1, 29-31.
[210] Ibid., IV 2, 7-9.
[211] Ibid., I 2, 126-130.
[212] Ibid., I 1, 203-207.
[213] Ibid., IV 1, 412-413.
[214] SK BiH, III 1, 96-101.

Partisan Supreme HQ November 4 1941 report brings details of conflict with Chetniks on the liberated territory in Serbia. They accused Chetniks of not participating in combat against the Germans and instead leading a *power struggle* behind the front lines[215]. The Brajići agreement was short-lived and came into crisis weeks after it was signed, so the second high level meeting took place, in Čačak on November 20, as the last failed attempt to cease hostilities between two fractions[216] in midst of the German offensive (First Offensive) on liberated territory in Serbia.

However, the breaking down of alliance and the start of hostilities was diverse depending on the region, or war theatre. The relations between two Serb armies broke down in Serbia, yet resonated differently through Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to high degree of autonomy in decision making, Bosnian Chetniks have responded differently. For instance, when, on November 9 1941 Mihailović ordered Dangić in Eastern Bosnia to send 5/6 of his troops across the border to attack Partisan stronghold of Užice in Serbia, Dangić did not comply, being more concerned about the 1/6 that would remain in Bosnia[217], showing both his autonomy in decision making and local considerations, that had little to do with Chetnik-Partisan conflict elsewhere.

In Bosnia, after the failed Conference with Partisans, scheduled for November 16 in Vlasenica, Chetniks held their own conference on November 17 and formed separate authority for Eastern Bosnia, thus ending a Joint HQ in the region[218]. But Chetniks and Partisans continued the attempts to negotiate during December in Eastern Bosnia[219] and even after the Joint HQ was dissolved, Chetniks-Partisan joint administration still existed on local level, in cities of Rogatica, Olovo and Han-Pijesak until the end of 1941[220].

---

[215] ZNOR, I 1, 242-247.
[216] Ibid., I 1, 274-275.
[217] Ibid., XIV 1, 72-75.
[218] ZNOR, XIV 1, 79 – 82. SK BiH, III 1, 122-126.
[219] ZNOR, XIV 1, 83 – 84. ZNOR, IV 2, 204-207.
[220] Ibid., XIV 1, 114-117.

Whereas in Herzegovina there was no cooperation comparable to other regions and the open war between two groups started on January 6 1942[221], while the possibility of negotiations still existed elsewhere[222], and in Eastern Bosnia joint administrations ceased to exist around the new year, other parts of Bosnia had experienced cooperation for at least two more months. In Central Bosnia, Partisans still coordinated with Chetniks the attacks on the city of Olovo, indicating cooperation still existed during January 1942[223] and the last joint Partisan-Chetnik actions in Western Bosnia were in February 1942 in Mrkonjić grad[224]. How to explain this temporal and spatial variation in relations between the armed groups?

The two independent variables remained constant during the period before and during Partisan-Chetnik cooperation, yet changed after the conflict. Ideological differences were tolerated in order to accommodate the need to cooperate with ethnic kin rebels, and after the cooperation broke down, the ideological justification of conflict gained prominence. If dependent variable is conflict and cooperation between these two armed groups, than there must be other independent variable that can explain the change.

Chetniks and Partisans did have different strategic considerations on the territory of NDH than in Occupied Serbia. The experience of cooperation in early uprising, proximity of common threat posed by NDH regime, as well as its offensive intentions, indicated through military actions and indiscriminate violence, made the benefits of cooperation, or at least non-attacking, higher than the damage of conflict, such as the one inflicted by power struggle in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This explains the longer cooperation in B&H. However, variation inside Bosnia and Herzegovina regions also needs to be accounted for. Chetniks have for some time been

[221] Vojnoistorijski institut, 1964, 191.
[222] ZNOR, IV 3, 40-41.
[223] Ibid., II 2, 228.
[224] Ibid., IV 3, 240-242, 265-269.

negotiating with Germany the transfer of control over Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina from NDH to Serbian and Montenegrin authorities[225]. Driven by these expectations, they saw no urgent need to fight the Germans, nor the Partisans, in these two regions[226]. These expectations radicalized Partisan-Chetniks relations in these areas, because they raised Partisans' suspicions, but also because Partisans feared becoming overwhelmed by joint forces of Chetniks and Nedić from Serbia[227]. The expectations also led Chetniks to take "neutral stance" during Second offensive in Eastern Herzegovina, after which the Chetnik-Partisan relations became un-repairable[228]. While the Germans held Chetniks in high hopes, NDH authorities flatly refused any proposal that compromised their control of B&H[229], but these Chetnik considerations had produced enmity with Partisans and incentives to cooperate with other groups that remained constant during the war. Finally, in Western Bosnia, far away from Serbian and Montenegrin borders, where threat from NDH forces changed the strategic position of Partisans and Chetniks, the cooperation continued longest.

8.3 After the Fallout: Framing of Conflict

As mentioned before, the ideological differences have been put aside and ethnic kinship was accentuated during the short period of Partisan-Chetniks cooperation. When the war between them started, the narrative changed tremendously.

Partisan leading ideologist Moša Pijade's expose "What are Partisans in Bosnia and Herzegovina fighting for?" from January 1942 blamed Chetniks from Serbia for spoiling the

---

[225] Ibid., XII 2, 111-124, 139-142, 162-176. XIV 1, 151-154.
[226] SK BiH, III 1, 154-156.
[227] Ibid., III 2, 28-29.
[228] ZNOR, II 2, 303-309.
[229] Ibid., XIV 1, 151-154.

cooperation in Bosnia. Only few months after being called "Serb brethren", Chetniks were portrayed as ideological and ethnic enemies of both Serbs and Muslims:

> "For long time, Partisans have been united with Chetnik peasants in struggle against Ustasha and against Occupiers that pressed Croats and Muslims into extermination of Serbs. The struggle was single and it didn't matter who was Partisan and who was Chetnik… However with arrival from Serbia of traitorous officers […] begins enemy action to demolish Partisans. […] [Chetniks] are pressing Serbian people into extermination of Muslims just like that bandit Pavelić pressed Muslims against the Serbs. They succeeded in turning some Bosnian Partisans to Chetniks […] through lies and slander and luring them into pillaging Muslim villages. They claim they fight for Serbdom but they are nothing but Serbian Ustasha, Hitler's servants and enemy of Serbian people."[230,231]

Official Partisan HQ address to peoples of Bosnia of January 19 called for joint struggle against Chetnik traitors[232]. An address by Partisan Muslims of Eastern Bosnia from January 25 1942 equated Chetnik violence against Muslims with Ustasha violence against Serbs, declaring: "Muslim Brothers! Chetniks are Serb fascists, just as Ustasha are Croatian fascists!"[233] By February 1942, the main proclaimed goal of Partisans in Bosnia became the destruction of Chetniks[234]. However, in a letter of March 1942, Partisan leader Tito warns of dire political consequences if Partisans were to fight against Chetniks at the same time Ustasha did, afraid that Chetniks would inevitably use this synchronicity against them, portraying them as collaborating with enemies of Serbs[235].

