

Why do they fight? Explaining participation in the War in Croatia

By

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## **Abstract**

This project explains voluntary participation in the War in Croatia, using a data set of daily interval event data and interviews with Croatian war veterans. It challenges the previous findings of macro level based research on conflict and the literature's emphasis on material incentives as the prime motive for individual participation in war. Conversely, my findings show that the biggest influence on mass participation was the escalation of violent events. Using a generalized linear model I observe significant differences in the number of violent events in each of Croatia's 120 municipalities and the number of individuals who enlisted in the Croat armed forces. Secondly, I show that the earliest joiners belonged to Croatia's dissident community; however, rather than observing these individuals' grievances as the most crucial variable in their decision to participate, I show that in fact, the first fighters joined as a result of social incentives and pressures. Finally, I test the early months of the conflict and show that the fighting was stable. I then explain why the conflict remained in equilibrium by looking at disincentives local and central elites had in reestablishing peace. In the end I reveal that while material incentives were unimportant in mobilizing individuals at the mass level, war profiteering at the elite level provides us with a better understanding of why once started, the conflict was unlikely to stop.

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## **Chapter 1: How do we explain participation in the War in Croatia?**

### **Introduction**

In his masterpiece *War and Peace*, Tolstoy explains that while the political interests of Napoleon, and the interests of Czar Alexander offer some explanation for Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia, what better explains the war is the participation of French soldiers in Napoleon's army.

He writes,

The willingness or unwillingness of one French corporal to enlist for a second tour of duty appears to us as good a cause as Napoleon's refusal to withdraw his army beyond the Vistula and give back the duchy of Oldenberg; for if he had been unwilling to serve, and another had been unwilling, and a third, and a thousandth corporal and soldier, there would have been so many less men in Napoleon's army, and there could have been no war. (Tolstoy 2008: 604)

Tolstoy is right. Wars depend on participants. Of course in Napoleon's time many of his soldiers were conscripted, while the Czar's militia was made up of peasants donated to the war effort by Russia's nobles. Still, some individuals no doubt volunteered, and this is what puzzled Tolstoy. Why do people voluntarily participate in war? When it comes to internal conflicts, the question of participation is even more challenging. Often times rebel forces lack the coercive authority of the state and therefore are incapable of enforcing participation. Yet, people participate and war is

waged. In order to better understand domestic conflict, this project focuses on the voluntary participation of insurgents in an internal war.

In the following I explore participation in the early months of the War in Croatia (1991-1995). I look at only the early months (January 1991 to October 1991) since conscription was not introduced in Croatia until October 1991. While the War in Croatia has been discussed elsewhere (Cohen and Dragović-Soso 2008; Zakošek 2007; Radelić et al., 2006; Gagnon 2006; Mann 2005; Mueller 2000; Holbrooke 1999; Tanner 1997; Woodward 1995) few, if any have addressed the question of participation. The question of why individuals participated in the Croatian War has not really been asked or answered. Rather, the literature has looked at the structural causes of the conflict (Mann 2005; Bunce 1999; Woodward 1995), the possible reasons elites had in instigating the conflict (Zakošek 2007; Gagnon 2006) and through these broader or elite based views assumed the involvement of thousands of individuals.

The puzzle of participation is not new. Research on internal conflict has focused extensively on individuals' motives and reasons for joining the fight (Gurr 1970; Tilly 1978; Hardin 1997; Lichbach 1998a; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Collier and Sambanis 2005; Weinstein 2007). What remains unresolved in the literature is the emphasis on broader, macro level variables versus the study of conflict at the micro level. While research using macro level, economic driven models has contributed to our understanding of conflict, it is limited in that it only tells us about correlations between broad economic circumstances and participation (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). What is missing are the micro level processes involved in insurgent mobilization. Though most of this research theorizes about these processes, few investigate them

outright. Other research has tended to hypothesize and speculate about such processes (Kalyvas 2003) or formally model individual level behavior (Hardin 1997; Lichbach 1998a; Weinstein 2005). While this work has contributed greatly to theory building, much of it lacks empirical confirmation. The more pressing problem is that research based on macro economic models and research based on formal modeling tend to talk past one another.

This is most evident when we look at the greed/grievance debate (Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Collier and Sambanis 2005; Taydas et al., 2011). The greed/grievance literature has a strong body of work, showing a strong correlation between civil war onset and low economic growth. From this relationship it is then inferred that amid economic hardship, rebels are motivated by the opportunity to obtain material incentives via the looting mechanism (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Yet, if we look at Lichbach's (1998a) extensive work on mobilization and his formal models, we see that any such explanations should be considered incomplete. From Lichbach's point of view material incentives *can be* an important factor in mobilization; however, at the same time, Lichbach (1998a) finds that material interests alone are insufficient and rebels require at least two solutions from four solution categories (market, community, contract and hierarchy) in order to spur mobilization. From this perspective the work by Collier and Hoeffler (2004), Fearon and Latin (2003), and others (Collier and Sambanis 2005; Hoeffler 2011) tells us only half of the story and does not provide us with a complete theory of participation in domestic conflict. The divergence within the domestic conflict literature, the black box macro economic models and their formally modeled counterparts, underlies the necessity of exploring the micro level processes involved in bringing individuals into conflict (George and Bennet 2005).

In the remainder of the introduction I review the explanations for the War in Croatia, justify the approach I adopt to address the question of participation, discuss my case selection and methodology. I then offer a brief overview of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Croatia.

## **Explanations for the War and the approach adopted**

Why did the breakup of Yugoslavia lead to war? This question has been asked by hundreds of books and articles. The main focus has been on the rise of ethnic nationalism among Croats, Slovenes, Albanians and Serbs during the late 1980s (Zakošek 2007; Dragović-Soso 2002; Brubaker 1996), with most of the literature agreeing that the Yugoslav Wars emerged from elite circles rather than from the ground up (Klanjšek and Flere 2011; Jović 2009; Zakošek 2007; Gagnon 2006; Hockenos 2003; Mueller 2000; Thompson 1999; Silber and Little 1996). At the same time, there is not a consensus on what motivated elites to bring their followers into conflict. Was it nationalist ideology pursued by each country's leader (Hockenos 2003; Silber and Little 1996)? Or was it merely the use of nationalist rhetoric to maintain power (Gagnon 2006)? Perhaps a combination of both (Zakošek 2007)? It is extremely difficult to determine what motivated the leaders of the former Yugoslavia. What we do know is that both Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević used nationalist rhetoric and nationalist symbols while in office. We also know that both leaders, along with those surrounding them, profited politically and financially from the Yugoslav conflicts (Hockenos 2003; Gagnon 2006; Zakošek 2007). Hockenos estimates that President Tuđman and Croatian Defense Minister, Gojko Šušak raised over 100 million dollars from the Croatia diaspora and were able to use this

money as their own personal expense account (Hockenos 2003: 87 ). A document from the Serbian security services reveals how Milošević, or at least his regime, profited from the War. According to the document, after the fall of the Croatian town Vukovar, 3.8 million dollars, 430 thousand Swiss francs, and 38 kilograms of gold were to be sent to Belgrade by Serbian paramilitaries (Stewart 2008: 163). What we do not know is whether or not material profit was a by product of nationalist ideology or if each leader's expressed nationalism was just an excuse to profit. From the perspective taken here the question of each leader's beliefs is largely irrelevant to understanding why the war occurred. What matters more is understanding how these leaders were able to persuade other people to fight and die for them.

This is why it is useful to see what the literature on domestic conflict can provide as a means of explaining the Yugoslav Wars. Most of the literature on domestic conflict holds that individuals are strategic, rational actors (Francisco 2009, 2010; Weinstein 2007, 2005; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Lichbach 1998a; Hardin 1997; DeNardo 1985); however, while the assumption of rationality holds that individuals are materially motivated and much of the literature stops there (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hoeffler 2011), other work merely uses this as a baseline from which to understand the basics of collective action in the form of dissent, protest, rebellion and insurgency (Lichbach 1998a; 1998b; Ferrara 2003; Weinstein 2005, 2007). For example, Weinstein (2005, 2007) orients his work around the concept of rational choice in order to explain why some insurgent groups inflict greater harm on the civilian population than others. He holds that social motivation and insurgent zeal can overcome the need for material incentives. Insurgent organizations that are mobilized through norms of social

reciprocity, rather than material incentives are less likely to victimize the civilians living in and around a conflict zone (2007).

While work like Weinstein's allows for the mobilization process to involve more than material incentives (see also Lichbach 1998a; Hardin 1997) it, like much of the research on domestic conflict, it relies on the assumption that rebels face a collective action problem. The fundamental understanding here is that in order for individuals to participate in collective dissent, they must be provided with an individual selective incentive (Olson 1965; Lichbach 1998a; Weinstein 2005, 2007; Francisco 2010). When pursuing a public good, most individuals will free ride, hoping that someone else will do the protesting and fighting for them. Most people hope to benefit from the goals of collective action without having to collectively act (Olson 1965).

The problem of collective action is that it again introduces the question, this time at an individual, mass level, as to whether participants are materially or ideologically motivated (Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Weinstein 2005; Taydas et al., 2011). Most of the literature assumes that individuals can be motivated to fight by either material incentives or ideologically based collective grievances (Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Weinstein 2005; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). Moreover, it is often assumed that the central authorities in a conflict are more ideologically committed to the central cleavage than the peripheral participants; however, Kalyvas (2003) argues that this dichotomy is too reductive. That is, participants are not necessarily agnostic towards the reasons they are fighting, nor are they necessarily ideological zealots ready to sacrifice themselves for the greater cause. As Kalyvas offers, internal conflicts

are not binary conflicts but complex and ambiguous processes that foster an apparently massive, though variable, mix of identities and actions — to such a degree as to be defined by that mix. Put otherwise, the widely observed ambiguity is fundamental rather than incidental to civil wars, a matter of structure rather than noise. (2003: 475)

The question to answer is, how do leaders and their followers solve their collective action problem, regardless of whether or not solutions stem from material or grievance based incentives? The most extensive research on which solutions are used to overcome the collective action problem is Lichbach's work (1998a). Again, starting from the assumption that dissidents are rational and self-interested, Lichbach develops four possible solution groups to the collective action problem. These are material, community, contract and hierarchy (1998a). Perhaps the most important aspect of Lichbach's approach is that it allows us to take "pecuniary self-interest as the baseline model and selectively [expand] the conception of rationality as the baseline model fails to illuminate reality" (1998a :327). As a result of Lichbach's solution groups, the constant comparison between our assumptions and the observed reality remains systematic. That is, dissidents can become real people motivated by material incentives, friendships, leaders, and cooperation with other like minded individuals, all of which are viable solutions to the collective action problem.

The collective action research program (CARP) outlined by Lichbach (1998a, 1998b) allows for us to research and explain mobilization as a process contingent on circumstances and the actions of individuals without merely stating that things happened and people did stuff.

CARP is especially useful in overcoming the problem of macro level inferences on micro level processes, as it stresses that collective action does not occur from macro level determinants alone. Rather, it is the product of individuals' strategic behavior. Protest is not caused by broad determinants. From the perspective of CARP, collective dissent is the product of insurgents, protesters and their leaders' tactical responses to their environment, circumstances and events (Lichbach 1998a, 1998b; Francisco 2009, 2010). As it relates to the existing literature, CARP informs us that any relationship between macro level variables and conflict is contingent on micro level processes. Understanding the interaction between the broader conditions measured at the macro level, or what Lichbach refers to as unplanned order (1998a: 21) and the strategic action among insurgents themselves, what Lichbach refers to as planned order (1998a: 21), is essential to understanding individual participation in conflict. To understand conflict is to understand the actors' collective action solutions (Lichbach 1998; Weinstein 2007). CARP then constructs a theoretical framework through which we can observe which collective action solutions are used and from where or who it is they originate, thereby offering greater insight into the processes involved in fostering participation in domestic conflict.

CARP is also able to resolve the ongoing debate concerning whether or not such processes are directed by the center to the periphery, the periphery to the center, or the product of interactions between the two (Kalyvas 2003; Weinstein 2007; Weidman 2011; Isaac 2012). By focusing on how actors are embroiled in the conflict in the first place, CARP is well suited to illustrate the relationship between the center, the periphery and participation.

By using CARP to understand participation in the War in Croatia I contribute to our understanding of domestic conflict and our understanding of the Yugoslav Wars. I test macro

level theories with micro level data and formally modeled hypotheses with empirical evidence. While macro level research has found a strong relationship between war onset, macro economic conditions and material incentives, I show that local economic circumstances and material incentives are insufficient in explaining participation in the War in Croatia (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). Instead, I contribute to the literature by providing evidence that violent events and social incentives moved individuals to participate in the conflict. Moreover, I also demonstrate that while material incentives are not necessary for mass mobilization, there is evidence that such incentives were pursued by local and central leaders. Identifying how the conflict generated private interests for those charged with its prosecution contributes to our understanding of why domestic conflicts are stable (Francisco 2009). My contribution is one that should move the literature away from macro level theories of conflict and instead orient our theories towards the micro level. Only then can we begin to systematically understand that various ambiguities and varied interests that lead people to war.

### **Case selection and methodology**

While there is a surfeit of research on the Yugoslav Wars, the conflicts have largely been overlooked by the domestic conflict literature. This is especially true for the case of Croatia. Moreover what does exist in English focuses on both Bosnia and Croatia. Meanwhile works in Croatian generally do not approach the War with broader theories of conflict. Most research on the Yugoslav Wars combines Croatia and Bosnia (Gagnon 2006; Mann 2005; Hockenos 2003; Holbrooke 1999; Silber and Little 1996; Woodward 1995), or looks only at Bosnia (Kalyvas and Sambanis 2005; Weidman 2011).

The problem with this literature is that the causes of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia are treated as the same. Though both conflicts are certainly related, it is important to notice that the Croatian War started first. As the violence went from zero to nearly constant, and the death toll rose from zero to around 10,000 deaths in the course of a few months, Croatia represents a more robust case with which to explore the process of mobilization. The lessons from the War in Croatia no doubt were used in Bosnia when the war started there a year later. This means the strategies of recruiting, arming, organizing and mobilizing individuals in Bosnia had already undergone a rehearsal of sorts in Croatia. Moreover, many of the soldiers, Croats, Serbs and foreigners who had fought in Croatia during 1991 went (or were sent) to fight in Bosnia in 1992 (Loyd 2001; Maas 1997). Many of those in command of these soldiers had commanded the same soldiers in Croatia in 1991 (Loyd 2001; Maas 1997). As a result of all this, the puzzle of mobilization is much more compelling in the Croatian case, and yet the literature so far has paid more attention to Bosnia than to Croatia. By exploring participation from the period before the conflict to its escalation into a civil war,<sup>1</sup> I am able to provide a more thorough understanding of both the wars in Croatia and in Bosnia, while exploring one of the relatively overlooked cases of domestic conflict.

This project adopts a mixed methods approach and I use both quantitative data and qualitative interviews to answer my research question. The bulk of the data come from a data set of daily interval event data coded from news wire service stories in Lexis-Nexis Academic. Each story was coded for the date, day, and location of the event, the type of event, the actors involved

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<sup>1</sup> Within Croatia many object to labeling the Homeland War a civil war; however, a civil war is defined as a war between citizens of the same country. In 1991 when the War began, Croatia was part of Yugoslavia and not recognized internationally as an independent country until 1992. Therefore, as it concerns the period studied here the label of civil war is applicable.

in the event and their target, the number of participants, the number of participants arrested, injured, or killed, and the number of state forces injured or killed. While these data are useful in conducting quantitative analysis, they are also valuable for their descriptive qualities. The data are able to show a more complete picture of the conflict's origins and escalation than what is available in most of the existing research on the war. This was useful when conducting interviews as the data helped confirm what many of those interviewed related about what was happening around them at the time of their decision to participate.

The number of soldiers in each municipality was taken from [registarbranitelj.com](http://registarbranitelj.com), a website containing the names and dates of enlistment for Croatian soldiers. Multiple units for a single municipality were added together. Other data were taken from census data for 1991 in the Republic of Croatia Statistical Yearbook for 1992. Data on the ethnic makeup of each municipality were taken from the 1991 Croatia census provided to me by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

I conducted 32 interviews with former participants in the Croatian War from February 2012 to November 2012. The interviews were conducted with Croatian war veterans in Dalmatia (Southern Croatia), Central Croatia and Slavonia (Eastern Croatia). The interviews usually lasted between one to three hours and were undertaken in subjects' places of business, homes, or nearby cafes. In Croatia, and the surrounding countries, the topic of the War in Croatia remains a very controversial issue. As a result I usually had to use another Croatian to personally request the interview with each subject. This required us to find family members and friends of war veterans to introduce us and ask for an interview. Even still, many of the individuals we requested interviews with declined. This was especially the case with former members of Croatian

paramilitary groups. Given the sensitive nature of the War in Croatia, it was necessary to offer anonymity or confidentiality to each subject. Even though the interviews were confidential or anonymous, most subjects refused to let us record the conversation. Therefore, my research assistant and I took rigorous notes during each interview and afterward combined them in detailed summaries. Wherever quoted text is used, it is a translation of a quote that was written down verbatim. Everywhere else, what the subject reported is paraphrased in a way that tries to closely capture what the subject said and the way he said it.

I asked the research subjects several open ended questions concerning their involvement in the War, including when they became involved, life in Yugoslavia, their attitudes towards Communism and Yugoslavia, their feelings towards Serbs before the War, their family's role in the Second World War, and their perception of the threat facing Croats or Croatia during the War in Croatia. In addition to the above questions, respondents were asked about their employment before the War, their payment after joining, and the type of weapons and equipment received after joining the military or paramilitary organization.

One of the biggest limitations of this study is that I was only able to interview Croatian war veterans and not Serb participants or members of the Serbian forces who fought in the War. At the same time the case of Serb involvement is not as challenging. This is due to the fact that the Yugoslav Army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija*, JNA) was aligned with the Milošević regime in Serbia and the JNA instigated conscription from the first days of the war. What is missing from this project is any explanation of the participation of Croatian Serbs in the various paramilitary organizations that formed in 1990-1991 in Croatia. Still, understanding the

participation of Croatians in the War in Croatia can go a long way in aiding our understanding of how and why individuals participate in internal wars.

## **The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Croatia**

There is a very large literature on the breakup of Yugoslavia. For the purposes of this section and through the remainder of the work itself I have limited myself to just a few works (Jović 2009; Radelić et al., 2006; Gagnon 2006; Hockenos 2003; Lampe 2000; Glenny 2000; Tanner 1997; Silber and Little 1996; Ramet 1992).

The War in Croatia emerged out of the political and economic crises facing Yugoslavia in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisted of six republics (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two autonomous provinces in Serbia (Kosovo and Vojvodina). The country was originally formed as the Kingdom of Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes in 1918. During the Second World War, Croatia's Fascist Government created the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and with the help of its Axis allies expanded the country's borders into parts of Bosnia. The Fascist Ustasha regime embarked on a campaign to convert one third, expel one third, and murder one third of Serbs living in Croatia and Bosnia (Lampe 2000: 209). Tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of Serbs were murdered along side Jews, Communists and other political and ethnic undesirables. After the War, the Communists came to power and created the internal borders of each republic and province in Yugoslavia in the form that existed up until the wars in 1991 and 1992. During and since the wars in the 1990s, seven countries have emerged out of the wreckage

of Yugoslavia: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia and Slovenia.

Most of the literature places the beginning of Yugoslavia's end with the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980. Tito had been the undisputed ruler of Yugoslavia since 1945. In the place of his leadership the country was ruled by an eight member, rotating Federal Presidency. Each member came from one of the republics or provinces (there was a 9th seat left vacant for Tito). At the same time, the 1974 constitution had devolved much of the central government's authority to each of the country's republics (Ramet 1992; Jović 2009). As a series of political and economic crises began hampering the country's development and prosperity, the country's leadership and institutions were increasingly regarded as being too inept at handling the problems facing Yugoslavia (Dizdarević 2009; Jović 2009). The Communist leadership accepted the need for constitutional reform; however, there was no consensus on what direction such reforms should take. The Slovenian, and to some extent the Croatia leadership wanted further decentralization. While Serbia and its allied republics sought greater centralization.

The economic and political crises have often been regarded as the main cause of the breakup of Yugoslavia; however, the economic and political crises alone do not explain the country's breakup, or why the breakup resulted in violent conflict. Rather, as Jović explains they do provide "a context in which arguments on exploitation and injustice within Yugoslavia could occur," (Jović 2009: 17). These crises then "played an important role in generating demands for changes from within both the political elite and the population" (Jović 2008: 17).

The person who most masterfully manipulated these demands for change was Serbian Communist leader Slobodan Milošević. Echoing the arguments for greater democratic rights and

a resolution to the economic crisis made by activists in Serbia and throughout Yugoslavia, Milošević was able to use a series of protests to sideline his opponents and topple the governments of Vojvodina, Montenegro, and Kosovo (Dragović-Soso 2002; Cohen 1999). As a result, half of the eight member Federal Presidency came under the control of Milošević. In January 1990 the Yugoslav League of Communists held an extraordinary session at which amendments and changes to the constitution were proposed. With Milošević's clique dominating the delegations from four of the respective Communist Parties (Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Vojvodina) the Slovenian and Croatian delegations' proposals for further decentralization were consistently defeated. As a result the Slovenian and Croatian delegations left the Congress and thereby left the Communist Party. A few months later and democratic elections were held in both republics.