The ideologization of conflict was running rampant on the other side too. After the break with Partisans, in Instruction to Montenegro Chetniks, Mihailović explains:

> "With Communists – Partisans there can be no cooperation because they are against the Royal Family and in favour of social revolution. This cannot be our

---

[230] SK BiH, III 2, 17-18.
[231] The opportunity to pillage Muslim property or to take personal revenge as important aspect of motivation to join Chetnik forces or defect from Partisan has been suggested in several documents. See Chapter 9.1.
[232] ZNOR, II 2, 229-230.
[233] Ibid., IV 3, 94-95.
[234] SK BiH, III 2, 32-36.
[235] ZNOR, II 3, 142-145.

goal, since we are only and exclusively soldiers and fighters for King, Homeland and free people."[236]

In Herzegovina, Chetnik leader Jevđević deliberately used violence to deepen ideological conflict during 1942:

> "In those battles several hundred men were killed and wounded, ideological differences were hardened to the maximum and we have gained a developed anti-communist army that knows no compromise. The same case with […] units that I systematically pressed into the battle, so that the blood spilled would deepen the difference between them and the Partisans."[237]

In spite of Tito's attempt to avoid being blamed for intra-ethnic civil war, the fact that Partisan leaders included other ethnic groups other than Serbs was, after the split, vigorously used by Chetniks to point to their anti-Serb nature. In May 1942 in Herzegovina, Chetniks ran negative campaign against Partisans, pointing to their Croat, Jewish and Muslim frontrunners, calling them "savages", "traders of Serbian white slaves" and "thirsty of Serbian blood"[238]. Jevđević report of June 1942 claims Partisans were getting ammunition from Ustasha and smears them for the willingness to enlist Muslims, Croats and women[239].

Bosnian Chetnik-Partisan local cooperation predated the one made by HQ in Serbia and it lasted longer. The relations between the two groups first broke in Serbia, than in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were attached to Serbia/Montenegro, and lasted longest in isolated Western Bosnia. If the cooperation was driven by ethnic kinship or was shredded by ideological differences, what explains such variation?

Local considerations took lead over the larger goals framed on national level, especially for decentralized Bosnian Chetniks. This is most obvious in case of Western Bosnia where rebels

---

[236] Ibid., XIV 1, 97.
[237] Ibid., XIV 1, 468.
[238] Ibid., IV 5, 369.
[239] Ibid., XIV 1, 397-405.

were the last to differentiate themselves into Chetniks and Partisans, and last place where the conflict had spread. Unlike Eastern Bosnia or Herzegovina, rebels on both sides could not have counted on assistance from ethnic kin across the border and, encircled by the NDH, had nowhere to retreat. The appeal of ideological struggle was minimal, strategic considerations were maximized. Both sides changed their ideological narratives of the other group only after the conflict, in order to justify the ingroup violence. In Herzegovina, Chetnik leader deliberately incited ideological enmity, in order to solidify his units. The consequences of ideologization of conflict were much more serious on the Partisan side, as will be described in Chapter 9. Having the same pool of population to draw conscripts from was not a determinant in case of this civil war. Partisans actively attracted other ethnicities to join insurgency, while Chetniks did not. That doesn't mean Partisans were not strategically cautious about attacking Chetniks synchronously with Ustasha, or that they did not have to justify war against other Serbs, but these issues were all peripheral. What mattered was the "power struggle" they accused Chetniks of, the one they also participated in.

9. 1942: Partisan Ideological Defeat & Chetnik Accords with NDH

The beginning of 1942 was marked by the German "Second Offensive" (35 000 men strong attack of German, Italian and NDH forces, with passive Chetnik cooperation) that targeted Partisans in Eastern Bosnia and Northeast Herzegovina. These forces repossessed Eastern and parts of Central Bosnia, with Chetniks overtaking Partisan units in Eastern Bosnia through putsches in their units[240]. Although the majority of German forces left Bosnia after the Second Offensive[241], the losses had forced Partisan units to move their troops towards the Western Bosnia. Nevertheless the reasons for Partisan breakdown in Herzegovina were not the military defeat by German forces, but their brutal enforcement of communist ideology.

Partisans' response to the conflict with Chetniks has led them to reorganize their units. After the rift with the Chetniks, Partisans were becoming increasingly unsure whether their troops will accept fighting other Serbs. From late 1941 onwards various Partisan reports recorded numerous defections to Chetniks in different regions[242]. What they did is creating new ideologically grounded Proletarian brigades, but also ideologically neutral Volunteer Army. Proletarian brigades were the only to be trusted not to desert and these units were used to fight Chetniks since early 1942[243]. First Proletarian brigades were formed in East Bosnia on December 21, and consisted of selected, mostly Serb and Montenegrin, soldiers[244]. They were conceived as elite, ideologically rigorous units - their task was not only fighting the occupation but also "economic exploitation". Their appearance was specific - every unit had a red flag with star,

[240] Ibid., IV 3, 96-98. Ibid., IV 4, 30-32.
[241] Ibid., IV 3, 181-184, 209-211.
[242] Ibid., I 1, 322-323. Ibid., II 2, 283-289.
[243] SK BiH, III 2, 98-99.
[244] ZNOR, I 1, 321-323.

hammer and a sickle[245]. When the conflict started, both Chetniks and Partisans started seeking

defections from the other side. For that reason, Partisan Supreme HQ formed Volunteer Army in

Bosnia on January 1 1942. They carried no ideological insignia and were created to gather

Chetnik defectors. It was also the acknowledgement that in Bosnia, many were willing to join the

uprising, but for ideological reasons not willing to approach neither them nor Chetniks[246].

9.1 The "Herzegovina Experiment''

Herzegovina, southernmost part of the country, bordering Montenegro, was under Italian zone of

control. Chetniks and Italians started cooperating there in late 1941 and in 1942 Italians officially

allowed military cooperation with Chetniks on local level, but in accordance with their official

policy towards NDH, this cooperation was to be established under condition of taking no written

obligations[247]. On the other hand, Italians demanded nothing but extermination of Communists,

and Chetnik-Italian cooperation was geared in this direction.

These events had set the stage for one of the most curious cases of instrumental role of

ideology in this civil war. Partisan-Chetnik conflict in Herzegovina started in December 1941,

earliest in B&H. Herzegovina Partisans HQ called the people of Herzegovina to reject Chetniks

and join the "holy partisan war"[248]. In February 1942, Tito ordered Proletarian brigades to move

into Herzegovina, destroy Chetnik units, and form Volunteer Army from remaining ones[249].

Partisans had had a military upper hand until April 1942, even liberating the important Ustasha

stronghold of Borač, that Chetniks had failed to[250], all with approximately 4000 men[251].

---

[245] Ibid., II 1, 134-137.
[246] Ibid., II 1, 115-116.
[247] Ibid., XIII 2, 96-97.
[248] Ibid., IV 2, 176-178.
[249] Ibid., II 2, 349-353. Ibid., II 3, 20-21, 62-63.
[250] Ibid., II 3, 410-412.

But the ideological vigour of Proletarian brigades was a double-edged sword. Partisans started a campaign of violence against all suspected to be military or ideological threat, as well as burning and pillaging indiscriminately. The reports boasted:

> "The mass destruction of fifth column of all colours and traitorous Chetnik bands had huge political effect. Masses fully endorse killings of the fifth column."[252]
> "My opinion is that all Volunteer units should be cleansed, sufficient number disarmed and executed and command cadre replaced by more responsible men. […] The Herzegovina experiment was a tremendous success."[253]
> "Tomorrow we're putting 30 man on trial […] I'm looking forward to a feast – hope at least half will be executed. The enthusiasm of Herzegovina comrades embraced us too, for really, there is no progress unless we see uprooted not only the fifth column, but also those who will become that in twenty years."[254]

However, Chetniks had different information. Jevđević assessed that only one third of population supports communism[255]. He was right. In May 1942 a series of putsches in Partisan units occurred, and many soldiers defected to Chetniks[256]. The Italian protection helped Chetniks soliciting defections by offering the defectors safety. Chetniks official instructions for putsches in Partisan units, from May 1942 promises:

> "All of you who were forced and terrorized to join Partisan villains, liquidate the alien commissars and together with your true national leaders report to nearest Italian commandant, your lives and property are guaranteed and you will be able to keep your weapons […]"[257]

Eventually, most Partisans in the region defected to Chetniks[258], whose troops rose from only 300 in May to 1800 in two months. Chetniks had used communist terror in Herzegovina to

---

[251] Ibid., XIV 1, 417-427.
[252] Ibid., IV 4, 77.
[253] Ibid., IV 4, 227.
[254] Ibid., IV 4, 276.
[255] Ibid., XIV 1, 397-405.
[256] Ibid., II 4, 141-143, 170-179.
[257] Ibid., IV 5, 372.
[258] Ibid., XIV 1, 427-432.

take control over the whole region[259] ending up with 8000 men strong army[260], reliable Italian

protection and no significant opponent, being only formally a part of NDH.