The April and May elections in Croatia in 1990 brought to power the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, HDZ) and the party's leader Franjo Tuđman. HDZ began a program of nationalization (Hockenos 2003; Brubaker 1996; Silber and Little 1996) in which symbols of Croatian national identity, outlawed under Communism, were resurrected. At the same time, Serb dominated areas in Croatia, with tactical and organizational support from Belgrade (Gagnon 2006; Jović 2009), began organizing local municipalities through the Serbian Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka*, SDS) in order to prepare for secession from Croatia. At the time the population of Serbs in Croatia was 12 percent, most of whom lived on the border of Bosnia in the region Krajina and in the western region Slavonia, which bordered Serbia. In August 1990, SDS held a referendum in the Serb dominated areas on whether or not they should stay in the Republic of Croatia. During this time, Serb insurgents

blocked roads and train tracks into the area, thus separating themselves from the rest of Croatia in what came to be known as the Log Revolution. When the Croatian police attempted to intervene, they were thwarted by the Federal military (specifically, their helicopters heading to the area were intercepted by Yugoslav Military fighter jets). Under the pretense of keeping peace between both Serbs and Croats the JNA was deployed throughout parts of Croatia; however, it was quite clear later on that the JNA was not a neutral actor, but supporting the Serb insurgents in Croatia (Jović 2009; Silber and Little 1996).

During the Spring in 1991, tensions increased. Serb insurgents seized weapons from local police stations, several bombings occurred around Croatia, and barricades between Serb and Croat neighborhoods were frequently erected. The first fighting occurred between Croat and Serb forces in March 1991. Intermittent fighting and killing occurred across Croatia, mostly between Croatian police and Serb paramilitary organizations. In May 1991, Croatia held a referendum on whether or not the republic should stay in Yugoslavia. On June 25, 1991 Croatia and Slovenia both declared their independence from Yugoslavia. At this time further JNA units were deployed throughout Croatia and several naval blockades were initiated around Croatian towns and cities on the coast. In August, the JNA began assaults on Vukovar and Dubrovnik while other Croatian towns in Central and Western Croatia were ethnically cleansed by Serb paramilitary forces with support from the JNA. For their part Croatia's forces consisted mostly of Special Police and *ad hoc* defensive organizations. Prior to the advent of the war, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense had smuggled in small arms from Eastern Europe, most notably from Hungary. At the beginning of the War, Croatia had no heavy weapons, where as the JNA was the third largest army in Europe. The conflict escalated through the summer and into the fall of 1991

before transforming into a protracted civil war by the winter of 1991-1992. In December 1991, Croatia was internationally recognized as an independent country. In August 1995, after years of rearming and training, Croatia forces embarked on an offensive operation that effectively defeated the Serb army in Krajina and sent nearly 200,000 Croatian Serb civilians into exile in Serbia. In 1998 the Serb occupied areas of Western Croatia peacefully came under Croatian control.

## **Outline**

While the above describes the War in broad terms, the remainder of this work investigates the more nuanced parts of the conflict. This is achieved by using the collective action problem as the skeleton on which to frame my inquiry into participation in the War in Croatia. I am primarily interested in understanding how leaders and individuals were able to overcome their collective action problem and the consequences created from the solutions used.

The second chapter examines the relationship between violent events and participation. While it is often assumed in much of the literature that participants pay higher costs by fighting, I hypothesize that in fact individuals may regard not participating as more costly than participating (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007; Lichbach 1998a). I test this hypothesis using a generalized linear model and find that municipalities with a higher incident of Serb attacks had a higher number of Croat participants.

The third chapter looks at who fights first. While the consequences of violent events are capable of explaining most participants, they are not able to explain why some individuals participated before the fighting began or escalated. Using my interviews with war veterans, I

look at the different social incentives between early joiners and later joiners. I find that the earliest joiners were social joiners who belonged to a pre-existing community. Membership in this community was delineated by an individual's stance on the *hrvatska stvar* (translated here as the Croatian Cause). The extent of one's integration into this community through interpersonal relationships strengthened the likelihood that he would be recruited and become involved in earliest days of the conflict.

In the fourth chapter I explain why the fighting in the early months of the conflict was nearly continuous. I first test to see if the conflict was in equilibrium and then explain how, despite the existence of the collective action problem, the fighting could continue at a near constant rate. I do this by looking at the selective incentives of those involved, finding that many of the conflict's leaders and commanders profited from the conflict itself. Most notably, profit was made through selling weapons to participants. Given the result from the second chapter, I argue that since increased violence increased participation, increased violence would also increase demand for weapons. Thereby creating disincentives for peace and upholding ceasefires, while creating more material incentives for further violence.

In the conclusion I summarize what each chapter reveals about participation in domestic conflict. I then explore how all of this informs the literature on participation and further develops our theory of internal war.

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## **Chapter 2: Violence and Participation in the War in Croatia**

### **Introduction**

Why did people participate in the War in Croatia? Twenty years after the breakup of Yugoslavia, there remain several competing explanations for the War in Croatia. Some of the recent scholarship suggests a small group of elites with extreme ideological beliefs engineered the violence in Yugoslavia (Hockenos 2003; Klanjsek and Flere 2011). Other work downplays the importance of leaders' ideology, arguing instead that elites instigated the violence in order to distract and demobilize opposition groups opposed to the privatization process (Gagnon 2006). A similar view offers that violence was the result of elite-organized bands of thugs, motivated by the spoils of war rather than nationalist antipathy (Mueller 2000). What is missing from each of these perspectives is an explanation for individuals' participation. Ideological or strategically calculating elites may have wanted a war, but this does not explain why people chose to take part in it. This is especially the case when we consider that the majority of the war's entrants were not criminals or raving nationalists. In order to have a better understanding of the conflict in Croatia, and conflict more generally, it is necessary to systematically explore the participation in the conflict through theories of collective action. Orientating participation in the War in Croatia around the puzzle of collective action, allows us to understand that individual participation is a phenomenon dependent on solutions to the collective action problem. Adopting such an approach will provide a more robust explanation for individual involvement in the War in Croatia.

In the following chapter I challenge much of literature on the Croatian War. I identify three shortcomings: First, while the literature wants to focus on elite backed thugs or nationalist zealots, the number of participants in the data, exceeds the number of individuals assumed to be

involved in these explanations. Secondly, interviews with Croatian war veterans indicate that participants were not simply criminals or nationalist zealots. Many of the interview subjects were satisfied with life in Yugoslavia prior to the war, were employed at the beginning of the war, and relatively amicable to Serbs living in Croatia. Thirdly, the dynamics of the conflict underscore an increase in escalation and participation, something that is also not properly accounted for in the current literature. What remains to be explained, is how individuals were mobilized into participating in the war. To answer this question I look at the relationship between violent events and increases in participation. I argue that the increase in local, violent events motivated individuals to take part in the war. I develop this argument through theories of collective action. I then test the relationship in a generalized linear model.

The current literature on the Croatian war neglects the broader research on civil wars.<sup>2</sup> This is a great oversight since much of the literature on domestic conflict focuses on the question of participation through theories of collective action (Lichbach 1998; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Weinstein 2005, 2007; Ross 2002; Gates 2001; Kalyvas 2003, 2007; Francisco 2009, 2010). The collective action problem occurs when individuals prefer to free-ride rather than participate in the acquisition of a public good. To overcome the free-rider problem, participants must receive an incentive or pursue an interest that is available only to those who participate (Olson 1965; Lichbach 1998). Much of the recent research on conflict has focused on material selective incentives as solutions to the collective action problem (Ross 2002; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hoeffler 2011). As I discuss at length in this chapter, the reliance on material incentives is

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<sup>2</sup> It can also be said that research on civil wars has overlooked the case of Croatia. Most of the focus on the Balkans has been on the War in Bosnia (Kalyvas and Sambanis 2005; Weidman 2011).

problematic to theories of collective action and conflict (Lichbach 1998). Therefore, my examination of the relationship between violent events and participation helps overcome the recent, and problematic emphasis on material incentives as the primary means of mobilization (Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Kocher and Kalyvas 2007). A look at the case of Croatia through collective action theories of conflict not only improves our understanding of the war in Croatia, it also helps overcome some of the deficiencies in the current theories of domestic conflict.

The rest of the chapter proceeds with an examination of the limitations of both the Croatian and the civil war literature. I overcome this limitations by exploring the relationship between violence and participation. I then engage in a brief presentation of historical cases in which violence seems to have been a motivating force behind for individuals' participation in the conflict. I introduce the theoretical arguments of why violence can spur mobilization, rather than deter it. Afterwards I test the relationship between violence and participation. I then discuss the results.

### **Explaining civil wars and the war in Croatia**

Research on civil wars has largely come to explain participation as a consequence of either greed or grievances (Sambanis 2001; Collier et al., 2003; Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). This dichotomy has gone on to develop an additional delineation over the concept of violence as a force emanating a from conflict's center or from its periphery (Kalyvas 2003; Weidman 2011). By center I mean a "master cleavage," where as the term periphery refers to local interests "on the ground" (Kalyvas 2003: 475-476). Both

perspectives hold that insurgents face a collective action problem. Solutions to this problem are largely thought to depend on the resources available to insurgent leaders (Weinstein 2005). In non-ethnic wars, insurgent organizations overcome the free-riding problem by providing material incentives via the looting mechanism to attract members with the prospect of profits from the battlefield (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Weinstein 2005, 2007; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). In ethnic wars, it is assumed that ethnic ties and a shared identity can overcome the collective action problem without necessitating the use of material incentives (Weinstein 2005; Sambanis 2001; Kaufman 1996; Hardin 1997). The argument here is that widely held conceptions of ethnicity help coordinate insurgency and overcome free riding by fostering a sense of collective identity in which the group's loss is also the individual's loss (Hardin 1995; Sambanis 2001). Violence in ethnic conflicts is considered to be more center driven and occur in the pursuit of a collective good or master cleavage; violence in non-ethnic conflicts emerges out insurgents' pursuit of local, material interests.

What's interesting is that much of the research surrounding the war in Yugoslavia, one of the most infamous cases of ethnic conflict, shows a strong resistance to ethnic explanations of the war (Mueller 2000; Hockenos 2003; Gagnon 2006; Klanjsek and Flere 2011). While the broader literature has assigned certain motivating characteristics to the Yugoslav wars, scholarship dealing specifically with these cases opts for a greed based explanation of the conflict. In his work, Gagnon challenges the entire concept of ethnic war, arguing that the wars in Bosnia and Croatia were the result of elites attempting to demobilize opposition groups (Gagnon 2006). Survey data taken just prior to the war in 1990 supports his contention that Yugoslavia was ethnically harmonious and tolerant. When asked if they felt perceived threats to

the national rights of their own group, 82.7 percent of Croats and 87.3 percent of Serbs said “no” (Gagnon 2006: 36). Similarly Klanjsek and Flere (2011) show that there was no significant level of “longing” for an ethnic homeland among Serbs and Croats in Croatia. Rather than using violence to mobilize the masses under a nationalist cause, Gagnon argues violence was used by elites to demobilize groups opposed to their policies of privatization. These elites then organized and imported violence into areas with the greatest ethnic integration.

Mueller (2000) directly addresses the role of paramilitary violence and also uses it as a means of explaining the conflict. He argues that the violence in Yugoslavia was “not derived from a frenzy of nationalism--but from the action of recently empowered and unpoliced thugs” (2000: 47). In both Croatia and Bosnia, paramilitaries were involved in some of the worst incidents of the wars. According to Mueller, many of the individuals in these groups were criminals released from prison for the purpose of participating in the conflict. Stewart writes that one of the Wars’ most notorious paramilitary leaders, Arkan, toured prisons and handpicked inmates to join his Serbian Volunteer Guard (Stewart 2008: 129). As a reward for their participation the paramilitary organizations and their members were compensated with loot taken from the battlefields of Croatia and Bosnia. One document from the Serbian security services reveals that out of the spoils of Vukovar, Arkan, was to keep 2.5 million German Marks and 15 kilograms of gold, while sending 3.8 million dollars, 430 thousand Swiss francs, and 38 kilograms of gold to Belgrade (Stewart 2008: 163). Mueller argues that the incentive for non-members to participate in such violence was also material: “If the property of a local Muslim is going to be looted and set afire, it may seem sensible to some-- even rational --to join the

thieves”(Mueller 2000: 55). According to Mueller, the wars in Croatia and Bosnia were more the result of a criminal enterprise than nationalism or ethnic hatreds.

This emphasis on material incentives is problematic for both the case of the Yugoslav wars and for more general theories of civil war. When material interests are involved it can be difficult to discern the differences between political and private, or criminal actions (Kalyvas 2003). The problem is that a reliance on material interests has the potential to move explanations of insurgent actions away from the realm of the political and into the criminal. The implications for collective action theory and understanding conflict are as follows: if rebels become rebels solely because they can profit materially from rebelling, then how do we know they are really rebels and not just criminals? If the motives underlying insurgent participation are criminal, than theories of collective action used to explain such participation do not apply (Lichbach 1998: 238). Without the pursuit of a public good the applicability of collective action theory to conflict is negligible.

In the case of Mueller’s work, maybe we do not need a theory of collective action. Paramilitary groups were in the pay of elites and paid to carryout horrible acts of violence. Its not altogether that difficult to accept; however, the problem with this statement is the fact that the number of paramilitaries was relatively small. Though there were 13 Croatian, 14 Bosniak, and 56 Serbian paramilitary organizations operating in Bosnia and Croatia during the course of the war, their membership numbers are not estimated to be that large. Arkan’s group was believed to have between 500-1,000 members and only 200 core members (Mueller 2000). While a commander of the most notorious Croatian paramilitary group, The Croatian Defense Forces (HOS), estimated that they had around 1,000 members in Croatia (Interview in Slavonski Brod

on 09/27/2012). It is also important to remember that both the Yugoslav Army (JNA) and the Croatian military (HV) were in the field, making paramilitary groups ancillary to these official forces. If we use the estimations for the size of Croatian paramilitary groups as an estimate then we would see around 13,000 Croatian participants, and yet the data show that by October 4, 1991 (the day before conscription was announced in Croatia) the Croatian National Guard (ZNG), the official, state armed forces had 83, 738 members, all of them volunteer. Gagnon makes a similar argument, offering that violence in Croatia was,

Imported from outside, that is, it was perpetrated largely by paramilitary groups who went in and slaughtered civilians, forced the rest of the civilians to divide themselves by ethnicity, and forced those on the ‘wrong’ side to leave. (Gagnon 2006:151).

Moreover he argues, “The violence was not an expression of ethnic hatreds. Nor was it a political strategy meant to mobilize the population” (148). Gagnon provides strong evidence for his argument that the wars in Croatia and Bosnia were not a sudden eruption of ancient ethnic-hatreds. As noted earlier, public opinion polls show Croat and Serbs in Croatia had good relations with one another just prior to the conflict. Where I find Gagnon’s work problematic concerns his explanation for the war in Croatia. He asserts that the war: 1) was the work of elite backed extremist groups; 2) was not designed to mobilize segments of the population; 3) was designed to demobilize opposition groups.

Political elites certainly played a role in organizing the war; however, to limit the fighting to the actions of only elite-backed paramilitaries ignores the larger mobilization that went on in the spring and summer of 1991. It does not account for the increase in participants as the violence progressed. Secondly, it is not clear how we know that the regime was not seeking to

mobilize segments of the population. It is quite clear that Tuđman wanted an independent Croatia, and that Milošević and areas with a strong Serb population did not consent to the borders of a Croatian republic (Hockenos 2003; Cohen 2002; Silber and Little 1996). That the regime resorted to violence in order to obtain or defend the goal of a Croatian state is not that puzzling. Especially in light of the fact that Serbia and Croatian Serbs used violence as a means either keeping Croatia in Yugoslavia or changing the borders with which it would exit the Federation (Kadijevic 1993: 135). In light of this narrative, it is also easy to assume that the Croatian regime would want to mobilize as many people as possible to achieve its goals. Finally, while Serbia witnessed mass protests against Milošević and the war in 1991, Croatia did not. It is difficult to accept that the HDZ Government embarked on a violent conflict in order to demobilize an opposition that hardly seemed to have mobilized. What is puzzling is that a large number of individuals voluntarily took part in the war, despite the evidence of concord between Serbs and Croats before the conflict.

We are left then in a situation where the literature addressing the Croatian War specifically has provided incomplete explanations of the conflict. Additionally, the application of the dominant theories of conflict also appear insufficient. The greed perspective (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Ross 2002; Hoeffler 2011), while clearly appropriate to paramilitary groups is not necessarily relevant to the majority of the war's participants. Where as the concepts of ethnic cohesion and solidarity are challenged by the opinion polls just prior to the war. To overcome this problem I look at the role violence plays in inducing increased participation in conflict. This approach enables us to support those scholars whose work argues that a minority is responsible for the violence in Croatia, while also offering a better explanation as to why that violence

escalated into a long and protracted war. Secondly, this approach helps overcome the problem of material incentives and criminal motives identified in the literature by Lichbach (1998) and Kalyvas (2003).

## **Violence**

A positive relationship between a rise in violence and a rise in participation is at first counterintuitive. Instinctively one would think that increased violence should deter would-be participants from taking part in the conflict; however, the link between the effectiveness of violent repression as a means of limiting collective dissent is not empirically supported (Lichbach 1987; Francisco 1995, 1996). Several notable cases of insurgency also demonstrate that violence is capable of motivating individuals into participating in conflict, albeit anecdotally.

During the beginning days of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, support for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was galvanized by riotous events in Belfast and Derry in August 1969. Rioting bands of Protestants attacked people and property in Catholic dominated neighborhoods. Realizing that it was futile to call the police since many of the rioting Protestants *were* the police, Irish Catholics turned their support to the IRA as a means of obtaining some level of security, leading to an increase in IRA support and membership (Coogan 2002: 91-95, 104-106). According to Coogan, the incidents of 1969 revived an old formula for Catholics living in Ulster: “fear + distrust = IRA” (Coogan 2002: 95).

The case of Yugoslavia during the Second World War is also a well known example of the motivating effects of indiscriminate violence. The strength of the Communist Partisans and Serb Chetniks has been attributed to the Wermacht’s harsh counter insurgency tactics and Croatian

Ustashe terror against Serbs (Mazower 2009; Schmider 2011; Trifkovic 2011). The German policy for every dead German was the random killing of 100 Yugoslavs. The Ustasha policy was to kill one-third of Serbs living in the Croatian Fascist state, convert another third, and expel the remaining third (Lampe 2000: 209). When facing these policies Serbs, and later Croats and other Yugoslav nationalities, sought safety by joining the armed resistance movements.

Another example from the Second World War is seen in the affects of the allied bombing campaign. Rather than incapacitate German cities and the German war effort, the bombing just produced homelessness and death.

In Vietnam, the United States' aerial bombing campaign did not decrease support for the Viet Cong. In fact it had the opposite effect. Instead of moving areas out from under VC control, the bombing worked to strength the VC's position in the targeted communities (Kocher et al., 2011).

An example from the recent war in Croatia also illustrates the relationship between violence and participation. While conducting fieldwork in Croatia, many of the war veterans I interviewed kept referring to events that occurred in their town, suggesting that their decision to participate in the war was dependent on such events. As one respondent recalled, a single event in the eastern town of Osijek was "the day the war began" (Interview in Osijek on 04/10/2012), despite the fact that, other, well-known incidents had already occurred elsewhere in the country. Several other interviewees in Osijek made similar statements. I therefore decided to look at this incident in more detail. On June 27, 1991, several tanks from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) raced through the streets of Osijek, crushing several cars. This was one of the first violent incidents in Osijek, which later became the frontline of the war. Prior to that day, only 22 people

had joined the town's national guard (ZNG), the 106th Brigade. The following day, 384 people enlisted. This suggests that violent events can and do have a positive influence on participation.

Instead of deterring membership in an insurgency, violence can facilitate greater participation. Just as the few cases discussed above indicate some evidence for this relationship, so too have scholars theorized about its link. Lichbach offers that the decision to use violence by insurgents may be undertaken as a way of provoking state reprisals which can result in increased insurgent support. Such a strategy that seeks to deepen the conflict, "shows neutrals that their position is untenable. It frightens nonvictims into thinking that they may one day become victims and that they therefore must choose sides" (1998: 58). From this perspective the use of violence can itself help solve insurgents' collective action problem.

Kalyvas and Kocher follow Lichbach by empirically showing that amid indiscriminate violence the cost of free riding is more costly than participation. Using data from the Phoenix program in the Vietnam War, the authors show that the risk for non-combatants was greater than for combatants. For every one VC agent targeted by South Vietnamese authorities, 38 innocents were victimized (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007: 201). According to Kalyvas and Kocher's research (2007), civilians who join an insurgency have more to gain in terms of protection and resources than those who remain on the conflict's sidelines. This relationship implies that amid the indiscriminate violence in civil wars, the insurgent collective action problem may not be as daunting as the literature assumes. The necessity of material incentives to recruit participants is minimized as the violence itself does most of the heavy lifting. Moreover, the mobilizing role of violence can overcome that problem of criminality as one's sole survival is itself a selective incentive, and yet, by joining others in an organization one is collectively fighting for the

survival of the group. That is dissidents know and understand that they are working towards a common end (Lichbach 1998: 238).