What was the Partisan response to this military disaster? Already in June 1942,

Herzegovina CP committee explains the spring 1942 crisis of Partisan movement by starting a

"second stage" of the war – socialist revolution:

> "The course of collectivisation, the second stage, prevented the masses to understand the national-liberation character of our struggle. Instead, by doing this we alienated ourselves from the masses and paved the way for the fifth column."[261]

Partisans Foča regulations of February 1942 introduced local socialist authorities and measures

of collectivisation on liberated areas[262], but after the failure of "Herzegovina experiment" the

policy of synchronous liberation war and social revolution was abandoned. After the downfall,

Tito ordered the withdrawal of Proletarian brigades from Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, to

Western Bosnia where the focus of operation will be during next year[263]. While retreating,

Proletarian brigades moved through Muslim populated territory. Weary of the potential conflict,

Tito ordered them to stop all unwanted actions towards the population: requisitions and

confiscations, determined not to repeat the mistakes of Herzegovina[264]. The socialist revolution

was put on hold.

Partisans went step forward and accommodated the popular demands that were in sharp

contrast to their ideology. On June 1942, when partisans were most vulnerable and passing

Muslim territory of Central Bosnia, Tito ordered establishing religious (Christian and Muslim)

---

[259] Ibid., XIV 1, 397-405.
[260] Ibid., XIV 1, 417-427.
[261] SK BiH, III 2, 192.
[262] ZNOR, II 2, 411-420.
[263] Ibid., II 4, 395-399.
[264] Ibid., II 5, 7-9, 293-296.

referents in the Proletarian brigades units[265]. Determined not to repeat alienation of population again, the publicly liberal religious policy of Partisans continued until the end of the war[266]. First AVNOJ decisions of 8 February 1943 specifically guarded private property and insisted there'll be no social changes before the end of the war[267]. ZavnoBiH Declaration on Human Rights, July 1 1944 warranted, besides equality of nations, freedom of religion and individual property[268].

The founding of ideological units and beginning the course of collectivisation were measures of heightening the ideological aspect of the Partisan movement, which came out of need to strengthen the units confronting Chetniks. The assumption that civilian needs coincide with what their ideology offered was deadly wrong. Unlike Partisans, Chetniks played the revenge card – recruiting those individuals that wanted to get back to Muslims, for personal, or any other reasons[269], that proved more successful and helped them win a victory.

After the military defeat, Partisan ideology changed to accommodate the warfare. When Communists realized that ideology was an obstacle to attaining their war goals, they simply abandoned the idea of socialist revolution and started providing religious services and safeguarding private property. Again, strategic considerations trumped ideological.

9.2 Chetnik-NDH Accords

The power balance of mid-1942 was diverse in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Chetniks were dominant in Herzegovina and were far stronger than either Ustasha of Partisans. In Western Bosnia, Partisans were of equal strength with Chetniks and in Eastern Bosnia, they were defeated

---

[265] Ibid., II 4, 403-406.
[266] SK BiH, I 1, 150, 194-195, 287-288.
[267] ZNOR, II 8, 36-39.
[268] SK BiH, I 1, 59-60.
[269] ZNOR, XIV 1,133-139.

71

in the German Second Offensive. Here, although those territories under Italian control (the South-East) had some Chetnik presence, NDH had overall controlled the region. All other areas of Bosnia: North, Central and SW were mostly controlled by NDH.

Western Bosnia was the last region that experienced Chetnik-Partisan conflict. Both Partisan and Chetnik units have by then been in state of unrest[270]. February 1942 Partisan report warned that around half of Partisan army in Western Bosnia is prone to switching sides[271]. Eventually series of putsches by soldiers, upset because of the presence of Croats, Muslims or political commissars in the units, started in March and lasted until June 1942[272]. Partisans estimated that by June 1942 Chetniks were in control of 1/3 of Western Bosnia and its central part - south of Banja Luka - and reported even engaging them in frontal battles. They also estimated Chetniks were of the same strength as Partisans[273]. Thus Western Bosnia almost equally split by three actors – Chetniks, Partisans and NDH. It is not surprising that in these conditions the first "unholy alliance" of many, between two nationalist groups that crossed ethnic lines – Chetniks and Ustasha – was formed, above all to prevent either from becoming the weakest party if and after Partisan troops had reorganized.

Chetnik leader Drenović, commandant of the "Kočić" unit that previously worked tightly with Partisans, signed the first agreement with NDH on April 27 1942 in Western Bosnia's Mrkonjić Grad. The agreement had eight points, first one ending all hostilities, third:

> "Croatian armed forces will use their force to protect Serbian villages together with Chetniks from the attacks of communists or so-called 'Partisans'" and eight: "All inhabitants of Orthodox confession are guaranteed absolutely free profession of their faith, celebration of religious holidays and patron saints, as well as equality under the laws […]"[274]

---

[270] Ibid., IV 3, 273-291.
[271] SK BiH, III2, 47-51.
[272] ZNOR, IV 5, 68-71, 179-184.
[273] Ibid., IV 5, 211-222.
[274] Ibid., XIV 1, 216 – 217.

Series of agreements were then signed on a local level by various Chetnik units in Western, Northern and Central Bosnia[275]. On May 28 1942 another agreement was signed in Lipac between the representatives of NDH and three Chetnik units. It had about twenty articles, similar in tone to other agreements, including recognizing the NDH sovereignty, expected future Chetnik disarmament, etc.[276]

In order to keep track of, and discuss the developments on the field, Chetnik leaders held a conference in Javorani in Western Bosnia on June 7 1942. In a thorough discussion of pros and cons of the NDH agreements, rational arguments prevail. Chetniks that supported the agreements justified them by the need to protect from Partisans and especially Proletarian brigades, by protection of Serb civilian lives, who suffered in the security vacuum, liberating civilian Serbs from Croat camps, getting food and ammunition from NDH, but also by getting to know their troops better in order to fight them effectively, sometime in the future. The main counter-arguments were that after everything NDH had done to Serb civilian, the state sovereignty should not have been recognized, that surrender of weapons to NDH in the future is unacceptable, and that Chetniks should not join NDH volunteer ranks or get on the payroll - this would make them Ustasha mercenaries[277]. Finally, Chetniks of Eastern and Western Bosnia held another Conference in Grabska on July 1 1942, where they formed The Supreme Chetniks HQ for Bosnia and recognized all individual agreements with NDH[278].

Chetniks saw the new alliance in purely pragmatic terms, and NDH assessments were not much different – they were critical of the military value of the agreements, they mistrusted

[275] Ibid., IV 6, 377-380, 413-415. Ibid., XIV 1, 216.
[276] Ibid., XIV 1, 276 – 280.
[277] Ibid., XIV 1, 311-318.
[278] Ibid., XIV 1, 405-409.

Chetniks and did not find them reliable soldiers in the battles[279]. The alliance was borne out of consideration that was purely strategic and only justified in ethnic or ideological terms.