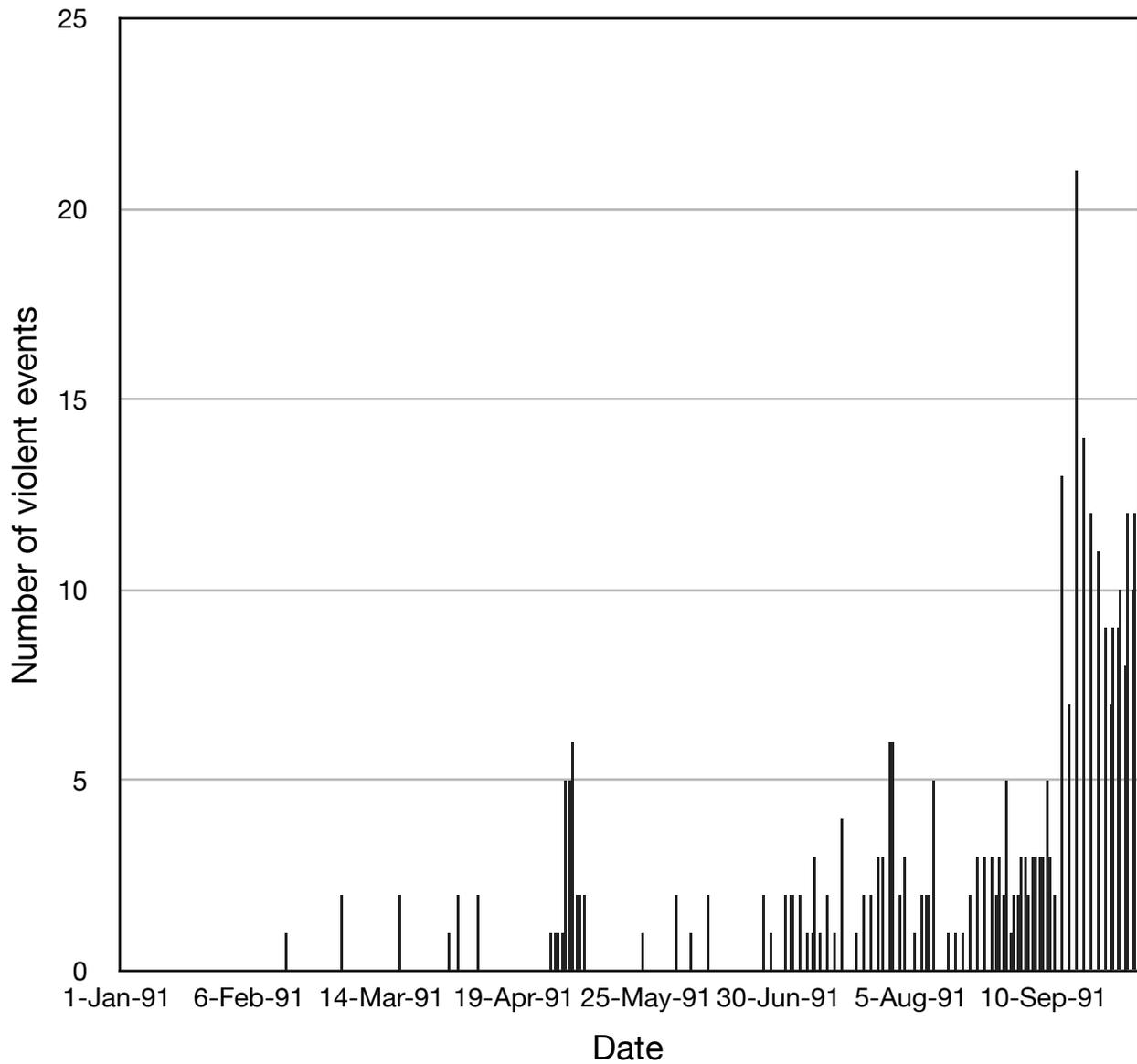
### **An empirical test**

Given the incidents in Northern Ireland, German occupied Yugoslavia, the Vietnam War, and the events in Osijek, along with Lichbach's formal argument about the relationship between violence and participation, and Kalyvas and Kocher's confirmation that free riding can be more costly than participation, I test the relationship between violent incidents and increases in participation with the following hypothesis:

H: As more violence occurs in a given area, insurgent participation from that area will increase.

This hypothesis will delineate the specific relationship between violence and participation. Since the data used to test my hypothesis is aggregated at the municipal level this test can also help clarify how we regard violence as a locally or centrally driven phenomenon.

**Figure 1: Number of violent events in Croatia**



### **Croats, the JNA and paramilitaries**

Before proceeding it is important that I address the reasons for only focusing on participation in the Croatian forces and not participation in Serb paramilitary organizations or the JNA. The biggest limitation to this study is that I only examine the relationship between violence and

participation among Croat forces. A better study would also look at the relationship between violence and Serb participants from Croatia. Due to data limitations this is presently not possible. By discussing the differences between the JNA, Croat forces and Serb paramilitaries I can mollify this study's apparent bias and limitations.

The biggest difference between Croat forces and the JNA is that one was voluntary, and the other was conscripted. Croatia did not announce an official mobilization until October 5, 1991. Therefore I only look at individuals' involvement between January 1, 1991 and October 4, 1991. All of the Croat participants during this period can be considered volunteer. As Figure 1 shows, fighting did not become that frequent until March 1991. By including January and February I control for who joined before the fighting really intensified.

The JNA, alternatively, was a standing military and did not face the same problems of participation as the Croatian forces. Though there was a large amount of Serbs who refused to answer their mobilization orders, unlike their Croatian counterparts, draft dodging and deserting soldiers faced penalties. The minimum sentence was six months in prison, while the maximum sentence could be death (Immigration 1993). Even though most sentences followed the minimum or less, the point remains that given the coercive capacity of the state, the JNA could compel people to join its ranks. Though records show that only 50 percent of those mobilized reported, it is important to remember that this was still 50 percent (Meuller 2000: 48). Without the authority to mobilize we would potentially see a participation rate lower than 5 percent (Lichbach 1998; Ainsworth 2002). Since I am looking at the question of voluntary participation, the research question does not apply to the JNA. The JNA did not face a collective action problem to the extent of that face by the Croatian forces.

As already discussed, paramilitary groups were important actors in the Yugoslav wars. The research concerning such groups reveals that their formation and organization is not all that puzzling. If, as Mueller and Stewart suggest, many of the paramilitary members were released from jail in order to participate in the war, then the question of participation is quite different for them than it is for non-convicts. For Convicts, participation provides them with a specific selective incentive, freedom, and does not require that their actions have a political motive. Secondly, if they are paid by looting, then again their actions may be criminal, rather than political, and then, collective action theory does not apply; however, extrapolating the motives of paramilitary members to other participants in the war reduces the entire conflict to a criminal enterprise and unnecessarily invalidates the application of collective action theory to our understanding of the conflict. A more appropriate picture, and the one adopted here, sees paramilitary groups as instigators of the violence that motivated other individuals into participating in the conflict. The question of participation in paramilitaries may be answered by greed and criminality; however, the question of why other individuals participated remains unresolved.

### **Using the label insurgent**

Finally, I discuss the use of the term insurgent. Figure 1 indicates the war began with a few isolated events that escalated into a larger conflict. The first events included bombings of kiosks and restaurants. The next level involved fighting between Croatian police and Serb forces (paramilitary and JNA) in the areas of Pakrac, Plitvice Lakes, Kijevo and Borovo Selo. Eventually, fighting occurred all over Croatia from the eastern city of Vukovar, to more centrally

located Karlovac, and all the way to Dubrovnik in the southwestern part of the country. On June 25, 1991, Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia, and then postponed its declaration until October 8, 1991. Given that Croatia was fighting a war of secession against a Federal army, and had not received international recognition, I think it is appropriate to view Croat fighters as insurgents.

## **Data**

The data for violent events were taken from a data set of daily interval even data coded from news wire service stories in Lexis-Nexis Academic. Only events of Serb actions or attacks, or those involving both Croats and Serbs fighting were included. This was done in order to avoid a tautological argument in the model. Namely, the independent variable of events is likely to be influenced by the dependent variable if the events include Croat actions. There is a greater potential for more Croat events to be caused by more Croat participants, rather than the increase in Croat participants to be a result of more events. By only including Serb actions or actions involving both Serbs and Croats, such as battles and gunfights, I minimize this problem. An event is considered any public display of force. Gunfights, shelling, and bombings are of course events. So too are blockades and barricades. Blockades forcibly prevented individuals from leaving towns like Vukovar, Pakrac, Kijevo, and Dubrovnik. Barricades forcibly prevented citizens from traveling between neighborhoods. While the action of blockading a town did not necessarily result in the loss of life or injuries in that town, interviews with Croatian war veterans reveal that they considered blockades to be threatening (Interview in Omiš on 07/05/2012; Interview in Štobrec on 08/05/2012; Interview in Zagreb on 03/27/2012 , see next chapter). The

number of soldiers in each municipality was taken from [registarbraniteljia.com](http://registarbraniteljia.com), a website containing the names and dates of enlistment for Croatian soldiers. Multiple units for a single municipality were added together. Other data were taken from census data for 1991 in the Republic of Croatia Statistical Yearbook for 1992. Data on the ethnic makeup of each municipality were taken from the 1991 Croatia census provided to me by the Croatian Bureau of Statistic

## **Methodology**

While the best way to test the relationship between violence and participation would be to conduct a time-series analysis, this is not possible given data limitations. The data I have on the number of participants is only the sum total of individuals in each military unit for each 120 municipalities up to October 4, 1991. That said, the model is still a viable test as it is able to compare the number of individuals serving in each municipality, controlling for population, and the number of Serb attacks in each municipality. This allows us to observe whether or not a significant difference exists between the number of participants in those municipalities with a higher number of Serb attacks than those in municipalities with fewer Serb attacks.

I test my hypothesis by comparing the number of individuals enlisted in the armed forces of each municipality in Croatia with the number of violent events in each municipality between January 1, and October 5, 1991. Since the data are positively skewed I use a generalized linear model (Fox 2008: 421). The dependent variable is the percentage of enlisted individuals given each municipality's population.<sup>3</sup> I add several controls taken from the civil war literature. Here I list them and later discuss their anticipated relationship. These include the rate of employment in

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<sup>3</sup> I originally included each municipality's population as a control variable in the model; however, it was highly collinear. I therefore removed it and made the dependent variable a percentage of insurgents given each municipality's population.

each municipality, the percentage of the population in each municipality that is Croat, and the extent to which the population is ethnically mixed among Serbs and Croats.

The Collier-Hoeffler model leads me to anticipate a negative relationship between employment and participation. The more people employed in a given municipality should result in fewer enlistments, as individuals with employment are less attracted to income earned through participation (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). I use the percentage of Croats in the population as a means of testing the grievance hypothesis (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). I anticipate that as the number of Croats in an area decreases, feelings of resentment of Serbs should increase, leading to increased enlistment. Finally, it has also been hypothesized that more diverse municipalities were less prone to conflict (Gagnon 2006). I anticipate that as diversity increases, enlistment should decrease.

The results in Table 1 confirm my hypothesis. The variable for violent events reports a t-value of 3.058, showing that it is significant. Municipalities that experienced a larger number of events had a larger number of enlisted individuals. None of the other variables report significant values. This is especially surprising with employment, since much of the literature has emphasized a relationship between unemployment and insurgent recruitment. The poor performance of the other variables helps demonstrate the importance between violence and participation.

**Table 1: Violent events and participation in 120 municipalities**

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	t-value
Intercept	-0.064	1.654	-0.389
Violent events	0.052	0.017	*3.058
Employment	-0.000	0.000	-0.406
Diversity	-0.013	0.019	-0.703
Croat percentage	0.036	0.036	0.995
N			120

Note: The dependent variable is the percentage of the sum of enlisted individuals serving up to 10/05/1991 given each municipality's population. Violent events are the total number of Serb attacks or instances of Croat Serb fighting in each municipality up to 10/05/1991. Employment is the rate of employment in each municipality, the percentage of the population in each municipality that is Croat, and the extent to which the population is ethnically mixed among Serbs and Croats. The dependent variable is taken from [registarbranitelja.com](http://registarbranitelja.com). The variable violent events is taken from my own data set of daily interval event data. Employment and diversity are taken from the 1991 census, which was completed by September 1991. The percentage of Croatian population is from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

## Discussion

What do these results say about the war in Croatia? Seeing violence as the explanatory variable for participation greatly challenges those perspectives that continue to view the violence as a result of enduring ethnic nationalism. The model's output is not completely at odds with Gagnon (2006), Hockenos (2003), Klanjsek and Flere (2011), or Mueller's (2000) central theses that the war in Croatia began at the elite level. I have improved on this viewpoint by demonstrating how, in the absence of strong ideological commitments or rampant ethnic nationalism, a large number of individuals decided to participate in the war. This approach helps our understanding of the conflict as it does not require the conflict's participants to be thugs, criminals, or committed nationalists. Rather, this approach allows us to understand how a country with relative harmonious relations between its ethnic inhabitants was torn apart by a horrendous war. Moreover, it invites us to see the initial incidents of violence as part of a possible strategy used by the minority of elites and extremists who *were* first committed to a nationalist program.

As it relates to the broader topic of civil war and collective action, this chapter supports the theorized relationship between violence and participation in Lichbach (1998), and Kalyvas and Kocher (2007). By showing that collective action in civil war is not dependent on material incentives we are able to overcome the problem of individual's pursuing criminal interests rather than collective goals. In cases where violence is the main motivating factor, individuals may become involved for the sake of self-preservation, something that is inherently self-interested; however, individuals join a group, and fight for the goals of that group, thereby pursuing a collective good while also benefiting their own self-interested survival. The fact that participation in civil wars like the those in the Balkans, breaks down on ethnic lines reminds us that ethnic identity, while solely not the cause of conflict, plays an important role in the conflict. In a situation where material incentives are the main motivation for participation, ethnic identity should not be as salient. Once acts of violence between ethnic groups become significant enough to spur participation, individuals begin to regard their survival as one link to the good of the group (Hardin 1997). This pattern of behavior relies on Lichbach's community solution category (1998). The already existing differences between members of differing ethnic communities become divisive once violence is introduced.

The most important contribution of this chapter is its contribution to the debate concerning the central or peripheral origins of violence. The violence measured in the model was at the municipal level, giving it a distinctively local character. We see then, that local events spurred participation. Though this provides support for the role of local interests in conflict, it rivals those explanations that see local violence as a consequence of individuals pursuing material goods. Insurgents may be motivated more by local events, but their motivation does not

depend on material incentives. Moreover, the center may play an even more important role in facilitating the participation of individuals at the local level. Actors' interests may be local, but those seeking power at the center provide them with the resources and organization to act. After all, there are limits to what violence can explain. It may explain increases in participation, but it cannot explain how participants acquire the weapons and resources necessary to participate.

While violence can help solve the insurgent collective action problem on a mass scale, Lichbach reminds us that collective dissent requires at least two solutions from his four solution groups (Market, Community, Hierarchy, Contract) (1998). Alone, violence is a choice. The most likely assistance to come to willing insurgents does so from a pre-existing organization. Such an organization will have leaders and goals all of its own. The question then becomes whether or not the goals of the organization stem from a central cleavage or a peripheral concern. Is the organization organized to pursue local interests, or does it use local interests to motivate participants in the pursuit of larger, centralized collective goods?

In order to answer these questions further research should focus on the early participants in organizations that precede the violence. After all, how can we say violence causes participation if we cannot explain where the initial violence comes from in the first place? Are early participants more zealous than latter joiners? If so, does this mean that they are more likely to be pursuing a collective good, or are material selective-incentives needed to overcome their collective action problem?

I address these questions directly in the next chapter. I look at the influence and concept of local interests more closely, relying on interviews with war veterans and their perceptions of the conflict as something local, rather than national. I also explore how they joined the fighting

after committing to participating. By exploring the process of participation I answer some of the questions stated above.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that the main reason more and more individuals joined the Croatian forces in the Croatian Homeland during the summer and fall of 1991 was in response to violent incidents. This viewpoint both challenges and supports the existent literature. While it presents a theory and evidence that challenges the notion that the war was executed by paid thugs or nationalist extremists, it compliments the idea that the war was initially perpetrated by a minority whose violent actions mobilized more and more individuals into conflict. The research here contributes to collective action theories of conflict by using micro level data to argue that mobilization does occur without material incentives. It contributes in other ways by observing that local incidents of violence motivate individuals into participating in the conflict, thereby providing support for the viewpoint that regards violence as a phenomenon that emerges from locally.

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### **Interviews**

- Former HOS Commander, interviewed in Slavonski Brod on 09/27/2012.
- Former member of the 156th Brigade, interviewed in Omiš on 05/07/2012.
- Former member of the ??? Brigade , interviewed in Štobrec on 05/08/2012.
- Former member working for Krizni Štab in Sisak, interviewed in Zagreb on 03/27/2012.
- Former member of the 106th Brigade, interview 2, interviewed in Osijek on 04/10/2012.

## **Chapter 3: Fighting first: Early participation in the War in Croatia**

### **Introduction**

It is understood that indiscriminate violence in a conflict can work to motivate individuals to participate in that conflict (Lichbach 1998; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007; Kocher et al., 2011). Amid widespread violence individuals may feel that participating is actually less costly than not participating (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007). In such cases escalating a conflict can be a strategy among insurgents (Lichbach 1998). While the relationship between increased violence and increased participation may work to explain why more and more individuals join the fight once the fighting begins, it does not explain who fights first. That is who joins and prepares to fight before the fighting has even begun?

Appreciating the importance of the first participants is necessary in understanding the dynamics of conflict as these individuals are ultimately responsible for developing the strategies that induce greater mobilization over the course of the conflict. For these reasons I focus on the conflict's earliest entrants. Using interviews with war veterans from the War in Croatia (1991-1995) I look at who fought first, comparing the initial differences between early and later participants. I argue that early joiners belonged to a bounded community of those disaffected with Yugoslavia and Communism; however, these grievances alone, do not explain their participation, rather it is an individual's inclusion in the dissident community and the social relationships within that community that explain who fought first. I offer that individuals were socially mobilized in to participating in the earliest days of the conflict. This perspective challenges those views that place an emphasis on local interests and material incentives (Collier

and Hoeffler 2004; Hoeffler 2011). I make two additional contributions. First, by exploring the discontent of early joiners I am able to show that grievances can have an influence on the onset of insurgency; secondly, by demonstrating that these grievances were largely contained to a specific community within the broader society I am able to explain why there fails to be a strong relationship between grievances and the onset of conflict at the aggregate level (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Taydas et al., 2011).

I begin by discussing non-material solutions to the collective action problem, paying particular attention to the importance of community solutions (Lichbach 1998). I then outline the boundaries and membership of the Croat dissident community in Yugoslavia. I explain the role of the central cleavage in early joining, explaining that among first fighters we should see a stronger attachment to the conflict's central cleavage than to local interests. Afterwards, I present the interview methodology and the initial differences between early and later joiners. I then engage in an analysis of the early joiners, using evidence from interviews, showing that early joiners knew someone involved in the preparation and organization for conflict and were recruited by those individuals..

### **Beyond Material Incentives**

Although much of the conflict literature is dominated by an emphasis on the relationship between participation and material incentives (Ross 2002; Collier et al., 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Hoeffler 2011; Taydas et al., 2011), other research on domestic conflict acknowledges that social factors can also help induce participation (Lichbach 1998; Kalyvas 2003; Wood 2003; Sageman 2004; Weinstein 2005, 2007). Lichbach refers to such solutions (i.e.,

community) as those that are capable of overcoming “pecuniary self-interest” (Lichbach 1998: 111). In the place of material rewards, normative values and shared identities within preexisting organizations, networks, or communities are capable of producing solutions to the collective action problem (Lichbach 1998; Wood 2003; Sageman 2004; Weinstein 2007). A key piece of the solution is reciprocity within a bounded community. As Weinstein explains:

The fact that participants have been and believe they will continue to be engaged in repeated interaction with others from the groups makes it important for them to cooperate today in order that others will cooperate with them in the future.

(Weinstein 2007: 99)

Members of a community or group will assist each other in the present in order to ensure that they continue to be assisted in the future.

In her work on collective action during the civil war in El Salvador, Wood (2003) observes that participation can result from the pleasure of engaging in effective action. Acquiring agency can motivate individuals to act, especially in circumstances and among groups that have developed common values that support and endorse such action (Wood 2003; Lichbach 1998).

Sageman extends this perspective by offering that cliques within a larger network operate as,

The social mechanism that puts pressure on prospective participants to join, defines a certain social reality for the ever more intimate friends, and facilitates the development of a shared collective social identity and strong emotional feelings for the in-group. (2004: 154)

Groups alone can foster an in-group specific view of the world which is transmitted to new members as a means of their desire to belong to the group.

Another advantage of a pre-existing community is that such groups and networks commonly engage in a great deal of communication concerning their intentions and goals prior to engaging in collective dissent. Such steady forms of communication are more likely to induce members to join in collective action. As Weinstein (2007), Lichbach (1998), Wood (2003) and Sageman (2004) all mention the importance communication can have in establishing values for action and dissent within a particular community, endowing members with a mutual understanding that one's participation is dependent on another's, and vice versa (Lichbach 1998: 113). Mancur Olson (1965) stressed that small groups can exert interpersonal pressure to force members to act. In a small group an actor who knows that others' participation is dependent on hers, and that participation is expected among all members of the group creates efficacious feelings and establishes norms of reciprocity.

It should be said that operating in tandem with community solutions in the War in Croatia were two crucial elements. The first was a pre-existing organization, in this case the Croatian political party HDZ. The second was the hierarchical structure of the party. I mention this in order to show that the dissident community in Croatia did not suddenly and spontaneously decide to form its members into a fighting force, rather it was the HDZ leadership that made the initial steps towards mobilization; however, it was among the dissident community and through its norms and relationships that HDZ was able to locate recruits and mobilize them. I anticipate that the earliest joiners were social joiners, meaning they joined through a relationship with a

member of the same community, while the later joiners were mobilized, not by relationships and shared values, but by the prevalence of indiscriminate violence (see Brown 2013).

## **Community**

In order to accurately observe the role of community solutions in overcoming the collective action problem it is necessary to identify the community in question. I do not assume that the boundaries of this community included all Croats and excluded all non-Croats. Croatian national and ethnic identity was certainly not that monolithic nor did Croats all share the same goals. For instance we see that the majority of Croats did not favor full independence. As Gagnon (2006) shows only 15% of Croats wanted full independence for Croatia in 1990, while 64% favored a confederation with Yugoslavia (Gagnon 2003: 135). Klanjsek and Flere (2011) too show that there was not an overwhelming longing for a independent homeland among the majority of Croats in 1990. Even among HDZ supporters, only 30% favored independence over a confederation (Gagnon 2006: 135). Therefore the community from which the first fighters began to participate in the preparation and organization of the conflict was relatively small. It is necessary then to identify its boundaries and the criteria for membership.