If we observe the regional variation, it's interesting noting that there was no cooperation established between Chetniks and NDH in Herzegovina. Safeguarded by Italians, Chetniks sovereignly ruled Herzegovina by middle 1942. NDH ministers protested this and demanded to send troops and take control over it[280], but Chetniks objected strongly, relying on Italy's policies of anti-communism and weakening of Croatian authority in coastal areas. Italian report from May 13 1942 depicts the situation in Herzegovina:

> "Ustasha elements in Mostar were spreading rumours of imminent arrival of their units, which will clean up Northern Herzegovina and again commit crimes against Serbs. The rumours caused Orthodox population much distress; they fear the new period of terror. Prominent Serbs immediately contacted our authorities suggesting that the news made such an atmosphere that arrival of even one Ustasha unit in this area would provoke all Orthodox into most energetic and desperate rebellion. There is also a chance that the desperate panicking masses could join communists […]"[281]

For Chetniks, the power balance in Herzegovina factored Italian credible protection from NDH, but in other regions, German authorities had no incentives to irritate NDH and denied any possibility of cooperation with Chetniks on a scale Italians were willing to in Herzegovina. Germans permitted formal agreements with Chetniks only from November 1943, and even then only with individual Chetniks groups, in spite of continuing Mihailović policy of waging a war against Germany[282]. Thus Chetniks in Western, Northern and Northeast Bosnia, where most of the agreements with NDH took place, had no other third party to ally with in their civil war against the Partisans.

---

[279] Ibid., IV 6, 373-376. Ibid., IV 8, 548-607.
[280] Ibid., XIV 1, 427-432.
[281] Ibid., XIII 2, 412.
[282] Ibid., XII 3, 679-681.

Although NDH ethnic policy towards Serbs, already started amending after the failure of insurgency, after the agreements with Chetniks, NDH continued to publicly accommodate some of their demands. NDH rules of engagement with insurgent civilian population ordered cessation of indiscriminate violence against persons or property, however still not sanctioning the practice of burning insurgent villages and sending hostages to concentration camps[283]. On a national level, another move was establishing of Parliament (February 23 1942), with 205 seats, of which 106 were members of Ustasha movement, 15 Muslims and 3 Orthodox representatives – but the *Sabor* had no real authority and was largely a red herring[284]. Other largely accommodating measures included stopping of forced conversion into Roman Catholicism and establishing Croatian Orthodox Church[285].

Although every typical NDH-Chetnik agreement contained a clause that guaranteed Orthodox populations' freedom of religion and equality before the law[286], the agreements had two major consequences: some Chetniks, alienated by NDH agreements turned to Partisans[287]. Also, Muslims were alienated from NDH because of the Chetnik accords[288], which will figure more in the next chapter.

Comparing Chetnik-NDH relations in Western Bosnia and Herzegovina allows testing for variables. The "ethnic" enmity between the two parties was constant, yet in Western Bosnia, Chetniks entered the agreements recognizing NDH sovereignty, and in Herzegovina, even spreading rumours of Croatian soldiers approaching was alarming. The reason for it is that

[283] Ibid., IV 2, 443-447.
[284] Ibid., XII 2, 162-176.
[285] Ibid., XII 2, 139-142, 162-176.
[286] Ibid., XIV 1, 215-218.
[287] Ibid., IV 5, 68-71, 179-184.
[288] ZNOR, IV 5, 433-437. ZNOR, IV 6, 349-363. SK BiH, III 2, 214-217.

Western Bosnia was in an unstable equilibrium, where each party's small absolute gain in power would mean possible downfall for one of the other two and Herzegovina was strongly held by Chetniks. Herzegovina Chetniks also had an ally against the Partisans – Italy, while in the parts of Bosnia under German control NDH was the only possible ally. Therefore the rationale of Chetnik agreements with NDH was purely pragmatic – when weighing the military benefits of cooperation with the violence that NDH perpetrated against its kin, the former was imperative.

This argument goes along the second hypothesis that ethnic cleavages are less relevant than strategic considerations and also that geographic distribution of armed groups is a significant factor in their decision making. The shifting of ethnic policies in order to justify strategic decisions is also visible in NDH continued public accommodation of Serb grievances through representatives in Sabor, establishment of COC, guarantees of freedom of religion etc. Therefore, strategic considerations informed the changes in ethnic and ideological ones and not the opposite.

10.   1941-1942: Muslims between NDH and Chetniks

Muslim relations with NDH were not conflictless. Second half of 1941 was marked by resolutions of Muslim leaders from Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, and other larger cities, expressing grievances about NDH government' policies[289]. Some of them were concerned about religious freedoms or policies that meddled with religious practices, such as the banning of women headscarves[290]. But in a Resolution of group of Muslims from Banja Luka, sent to Muslim members of NDH government – Kulenović and Bešlagić – they point out deep concerns and describe the causes of the uprising and instrumentalisation of violence along ethnic lines:

> "Parts of Ustasha units, some Wild, but also regular, committed grave attacks not only against Christians but also against Muslims, causing great amazement among us. […] The spread of the uprising in our parts is a consequence of these acts and mistakes. This uprising has all the horrors of insurgencies and civil wars with insurgents setting on fire and cruelly killing men, women and children as revenge against those who are often not responsible for their troubles. […] The elements that are responsible for this uprising attracted to their actions some Muslim scum, which we regret and condemn. […] We are aware of several occasions that Ustasha went on murdering Christians wearing fezzes on their heads. […] Catholic Ustasha has been attacking Christians calling each other "Mujo", "Huso", "Meho" etc. They spread rumours among Christians that we, "balije" are killing them in order to exterminate them. […] After creating such a tough conflict between us Muslims and Christian, now they call us to join the army and quell the rebellion, to kill Serbs, so that they can kill us, and that we mutually exterminate each other, not knowing when will all this stop or what consequences will it have."[291]

However difficult the NDH regime was for civilian Bosnian Muslims, the situation they encountered in parts of Bosnia that were governed by rebels was much more delicate. While Partisans tried to mobilize Muslim support for the war, Chetniks committed widespread acts of violence against Muslim civilians.

---

[289] ZNOR, IV 2, 157-158, 430-433.
[290] SK BiH, III 1, 126-127.
[291] ZNOR, IV 2, 431-432.

Straight after the Chetnik June takeover of Herzegovina, the Muslim elites tried to find a way to accommodate new situation in which they formally were citizens of NDH, but in fact were ruled by Chetniks and Italians. Elite Muslim politics was however in disjunction with the larger Muslim population – Chetniks leader Jevđević report of June 1942 suggests:

> "Intellectuals in larger centres have already realized how wrong their politics was and now are solidary with Serbs. They have sent a proclamation to the authorities where they are saying their destiny is tied up with Serbian […] on the other side, both Serbian and Muslim masses hate each other infernally and they have formed consciousness that cohabitation will never be possible again."[292]

One of the intellectuals he was referring to was Ismet Popovac, a Muslim leader who approached Mihailović already in July 1942. Popovac, identifying himself as both Serb and Muslim propagated idea of Muslims-Chetnik rapprochement and improvement of relations that were hampered by violence and suggested forming Chetniks Muslim units[293]. The creation of Muslim Chetnik units started in late 1942, and in January 1943 Mihailović promoted Fahim Musakadić into leader of Muslim Chetniks:

> "I agree with appointment of Musa as commander of Muslim Chetnik Units of Yugoslav Army. Musa must be brought into highest position because he is Yugoslav and Serb from head to toe."[294]

Muslim Chetniks, led by Popovac and Musakadić, soon published their political platform: their goal was organization of Muslims against Ustasha and full reconciliation with Chetniks. They identify a common enemy in Ustasha: "We know that the main political goal of Ustasha is to use Muslims against the Orthodox and through this fight they plan to exterminate us both"[295]. February 1943 German report identifies first 300 strong Muslim Chetnik units[296].

[292] Ibid., XIV 1, 397-405.
[293] Ibid., XIV 1, 456-458.
[294] Ibid., XIV 2, 139.
[295] Scanned document from Military History Archive in Belgrade; NF k. 226 b. 3/6-2
[296] ZNOR, XII 3, 79-84.

Two conclusions relevant for the third sub-hypothesis – relation between combatants and non-combatants can be inferred from these two cases. The events described in the resolution of Banja Luka Muslims show how ethnicity was instrumentalized in order to mobilize support through inciting conflict between the two groups. The rationale is the following. Indiscriminate violence is a powerful instrument because it is bound to provoke a mechanism of revenge. Once the cycle of retributions starts, recruitment into regular forces becomes easier. Ethnic conflict is factually constructed through violence and with strategic purpose.

Actions of Herzegovina Muslims towards Chetniks show that ethnic defection is possible, even in conditions of extreme ethnic conflict - identity of defectors is amended, qualified, but not abandoned. Just as Chetniks qualified themselves as anti-communists in order to justify cooperation with NDH, so did Muslims from Herzegovina add Serb label in order to defect to the *de facto* sovereign force. Ethnic enmity being constant, strategic considerations determined the Muslim approach to Chetniks.Yet, even if the idea of Muslim Chetniks can be explained from the perspective of Muslims, why did Chetniks agree with reconciliatory measures in Herzegovina? What made them abandon the established policy of exterminating Muslim civilians from the territories on which they had a firm grip? Partisan internal memo from September 20 1942 informs about the change in Italian policy towards Muslims in Herzegovina:

> "Lately there was a change of attitude of Occupiers towards the Muslims. Until recently they accused all Muslims of being Communists, but now they are talking with Muslim leaders and arming Muslim peasants. Clearly, the Occupier will intensify this relying on Muslims, because they perceive Chetniks as unreliable. Interestingly enough, this political game had led Chetniks to moderate their attitude towards the Muslims. […] During attacks on villages […] not only have they not attacked, plundered and kill Muslims, they even had sentries in front of Muslim houses. Nevertheless, the rift between Chetniks and Muslims is so deep that it won't be covered by Chetniks 'nice behaviour'. Instead, we will try to [do this] simultaneously disclosing Chetniks as […] butchers of Muslims."[297]

---

[297] SK BiH, III 2, 250.

Thus it was concern about the perspective of change of the balance of power in Herzegovina, which would, coupled with loss of Italian protection, jeopardize Chetnik position in the region, which led them to try to win Muslims over, instead of persecuting them. In late 1942 internal documents, Chetniks indeed admitted "too much crimes" against Muslims cannot be good, and Mihailović instructs officers to take "more tactical approach" to Muslims[298]. In February 1943 Mihailović ordered Chetniks to try and win over the Muslims, and he sanctioned any mistreatments[299]. But as the logic of civil war implies, different regions always had different strategic considerations. At the same time Chetniks were taking reconciliatory measures in Herzegovina, they were conducting mass and indiscriminate killings of Muslim civilians in Eastern Bosnia[300]. Chetnik leader Ostojić justifies these killings:

> "[Muslims] must be slaughtered, because, if we don't slaughter them, they will try to slaughter us, while the Occupier still protects them."[301]

In a region where Chetniks felt secure, under Italian protection, Muslims were perceived as no immediate threat, and the cooperation was even welcomed, having the perspective of possible Italian-Muslim rapprochement in the future. But while Muslims were protected in Herzegovina, in East Bosnia, where the power balance was different, Chetniks perceived their position as more vulnerable and with no protection of occupying forces; relations are perceived in pure terms of the security dilemma, leading to logic of pre-emptive violence.

---

[298] ZNOR, XIV 1, 566, 658-659.
[299] Ibid., XIV 2, 244-245, 334-338.
[300] Ibid., XIV 2, 31, 182-185, 503-506.
[301] Ibid., XIV 2, 31.

11.   From the Turning Point to Beginning of the End

11.1 1943: The Turning Point

Two major events traced the further developments in the war, with extensive consequences on the war dynamics. One was the establishment of Partisan "Bihać Republic" in Western Bosnia and consolidation of their power, and the other was the fall of Italy in mid-1943.

After most of the Partisan units, retreating from Eastern Bosnia arrived in Western Bosnia in August 1942, Tito instructed his troops to pursue liberation of major cities and to create continuous liberated territory[302]. Partisans have by now recognized the significance of holding cities for insurgency and pursued a state-building project, for the second time, after the defeat of "Užice Republic" in Western Serbia in 1941. Their success was unexpected by their enemies. Chetnik report of July 1942 estimates strength of this "soviet republic" at 12 000 well armed soldiers, which gathered from all parts of Yugoslavia[303]. December 1942 German report on the uprising in Western Bosnia described Bihać as "communist state" that expanded territory to 250x100 km, and had some 63 000 highly disciplined soldiers, way outnumbering Chetniks led by Jevđević in the region, that were 24000 strong[304]. Partisans' politics towards the Axis powers also developed diplomatic overtones. Besides continuous communication with Italian officers and soldiers, they entered a series of secret negotiations with Germans in Zagreb in March 1943 about the exchange of prisoners[305].

Chetniks were affected by these developments. German report from February 1943 describes anti-communism of Chetniks becoming much weaker than before, a sign that the rapprochement with Partisans might become possible, but Partisans declined any possibility of

[302] Ibid., II 5, 317-322.
[303] Ibid., XIV 1, 417-427.
[304] Ibid., XII 2, 952-957.
[305] Ibid., II 10, 430-431.

talks[306]. Spring of 1943 was a period of the so-called Fourth Offensive (Operation Weiss, or Battle of Neretva)[307]. The main body of Partisans had to move southwards from the liberated area of Western Bosnia and back into Chetnik-dominated Herzegovina. In course of this movement, numerous battles with Chetniks occurred, and after the Partisan military success against numerically stronger forces in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chetniks reported very low morale and bad conditions of their units[308].

After the Fifth Offensive (Battle of Sutjeska, or Operation Schwartz) in June 1943, one of the last large scale attempts to encircle and crush Partisans in NDH, Partisans were weakened, but gained significant political advantage. German field commander Lüters reports about the Partisan-Chetnik conflict and the results of the Offensive:

> "Total enemy forces were 40000 Chetniks and 18000 Communists. Both enemy groups were infighting, but Chetniks, although superior in numbers, could not hold the advance of Communists. […] Communist forces under Tito are superiorly organized, skilfully led and have surprisingly high battle moral. Enemy commandment was extraordinarily flexible and – also in defence – active. […] Croatian forces under Croatian command, with exceptions, have insignificant military value."[309]

Italy, whose troops have controlled significant parts of NDH, retreated from the war on July 25 1943. Partisans used this unprecedented opportunity to expand their territory, gain equipment, recruit more soldiers, and finally establish connections with the Allies, whose aid started reaching them in May 1943[310]. Partisans recaptured most of the Eastern Bosnia in late 1943, starting the Muslim and Chetnik re-evaluation of their positions[311]. Both expansion of insurgent

---

[306] Ibid., XII 3, 79-84.
[307] Ibid., IV 10, 562-563. Ibid., IV 11, 386-387.
[308] Ibid., II 1, 277-282. Ibid., XIV 2, 729.
[309] Ibid., II 9, 467-477.
[310] Ibid., II 9, 291, 334-340. Ibid., II 10, 100-101, 401, 429.
[311] Ibid., IV 19, 333-341.

territory and the fall of Italy in 1943 had devastating effects on NDH[312]. Besides losing territorial

control and allied troops, internal reports from 1943 indicate morale among Croats hitting low:

> "People are eagerly anticipating end of the war and openly saying they don't care
> anymore what side is going to win, as long as the war ends. Majority has no sense
> of patriotism any more, everyone is involved with smuggling and trading and the
> only goal is to make some profit, totally losing the sense of state and nations'
> interests."[313]

Partisan success apparently depended on their state-building strategy. As the theory suggested,

insurgency always have this element present, but it is the quality of the territorial control that is

critical. After failure in Herzegovina, modified Partisan government over territories they

controlled was the least bad option for the population that started filling their ranks. The events

of 1943 signalled that NDH lost the capability to exercise sovereignty on most of its Bosnian

territory, that Partisans are the force to be reckoned with and that Chetniks, after the defeat by

superior Partisan army and without the Italian protection, are on a verge of losing the war.

11.2 1944-1945: Beginning of the End

The events of 1943 led to three further developments of relevance for this thesis: development of

Muslim Militias throughout Bosnia, large-scale defections to Partisans and new shifts in

ideological positions of the parties that were losing the war.