Charles Tilly offers that broader societies often have contiguous zones within them that serve as boundaries among members of a wider community (2005: 134). For our purposes I regard what interview subjects referred to as the *hrvatska stvar* (the Croatian Thing or Cause), to be the contiguous zone around which social boundaries were delineated in Croatia and Yugoslavia. The central issues of the Croatian Cause can be understood as the issues of Croat goals for an independent state, the rights of Croats in Yugoslavia, Croatia's position in the

socialist federation, and interpretations regarding Croatia's past, especially during the Second World War.

The clarity of this boundary was intensified by the Communist's prohibition on unofficial public discussions of the past and by suppressing outward displays of Croatian nationalism or even patriotism. Croatian national aspirations go at least as far back as the 19th Century; however, during the Second World War the Croatian Independent State (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH) was aligned with Axis Powers and led by a Fascist regime, the Ustaša. In the post-war period Croatian support for independence or patriotism became associated with the Fascist regime and its crimes. What is more is that in the aftermath of the war, Croats who had (or were suspected of having) supported the NDH were discriminated against by the Communist regime. Associates of the NDH were denied employment and educational opportunities (Hockenos 2003). Members of this community, those on the losing side of WWII in Croatia, were not allowed to openly mourn their losses, nor were they allowed to publicly air their dissatisfaction with Yugoslavia.

While discussions of the past and the Croatian Cause were interdicted publicly, they continued privately. The memory of the war and the goal of an independent Croatia endured among certain members of the public. Many of these individuals migrated to Western Europe, North America and Australia, where they formed organizations aimed at overthrowing the Communist regime and liberating Croatia (Hockenos 2003). Many of those who remained in Yugoslavia continued to be concerned with the Croatian Cause. For example, in an interview in Drniš my interlocutor explained that his family frequently discussed the Second World War and what they saw as limitations on Croat rights in Yugoslavia. The subject went on to explain that

everyone in the area remembered whose side each family had been on, but that you only discussed such things with those who had been on the same side. He added that this was the reason they (meaning his family) hated Communist Partisans. Saying, they hated Partisans more than Četniks (Serb royalist, nationalist paramilitaries in WWII), since at least with a Četnik you knew where he stood. Partisans, on the other hand, were traitors since they were Croat, but potentially traitors of Croatia (Drniš 02/24/2012).

Other interview subjects related similar experiences, suggesting that precluded discussions of the past in the public helped create a discreet community in which the cost of membership could be further discrimination or even jail. Some interviewees went to jail or had relatives jailed for dissident activities involving the Croatian Cause, such as singing patriotic songs, having contact with the nationalist diaspora, or writing patriotic graffiti in public view. Belonging to the community itself was an act of dissent, which helped foster the values and norms that would later facilitate collective action. The boundaries of the community were how one regarded the Croatian Cause, while the level of belonging to this community was determined by one's stance, and the strength of that stance, on the Croatian Cause.

### **Local and Central Motivations**

Examining the differences between the early and later joiners can also help clarify where violence originates. The literature has developed a dichotomy between the origins of violence as a consequence of local or central interests (Kalyvas 2003). Centrally interested actors are thought to be motivated by the grievances concerning the conflict's central cleavage; locally interested actors are believed to be motivated by local, often material interests. I have challenged the

reliance on material incentives and demonstrated statistically that local, violent incidents induced individuals into joining the Croat forces (see Brown 2013). In this chapter I go further by arguing that the earliest participants joined socially from a pre-existing community whose boundaries were defined by one's stance on the conflict's central cleavage, the Croatian Cause ( i.e., the goal of an independent Croatia), demonstrating that the earliest violence has origins at the center of the conflict. Early joiners should all exhibit a stronger orientation around the central cleavage of the conflict, while later joiners should demonstrate a greater ideological and social distance from the central cleavage, which explains why they were mobilized later, by localized violence.

The fact that the group's identity was bounded by individuals' dissatisfaction with the status quo in Yugoslavia exemplifies that these individuals held strong grievances against the state and the Communist authorities. We see then that the central cleavage in this case is also a shared grievance. At the same time, the fact that the community's grievances were largely related to past events and further intensified by the interactions within the group itself (Sageman 2004) is a good indication as to why any statistical significance between the central cleavage and the onset of the conflict would not be observed at the aggregate level. The measure of grievance is not necessarily evident in the present. As this chapter will show, the participation of these individuals very much depended on their dissatisfaction with Croatia's lot in Yugoslavia, and that the early actions of these individuals played a crucial role in the opening days of the conflict.

## **Research Methodology**

I use interviews with former participants in the Croatian War in order to show the differences between early and later joiners. From February 2012 to September 2012, I conducted 32

interviews with Croatian war veterans in Dalmatia (Southern Croatia), Central Croatia and Slavonija (Eastern Croatia). The interviews usually lasted between one to three hours and were conducted in subjects' place of business, homes, or cafes. The topic of the War in Croatia remains a very sensitive issue in Croatia and the surrounding countries. As a result I usually had to use someone to personally request the interview with the subject. This required us to find family members and friends of war veterans to introduce us and ask for an interview. Even still, many of the individuals we requested interviews with declined. This was especially the case with former members of paramilitary groups. Given the sensitive nature of the War in Croatia today, it was necessary to offer anonymity or confidentiality to each subject. Even though the interviews were confidential or anonymous, most subjects refused to let us record the conversation. Therefore, my research assistant and I took rigorous notes during each interview and afterward combined them in detailed summaries. Anywhere that I use quoted text is a translation of a quote that was written down verbatim. Everywhere else, what the subject reported is paraphrased in a way that tries to closely capture what the subject said and how it was said.

I asked each subject several open ended questions concerning their involvement in the War, life in Yugoslavia, and their family's role in the Second World War (See Appendix for a full description of the questions). For the purposes of this chapter I focus on when and how each individual began serving the Homeland, asked as *Kad ste se i kako stavili u službu domvine?* I also look at which side their family supported during the Second World War, labeled as SFRJ for Partisan or Yugoslavia supporters and NDH for supporters of the Croatian Fascist regime; the presence of personal connections to someone involved in the early stages of the conflict prior to joining; and whether or not the subject experienced violence before joining. Out of the 32

interviews only 28 are considered viable. Some subjects refused to answer questions in a way that could support this research. Those interviews have been subsequently removed from the analysis. Two interviews were conducted with individuals who were too young to enlist in 1991, and have also been removed from the analysis in this chapter. Additionally, the 5 interviews with members of the paramilitary group the Croatian Defense Forces (*Hrvatske obrambene snage*, HOS) are not included. In the remainder of this chapter I look at interviews with war veterans and explore the motives of early joiners.

### **The Pattern of Participation**

I define an early joiner as someone who joined in the preparation, organization, and fighting in Croatia before June 25, 1991, the day Croatia first declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Later joiners are those who joined after this date, but before the introduction of conscription. The period of focus here is from 1990 to October 4, 1991, the day before President Tuđman announced conscription. The contending explanations for early and later involvement are the social relationships individuals shared with other participants or an individual's experience with violence. As stated earlier, I expect that early joiners should exhibit stronger social ties within a specific dissident community than later joiners, while later joiners should have witnessed greater levels of indiscriminate violence.

Tables 1 and 2 show that my expectations are, for the most part correct. In Table 1, only three out of 12 early joiners did not have a connection or relationship with either the nationalist community or individuals already involved in the conflict. Two of the three with no relationship discussed a violent incident as factoring in on their decision to join, the 11 other individuals

joined through someone, leaving only one participant who does not fit either expectation. Table 2 shows that six of nine later joiners joined without a connection and after experiencing some level of violence, while the other three joined without experiencing violence, but through a social relationship. In the remainder of this chapter I provide further evidence in support of the social aspects of early joining by exploring the process through which early participants joined in the conflict via respondents' interviews.

**Table 2: Summary Table of Early Joiners**

	Location	Violence	Family	Relationship
With Violence	Zagreb	Yes	NDH-SFRJ	Yes
	Stobrec	Yes	SFRJ	No
	Podstrana	Yes	NDH	Yes
	Ernest.	Yes	NDH	No
Without Violence	Zagreb	No	NDH	Yes
	Zagreb	No	NDH	Yes
	Zagreb	No	N/A	No
	Solin	No	SFRJ	Yes
	S. Brod	No	NDH	Yes
	Osijek	No	NDH	Yes
	Drnis	No	NDH	Yes
	Drnis	No	NDH	Yes

**Table 3: Summary Table of Later Joiners**

	Location	Violence	Family	Relationship
With Violence	Split	Yes	NDH-SFRJ	No
	Sisak	Yes	SFRJ	No
	Osijek	Yes	SFRJ	No
	Omis	Yes	NDH	No
	Drnis	Yes	NDH	No
	Drnis	Yes	NDH	No
Without Violence	Drnis	No	NDH	Yes
	Zagreb	No	NDH	Yes
	Split	No	N/A	Yes

### **Explaining early joiners**

The first subject from Zagreb was in the Reserve Police (RP). During Yugoslavia the RP existed in the event that if the city or republic needed more police officers than those it had on hand, it could mobilize these reservists. According to the subject, beginning in 1990 the RP began acting as a parallel police force, designed to monitor what other police and the Yugoslav Peoples Army were doing. At this point the certainty to which the newly elected HDZ Government controlled the power structures in Croatia was in question. For example, during a riot between Dinamo (Zagreb) and Red Star (Belgrade) football fans in Zagreb, there was the impression that the police acted more aggressively towards Croats than to Serbs (Tanner 1997: 228). A look at the Table 3 shows that nearly 30% of all sections of the Ministry of the Interior (MUP) in Croatia were populated by Serbs. The loyalty of the Serb policemen to Croatia was in question by President Tuđman's newly elected government. It was feared that if the Serb policemen left Croatia or refused to follow orders the police force would be considerably weakened. Therefore, according to the interview subject, it was necessary to create a parallel police structure, one that could monitor the activities of police and the Serb dominated JNA while also waiting in the

wings to fill any vacancies left by the defections of Serb police officers. In order to assure that the RP would be loyal to the new regime, only selected individuals were called to participate. Sometime in 1990 the subject was contacted by his *kum* who worked in MUP (*Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova*, MUP), (the word *Kum* can refer to one's Godfather or best man in Southeastern Europe). The subject was then told to recruit two other individuals that he knew and trusted. The subject told me that in this way loyal RP cells were set up all over Zagreb.

**Table 4: Ethnic Makeup of the Croatian Interior Ministry 1990**

Ethnicity	Police	Inspectors	Managers	Remaining	Total
Croat	45.8	46.1	66.3	59.3	50.3
Serb	32.8	34.5	29.2	23.3	30.1
Yugoslav	16.6	15.9	2.6	14.2	15.6
Other	4.8	3.5	1.8	3.2	4.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Table taken from Radelic et al., 2006: 82.