11.2.1 Muslim Militias (1943-1944)

During 1943, with Partisans rise to power, NDH losing ground, and increasing pressure on

Muslims to join Home Guard ranks, while Chetniks still presenting an imminent danger,

Muslims in Bosnia defected from regular forces of NDH in large numbers and started organizing

---

[312] Ibid., IV 17, 460-463.
[313] Ibid., IV 20, 725.

local militias for reasons of self-defence. Ustasha and German murders of Muslim civilians that were accused of supporting communism during summer of 1943 led to further Muslim alienation from the NDH authorities[314]. Partisan intelligence from June 1943 on situation around Tuzla, 85% Muslim populated area in Northeast Bosnia, reports that most Muslim villages are armed in local militias, some are cooperating with NDH, some are "neutral" and organized for self-protection, while other are sympathetic towards the Partisans[315]. Main reason behind large scale defection from regular NDH forces was forced mobilization, which would leave the villages unprotected[316]. Although Muslim Militias showed great flexibility in forging alliances with local armed groups, most of them eventually joined Partisan ranks towards the end of the war.

Partisans' first attempt to recruit large portions of Muslim population was in liberated Cazin Krajina, ¾ Muslim inhabited North-western tip of Bosnia in December 1942, with pessimistic perspective of attracting Muslims to join their ranks[317]. Partisan report from Cazin of September 1943 describes encounters with Muslim Militia led by Huska Miljković who had formed there:

> "[…] some kind of military formations with Chetnik character, mobilizing masses under appeals for struggle for Islam into "young Muslim army". His main methods of recruitment differ, but it's mostly through the use of force, and he recently kidnapped men gathered around mosques to pray."[318]

Huska army's core reportedly consisted of former members of Wild Ustasha, and he developed ties with both Chetniks and Germans and was openly hostile towards Partisans[319]. NDH report of November 1943 mentions that Chetniks and Miljković had made an oral

---

[314] Ibid., IV 14, 526-529. Ibid., IV 15, 495-496.
[315] Ibid., IV 14, 223-227.
[316] Ibid., IV 20, 725-734.
[317] Ibid., II 7, 40-44.
[318] Ibid., IV 17, 150.
[319] Ibid., IV 17, 150-153.

agreement against the Partisans, who dominated the surrounding region[320]. Still, Partisans kept

pressure on Miljković, and formed units in the vicinity of the territory under his army's control.

Eventually, at the end of 1943, Miljković, leading some 3000 strong Muslim Militia joined the

Partisans, and from February 1944 until his murder later that year he was a commander of newly

formed Partisan "Una operative group" that was formed to collect his former soldiers[321].

Other Muslim Militias, labelled *Zeleni Kadar* (lit. Green Cadre, term used for Home

Guard deserters) operated mainly in Northeast Bosnia, but after December 1943, Green Cadre

there was reduced to several hundred soldiers. However, the extent to which Green Cadre units

were open, similarly to Huska Miljković in Cazin, to forge alliances with groups across

ideological and ethnic cleavages was vast.

In Northeast Bosnia, Green Cadre and Chetniks cooperated against Partisans under

German auspices[322]. This was another indicator of the emerging autonomy of Muslim units and

power deterioration that had led Chetniks to ally with Muslim unist[323]. Criticized in February

1944 for cooperation with Muslim Militias, Chetnik leader answered:

> "We have to, man, only joining forces with Green Cadre can allow us to
> successfully fight Partisans, and Germans support our new friendship. After all,
> Draža [Mihailović] was ambiguous in his order, saying that we should be cunning
> in relations with everybody."[324]

Another group of some 500 strong Green Cadre was organized in Eastern Bosnia by

Muhamed Pandža, Islamic religious leader. Captured in late 1943, he tried to join Partisans. They

were suspicious of his motivations and simply did not know what to do with him:

> "In our opinion, he [doesn't want to join because he's] afraid for his own life, but
> because he became convinced that Hitler is losing the war and that Reaction in

---

[320] Ibid., IV 19, 481-483.
[321] Ibid., V 19, 96-97.
[322] Ibid., IV 20, 598-618, 725-734.
[323] Ibid., IV 22, 440-446.
[324] Ibid., IV 22, 445.

whole country is shaken, and on the way to breakdown while [Partisans] became most powerful factor in the country […] It would not be wise in these circumstances to liquidate Pandža, him being Muslim religious leader […] Please inform us promptly on how to use him."[325]

NDH was also still able, in early 1944, to gain leverage over Green Cadre formations under Nesad Topčić in Tuzla and formed *Domdo* (Domobrani Volunteer) units, limited to maximum of 5000 soldiers[326], which, together with Chetniks continued fighting against Partisans[327]. Green Cadre started to change stance towards Partisans in the second half of 1944, but because of strong SS (Handžar Division) presence in the region, avoided openly joining Partisans for some time to come[328].

The emergence of Muslim militias confirms the second hypothesis. They are, by all reports, formed not because of ideological or ethnic reasons, but because of the protection of otherwise vulnerable villages. The time of the emergence corresponds to disappearance of the sovereign state that would credibly guarantee safety. Their affiliation with other groups depended strictly on strategic considerations and was as volatile as the circumstances demanded. As Partisans became the only game in town, Muslim militias one by one joined the game. The mechanism of forced mobilisation, both by Home Guard and by Muslim militia, and desertions in order to protect local villages supports the third sub-hypothesis. Ethnic or ideological affiliation was not driving civilians to join the armies, but local security considerations did.

11.2.2 Defections to Partisans (1943-1944)

Towards 1944, Partisan power increased and individual and group defections gained impetus. The policy of encouraging defections throughout the war made Partisan army more multi-ethnic than any other. This, in turn, played in their advantage towards the end of the war, since it was

---

[325] Ibid., IV 19, 335.
[326] Ibid., IV 22, 440-446.
[327] Ibid., IV 22, 557-566.
[328] Ibid., IV 30, 92-98.

easier for defectors to join units that already had their co-ethnics. This doesn't prove the point that ethnic defections (across cleavages) are conceivable or not. Instead, defections seem to be in direct relations with power relations, but not completely detached from ethnic or ideological considerations. Although it would be difficult to systematically trace these defections, some notable examples deserve to be mentioned.

Muslims joining Partisan ranks were, thanks to active Partisan policy of encouraging defections, most numerous. Muslims of Central Bosnia refused NDH mobilization during July 1943 and in order to protect themselves from Chetniks, mostly joined Partisans[329]. Home Guard Colonel Sulejman Filipović led some 1500 Muslims and 600 Croats to join Partisans in September and October 1943, during battles for liberation of Tuzla, which was also a tipping point in relation of Muslims and Croats of this region towards the Partisans[330]. After that, cases of Home Guard Muslims defections were more frequent. It also had an effect on Chetnik units in the region near Tuzla, which started defecting in large numbers to Partisans after October 1943[331].

Partisan army was by second half of 1944 in a position to pose an ultimatum to Home Guard forces to defect by mid-September. The response was massive defection, especially in Western Bosnia, where whole Home Guard units joined Partisans in September 1944[332]. General amnesty for surrendering Home Guard and Chetniks was prolonged until January 15 1945[333] and after defection of thousands of Home Guard soldiers, Green Cadre and Ustasha also surrendered to Partisans *en masse* in Tuzla region in March 1945, signalling the end of the war[334].

---

[329] Ibid., IV 15, 169-172.
[330] Ibid., IV 4, 254-256. Ibid., IV 18, 208-214. Ibid., IV 17, 460-463.
[331] Ibid., IV 18, 199-208.
[332] Ibid., IV 29, 288-289, 615-618. Ibid., XII 4, 599-601.
[333] SK BiH, I 1, 10-11.
[334] ZNOR, IV 34, 314-320.

11.2.3 Disintegrations (1944-1945)

German report from September 1944 captures the extent of disintegration of NDH and widespread defections of its military[335]. The reconstructed NDH government brought more radical Ustasha to its core, and ceased cooperation with Chetniks, who rebelled against NDH throughout Bosnia, making them confronted with both Ustasha and Partisans.

By the end of 1944 Partisans controlled vast territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Chetniks were mostly dispersed and did not control any significant continuous territory[336]. As a response to Second AVNOJ Decisions of November 29 1943 that established Partisan organs as representative bodies of a new Yugoslav state, Chetniks held their own Congress in village Ba in Serbia and proclaimed future federal Yugoslavia, as parliamentary monarchy. This was an attempt to accommodate expectations of anti-communist, democratic movement and there was no mention of cleansing of minorities, which figured in every earlier Chetnik documents[337]. Faced with military defeat, Mihailović again tried to adapt his policies, trying to mobilize Croats and Muslims of Bosnia to join Chetniks, and not being particularly selective:

> "It is necessary, wherever there are Muslims or Croats, to form, next to Serbian, separate Croatian and Muslim units […] All correct Croats and Muslims can be accepted to these units […] Those Croats and Muslims that have superficially taken the name "Ustasha" can also be accepted […]"[338]

King Peter II's order to Chetniks to go under command of Tito made a total disorder in Chetniks units, they were disintegrating[339]. Desperate attempts were made to regain Allied support. In late 1944, Moljević, the men behind the idea of "Homogenous Serbia", now pleaded for unity:

---

[335] Ibid., XII 4, 599-601.
[336] Ibid., IV 30, 92-98.
[337] Jozo Tomasevich, *The Chetniks,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 399.
[338] Scanned document from Military History Archive in Belgrade; NF k. 5 b. 36/3.
[339] Ibid., NF k. 280 b. 16/1 f. 47.

"We now have to prove to the Allies that we're able to bring law and order to the country and unite it on democratic basis in a spirit of contemporary times. Unity with Muslims and Croats is a first condition […]"[340]

The power deterioration of NDH and Chetniks towards the end of the war was followed by new ideological turns, although in the opposite directions: NDH government became more radical and Chetnik leadership more ideologically and ethnically conciliatory. The main goal of these adaptations, mobilising soldiers and winning over the Allies, nevertheless failed.

The war in Bosnia lasted after Belgrade was liberated. Germany's army started the retreating, from Herzegovina towards Bosnia, in August 1944[341], and last German units left Sarajevo and crossed Sava in early April 1945[342], after which Sarajevo was liberated on April 6 1945[343]. Supreme Partisan HQ on April 21 ordered units around Sarajevo and across Eastern Bosnia:

"Chetniks must be hunted down continuously and with no respite; only with continuous movements and constant attacks you can cover the whole terrain and exterminate them."[344]

The Civil war in Yugoslavia lasted even after all foreign troops have left the country.

---

[340] ZNOR, XIV 4, 412.
[341] Ibid., IV 28, 445-448.
[342] Ibid., XII 4, 843-844.
[343] SK BiH, I 1, 435-436.
[344] ZNOR, II 15, 375.

Conclusion

This research has tried to explain *why* the actors on different levels of analysis behaved the way they did and *what* motivated them, by comparing *when*, *how* and *where* did ethnicity, ideology, or strategic considerations, figure in their documents, and in relation to violent conflict. In essence, it was a comparative approach, although it may seem masked by historical analysis. Empirically, instances of conflict and cooperation between different armed groups were compared, and it was supplemented by the analysis of the dynamics of repression and insurgency, as well as relation between militaries and civilians.

Related to first sub-hypothesis, that repression and insurgency could be better explained by strategic considerations, the research explained some mechanisms that shed light on instrumental nature of both ethnic and ideological cleavages in this process, but on the other side, not enough evidence was supported for this claim. The second sub-hypothesis, which predicted that strategic considerations would better explain relations between warring parties, was repeatedly confirmed in every case. Methodological approach of disaggregating actors, time and space proved to be rewarding, because it allowed for comparison of variation in Chetnik-Partisan, Chetnik-NDH, Muslim-Chetnik and all Muslim militia alliances. The instrumental role of ideology in military – civilian relations was tested in the "Herzegovina experiment" chapter and of ethnicity in the Chapter 10 on Bosnian Muslim grievances.

> The overall finding of the comparative analysis is that strategic considerations inform patterns of ideological and ethnic cleavages, answering positively to H2.

On a theoretical perspective, the paper has argued that master cleavages are simply not a good way to classify civil wars – H1. Based on the findings in this research, coding the war in Bosnia as *anything else than civil* war would not have been justified. From the introduction and the case

of Jeleč, the ambiguity and complexity of the phenomena never got out of the way and the attempts to cover these by any arbitrary binary coding is both empirically and conceptually uninformed.

Thus the role of cleavages in civil wars, based on the findings of this research is more complicated than what is suggested by labels "ethnic" or "ideological" war. They are instrumental, not essential to the violent conflict, and in order to understand the dynamics of civil wars, one needs to scratch deep under the surface of cleavages.

After Conclusion: External Validity?

This research does not imply generalizability, but in order to check for external validity, several historical studies of Second World War, referenced in secondary literature on civil war, can point in the direction of the hypothesis of this thesis. For example, in German occupied Soviet Union:

> "the decision to side with Germans or partisans seems commonly to have been *determined by the individual's wartime experience* - not by abstract considerations and evaluations of the merits and demerits of the two regimes, nor even necessarily by likes and dislikes or experiences under the Soviet regime before the occupation - *and also by the accident of which regime was the stronger and happened to control a given area*" [added emphasis].[345]

Another example is from Vichy France, where resistance fighters during the Second World War, Maquis, were described as a "*mosaic of distinctive movement created from below*" [added emphasis], with little emphasis on ideology[346]. These two anecdotal evidences are not sufficient for saying that the findings of this research possess high external validity, but do indicate that similar mechanisms might have been present in other wars of World War Two.

---

[345] Alexander Dallin, Ralph Mavrogordato, and Wilhelm Moll, "Partisan Psychological Warfare and Popular Attitudes," in *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, ed. John A Armstrong. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 336.
[346] Clarence B. Davis, review of H. R. Kedward, "In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942–1944," (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), in *History: Reviews of New Books* 23, no. 3 (1995): 132.

Appendix

Map 1: Independent State of Croatia
Italian (South-West) and German (North-East) Zones of control

HUNGARY

Cazin
Krajina

Posavina

Western
Bosnia
(Krajina)

North-Eastern
Bosnia

INDEPENDENT

ITALY

Central
Bosnia

STATE

Eastern
Bosnia

SERBIA

OF

CROATIA

Eastern
Herzegovina

Western
Herzegovina

MONTENEGRO

50 km

ITALY

ALBANIA

Map 2: Regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bibliography

Biddle, Stephen. "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

Brown, Michael E., ed. *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Brubaker, Rogers. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Brubaker, Rogers, and David Laitin. "Ethnic and Nationalist Violence." *Annual Review of Sociology,* no. 24 (1998): 423–452.

Chandra, Kanchan. "What Is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, no. 1 (2006): 397–424.

Christia, Fotini. "The Closest of Enemies : Alliance Formation in the Afghan and Bosnian Civil Wars". PhD Thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 2008.

Colić, Mladen. *Takozvana Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941*. Beograd: Delta-pres, 1973.

Collier, Paul. "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (2000): 839–853.

———. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (2004): 563–595.

Cramer, Christopher. "Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice and the Political Economy of War." *World Development* 30, no. 11 (2002): 1845–1864.

Crljen, Danijel. *Načela Hrvatskog Ustaškog Pokreta*. Zagreb, 1942.

Dallin, Alexander, Ralph Mavrogordato, and Wilhelm Moll. "Partisan Psychological Warfare and Popular Attitudes." In *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, edited by John A Armstrong. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.

David, Steven R. "Internal War: Causes and Cures." *World Politics* 49, no. 4 (1997): 552–576.

Davis, Clarence B. Review of "*In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942–1944*" by H. R. Kedward. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. In *History: Reviews of New Books* 23, no. 3 (1995): 132.

Djilas, Milovan. *Revolucionarni rat*. Beograd: Književne novine, 1990.

Eckstein, Harry. "On the Etiology of Internal Wars." *History and Theory* 4, no. 2 (1965): 133–163.

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. *Civil Wars: From L.A. to Bosnia*. New York: The New Press, 1995.

Fearon, James D. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414.

———. "Commitment Problems and the Spread of Ethnic Conflict." In *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, edited by David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, 107–126. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

———. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75–90.

Gagnon, Valère Philip. "Historical Roots of the Yugoslav Conflict." In *International Organizations and Ethnic Conflict*, edited by Milton Jacob Esman and Shibley Telhami, 179–197. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

———. *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia And Croatia in the 1990s*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Gleditsch, Nils Petter, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand. "Armed Conflict 1946-2001: A New Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 39 , no. 5 (2002): 615–637.

Goodwin, Jeff. *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Gourevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. London: Picador, 1999.

Green, Donald P., and Rachel L. Seher. "What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 6, no. 1 (2003): 509–531.

Hale, Henry E. *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics: Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hoare, Marko Attila. *Genocide and Resistance in Hitler's Bosnia: The Partisans and the Chetniks, 1941-1943*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

———. *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

———. *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Istorisko odjeljenje CK KP BiH. *Arhiv Komunističke Partije Bosne i Hercegovine*. Vol. 1, Tome I. Sarajevo: 1950.

Istorisko odjeljenje CK SK BiH. *Arhiv Saveza Komunista Bosne i Hercegovine*. Vol. 1, Tome III. Sarajevo: 1952.

———. *Arhiv Saveza Komunista Bosne i Hercegovine*. Vol. 2, Tome III. Sarajevo: 1953.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

Jervis, Robert, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein. *Psychology and Deterrence*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Kaldor, Mary. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics* 54, no. 1 (2001): 99–118.

———. "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 3 (2003): 475–494.

———. "Warfare in Civil Wars." In *Rethinking The Nature Of War*, edited by Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom, 88–108. New York: Frank Cass, 2005.

———. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

———. "Ethnic Defection in Civil War." *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 8 (2008a): 1043–1068.

———. "Promises and Pitfalls of an Emerging Research Program: The Microdynamics of Civil War." In *Order, Conflict, and Violence*, edited by Stathis N. Kalyvas, Ian Shapiro, and Tarek Masoud. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008b.

———. "Fear, Preemption, Retaliation: An Empirical Test of the Security Dilemma." In *Intra-State Conflict, Governments and Security: Dilemmas of Deterrence and Assurance*, edited by Stephen M. Saideman and Marie-Joëlle Zahar, 20–32. New York: Routledge, 2008c.

———. "Civil Wars." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, 416–435. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

———. "Internal Conflict and Political Violence: New Developments in Research." In *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, edited by Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence, xi–xiii. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010.

Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Matthew Adam Kocher. "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?: Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem." *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007a): 177–216.

———. "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam." *Politics & Society* 35, no. 2 (2007b): 183–223.

Kaufmann, Chaim. "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars." *International Security* 20, no. 4 (1996a): 136–175.

———. "Intervention in Ethnic and Ideological Civil Wars: Why One Can Be Done and the Other Can't." *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996b): 62–101.

Lake, David A., and Donald S. Rothchild. "Spreading Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict." In *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, edited by David A. Lake and Donald S. Rothchild, 3–34. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998a.

Lake, David A., and Donald S. Rothchild, eds. *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998b.

Lemkin, Raphael. *Axis Rule In Occupied Europe: Laws Of Occupation, Analysis Of Government, Proposals For Redress*. Clark: The Lawbook Exchange, 2005.

Lichbach, Mark Irving. "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 2 (1987): 266–297.

Licklider, Roy. "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993." *The American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 681–690.

Lijphart, Arend. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682–693.

Lukić, Dragoje. *Rat i djeca Kozare*. Beograd: Književne novine, 1990.

Mahoney, James, and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Mahoney, James, and P. Larkin Terrie. "Comparative-Historical Analysis in Contemporary Political Science." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, 737–756. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Mill, John Stuart. *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation*. New York: Harper, 1846.

Minić, Miloš. *Oslobodilački ili građanski rat u Jugoslaviji 1941-1945*. Novi Sad: Agencija Mir, 1993.

Montalvo, José G, and Marta Reynal-Querol. "Ethnic Polarization, Potential Conflict, and Civil Wars." *American Economic Review* 95, no. 3 (2005): 796–816.

Moore, Will H. "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing." *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 3 (1998): 851–873.

Mueller, John. "The Banality of 'Ethnic War'." *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 42–70.

Muller, Edward N, and Erich Weede. "Cross-National Variation in Political Violence A Rational Action Approach." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34, no. 4 (1990): 624–651.

Pejanović, Đorđe. *Stanovništvo Bosne i Hercegovine*. Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1955.

Petranović, Branko. "The Forms of the Civil War." *Filozofija i Društvo*, no. 4 (1993): 160–167.

Porta, Donatella Della, and Michael Keating. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Posen, Barry R. "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict." *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993): 27–47.

Powell, Robert. "War as a Commitment Problem." *International Organization* 60, no. 1 (2006): 169–203.

Redžić, Enver. *Bosnia And Herzegovina In The Second World War*. London: Frank Cass, 2005.

Sambanis, Nicholas. "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (2001): 259–282.

———. "A Review of Recent Advances and Future Directions in the Quantitative Literature on Civil War." *Defence and Peace Economics* 13, no. 3 (2002): 215–243.

———. "Using Case Studies to Expand Economic Models of Civil War." *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 2 (2004a): 259–279.

———. "What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004b): 814–858.

Skinner, Quentin. "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action." *Political Theory* 2, no. 3 (1974): 277-303.

Small, Melvin, and J. David Singer. *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816-1980*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, 33–47. Monterey: Brooks/Cole, 1979.

Tilly, Charles. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading: Longman Higher Education, 1978.

———. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Tilly, Charles, and Sidney G. Tarrow. *Contentious Politics*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.

Toft, Monica Duffy. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Tomasevich, Jozo. *The Chetniks*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975.

Varshney, Ashutosh. "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, 274–295. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Vojnoistorijski institut. *Istoriski atlas oslobodilačkog rata naroda Jugoslavije 1941-1945*. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske narodne armije, 1952.

———.*Hronologija oslobodilačke borbe naroda Jugoslavije 1941-1945*. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske narodne armije, 1964.

———. "Borbe u Srbiji 1941-1945." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome I. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske (narodne) armije.

———. "Dokumenta Vrhovnog Štaba Narodnooslobodilačke Vojske Jugoslavije 1941-1945." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome II. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske (narodne) armije.

———. "Borbe u Bosni i Hercegovini 1941-1945." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome IV. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske (narodne) armije.

———. "Borbe u Hrvatskoj 1941-1945." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome V. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske narodne armije.

———. "Dokumenti Nemačkog Rajha 1941-1945." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome XII. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut Jugoslovenske narodne armije.

———. "Dokumenti Kraljevine Italije 1941-1943." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome XIII. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut.

———. "Dokumenti Četničkog Pokreta Draže Mihailovića 1941-1945." In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu naroda Jugoslavije*. Tome XIV. Beograd: Vojnoistorijski institut.

Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliance*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Walter, Barbara F., and Jack L. Snyder, eds. *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Wilcox, Richard M. "The Politics of Transitional Anarchy: Coalitions in the Yugoslav Civil Wars 1941-45 and 1991-95". PhD Thesis. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000.

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

Wimmer, Andreas, and Brian Min. "From Empire to Nation-State: Explaining Wars in the Modern World, 1816–2001." *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 6 (2006): 867–897.