The subject also related that in addition to his involvement with the RP, he also helped Croat conscripts defect from the JNA. Again, these actions involved family members or family friends. The subject and other dissidents, would use vehicles from MUP to drive onto a JNA base with the purpose of taking a relative or friend out to lunch. This person would have already packed a few of his belongings in advance and would then leave in the MUP vehicle. He would be driven to his family's residence for an hour or so, and then he would be taken somewhere where he could join the fledgling (*Zbor narodne garde*, ZNG). According to the subject, the strategy here was three fold: 1) it was a way to find able bodied men to join the ZNG; 2) it denied such a person to the JNA; 3) it made the Croats remaining in the JNA nervous about being the only

Croats remaining in the JNA. Therefore it was hoped that they too would consider defecting. While this strategy is interesting in itself, what is most important is that the early defections relied on trust and familiarity between the recruits and the recruiters. According to the subject, the initial orders for recruitment came from HDZ.

The next subject, also from Zagreb, worked for the railroads during Yugoslavia. His family's past involvement with the NDH (his uncle was an Ustaša) made it difficult for his father to find work. He therefore immigrated to Germany. Through his father and traveling around the continent on the railroads the subject had strong ties with the radical elements in the Croatian diaspora residing in Western Europe. According to the subject, in order to maintain his job and as a result of his connection with the nationalist diaspora he was forced to work for Yugoslavia's secret police, the State Security Administration (*Uprava državne bezbednosti*, UDBA), informing on individuals in the diaspora. The subject relates that the leaders of the diaspora knew he was an informant and coached him on providing just enough correct information for his UDBA handlers to keep them interested and to keep him employed. Eventually the subject became a reserve officer in the JNA. Sometime in 1990, the subject relates that he and other like minded officers held secret meetings organized by HDZ, in which they discussed how to establish an army for Croatia in the event of a war. According to the subject, the individuals at this meeting were those each member trusted, meaning someone with known greater sympathies to Croatia than to Yugoslavia. After establishing an army structure for Croatia the officers would recruit individuals to participate. A relationship and knowledge of one's position on the issue of Croatia was a necessary precondition for recruitment. When asked how they would identify

recruits, the subject simply replied that they knew “who would and who wouldn’t” participate (Zagreb 03/28/2012).

This idea is supported by evidence from other parts of Croatia as well. A subject from Slavonski Brod, who was a member on the city council and involved in the preparation for the conflict, relates a similar situation with recruits. The subject hailed from a family with strong NDH ties. His father had been in the Wermacht, most likely the 369th Croatian Reinforced Infantry, as he fought at and *survived* at Stalingrad. After also narrowly surviving execution by Yugoslav Partisans in 1947, his father continued to be frequently harassed by the Communist authorities and eventually immigrated to Germany. In 1971, the subject himself was briefly detained for singing patriotic songs in a cafe. According to the subject, when the leaders recruited individuals to join the ZNG in Slavonski Brod in 1991, they only dealt with those individuals whom they knew and who stood on the “right” side of the Croatian Cause. Moreover, he explicitly stated that by contacting those individuals whom they knew and who knew each other it would be difficult for the recruited to refuse and say no (Slavonski Brod 04/10/2012).

A subject from Osijek relates that he was also “instructed” to join the Civilian Defense (*Narodna zaštita*, NZ) by his *kum*. The subject mentions that at the time the other joiners all knew each other. They were all “friends with whom they had talked with already,” (Osijek 04/10/2012) meaning they knew where each other stood on the issue of the Croatian Cause. Prior to being recruited the subject had contact with the nationalist diaspora through his brother, who lived in Germany and his father had been a soldier in the NDH.

Other early participants were contacted directly by HDZ and told to began forming an organization for defense. Two participants in Drniš related that they were both contacted by HDZ

members in the government and told to prepare for war. The last subject from Zagreb did not indicate that he was contacted by anyone in particular. Rather he explained he was simply mobilized into the RP sometime during 1990, but that it was boring and not worth talking about. Later he joined the 1st Brigade, the Croatian Special Forces. Despite the subject's lack of a stated interpersonal relationship he still fits the profile of the other interviewees. According to the subject it was easier for Serbs to live in Yugoslavia than for "regular" Croats. The subject mentioned that his family went to church, though quietly, and that he could never marry someone who was not a Catholic. The subject had a Serb neighbor, but according to the interview this neighbor did not seem "like a Serb." Even though this individual did not explain his family's history or who recruited him to join the RP, it is clear that his position on the Croatian Cause was similar to those recruited elsewhere. Given the other examples we can speculate that his views were known to those who mobilized him into the RP.

The final early joiner does not exhibit the same characteristics as the those in the previous interviews. Though not a party member the subject was somewhat satisfied with the stability of the Communist system and feels that all the negative aspects of the system intensified after Tito died in 1980. After the Log Revolution, when Serbs in Krajina felled trees blocking roads and declared the area independent from Croatia, the subject became concerned with what was going on and phoned a friend who worked in the police. When asked what to do, his friend told him to join the NZ, which he did with some other friends. Even though the subject seems to have been neutral on the Croatian Cause, I have included him since he joined through a connection in the police department.

## Discussion

What we see from these interviews is that joining early involved several community solutions to the collective action problem. Based on the interviews it is apparent that early joiners belonged to a pre-existing community. The boundaries of this community were delineated by an individual's position on the Croatian Cause. Those who shared the position that Croatia and Croats were victims in Yugoslavia, disadvantaged and suppressed, were considered members of the same community and therefore trustworthy. The establishment of such a community helped lay the ground for the knowledge and reciprocity that helped facilitate participation. The level of one's integration into this community through interpersonal relationships strengthened the likelihood that he would be recruited and become involved. This last point is largely due to the importance of interpersonal connections, known as *veze*, in Southeastern Europe. As Allock (2000) notes, despite the lack of scientific inquiry into the importance of connections in the former-Yugoslavia, "anybody who has worked in Yugoslavia for any length of time will have encountered them" (2000: 363). Connections in the former Yugoslavia are a necessary way of life. Who you know and how you know them is important in overcoming bureaucratic hurdles, receiving expedited healthcare, and finding employment. While such relationships, particularly between families are thought to be a legacy of a pre-modern phenomenon in the Balkans, Allock (2000) offers that actually, in the face of Communism's hold over civil society, the tradition of connections helped individuals overcome the limits of the state's capacity and the restraints on other forms of social interaction. Post-Communist problems, like the lack of an established rule

of law, coupled with economic uncertainty have ensured that the importance of connections endures in Balkan society.

The best example of the long history and importance of interpersonal relationships in the Balkans is the concept of *kumstvo*, which when translated into English can refer to godparenthood or even a form of familial sponsorship. In the interviews several individuals mentioned being instructed by their *kum* during the recruitment process. While conducting this research we were granted several interviews as a result of the person requesting the interview for us being the research subject's *kum*. *Kumstvo* is a complex Southeastern European social custom. A *kum* is either a godfather or a bridegroom; however, *kum* can also be referred to as the whole family of the godfather or bridegroom. For example, a man who was the best man at another man's wedding is *kum*, while his wife is also *kuma* and any subsequent children from the marriage may also be *kum* (Hammel 1968). At its core *kumstvo* establishes a strong sense of social reciprocity between the acting parties. An example of its importance as a form of reciprocity can be seen in how it was once traditionally used to end blood feuds or make amends for a grievous wrong. Righting the wrong of an accidental death involved the person responsible for the death offering the victim's family *kumstvo*. Saving another's life could also be rewarded with *kumstvo* (Hammel 1968). Though *kumstvo* is no longer used as a form of restitution for murder, it remains an important social institution. *Kumstvo* usually possesses asymmetric power relationships, meaning one party is often more obligated than the other party; however, there are shared obligations on both sides (Hammel 1968). While it is not wholly correct to say that someone cannot refuse a *kum*'s request, to refuse a request would create serious and negative social ramifications, especially in a situation where a *kum* is someone with

more social importance or greater connections than the person being requested to do the favor. This is not to say that an individual participated in the conflict simply because his *kum* told him to, rather it was the recruit's position on the Croatian Cause, the awareness of that position by those seeking recruits, coupled with the recruit's relationships in the community and with his *kum* that operated together to induce participation in the earliest days of the conflict. The interviews evince that the values of the community and the recruits' desire to maintain a good standing as members in that community propelled individuals into participation. The request of one's *kum* created a situation in which a refusal would easily diminish one's position within his own social environment. The interviews and relationships among the early joiners show that norms of reciprocity and forward thinking about one's future social standing were factors in the first fighters' decisions to participate.

So far I have presented evidence that supports the role of interpersonal relationships and community solutions in order to explain early joiners. To further strengthen this argument I look at the marginal role played by material incentives in mobilizing this group of participants. Table 5 shows that only three of the 12 subjects were paid for their participation in the early days of the War. These three were paid for their service through their place of employment before the conflict. This was standard practice in Yugoslavia. Firms would pay those employees who were in the military when they went on short exercises. The firms were then reimbursed by the Ministry of Defense. This is interesting as it indicates that for those employed and enlisted in the ZNG, participation was materially neutral; however, some subjects did say that when in the field their pay was raised to what it was when they had to travel for work. Many of the other participants were employed at the time of their involvement, but participated in the conflict

through organizations that were seen as voluntary, such as the NZ or the organized defense in Drniš. Since the first actions of the Reserve Police were clandestine, none of those participants were paid until they joined the ZNG after or right before the conflict escalated into a sustained war.

**Table 5: Early Joiners' Pay**

	Location
Recieved pay	S. Brod
	Podstrana
	Zagreb
Recieved no pay	Stobrec
	Ernest.
	Zagreb
	Zagreb
	Zagreb
	Solin
	Osijek
	Drnis
Drnis	

As it relates to the center-periphery dichotomy we see that the early efforts of mobilization involved the center in many different ways. While those that who joined early clearly show a strong orientation around the conflict's central cleavage, this alone is not enough to explain their involvement. Nowhere in the interviews did any of the subject's mention that they spontaneously decided to fight for Croatian independence. The fact that this community existed in Yugoslavia since the Second World War and did little in the way of challenging the regime, shows that even the strongest of communities continue to face difficulties in overcoming the collective action problem. We see that the mobilization process was not a peripheral affair; it

was initiated from the center of power by the leadership of HDZ, and it utilized individuals' orientations to the central cleavage as a way of selecting the most reliable and likely recruits. It took the mobilization efforts of HDZ to provide collective action solutions. That is, a preexisting organization with its own incentives and hierarchical structure took the first step in organizing the Croatian forces. At the same time, to say that it was only the efforts of the HDZ leadership is also incomplete. To have an accurate answer to the question of why the earliest joiners participated at all, we have understand that it was both the pre-existing organization, HDZ, and the pre-existing dissident community that made collective action possible.

This is exemplified by a debate within the HDZ and military leadership between Croatia's second Defense Minister, Martin Špegelj and President Tuđman. Mobilizing through the party and its interpersonal relationships with individuals within the dissident community was a conscious decision by President Tuđman. Tuđman felt the need to go through the party, rather than the structures of the official organizations because he was uncertain of who could be trusted and who could not. In an interview with Špegelj, the Minister explained that while he wanted to mobilize the Croatian Territorial Defense forces (*Teritorijalna obrana, TO*), Tuđman was unsure that officers in the TO would support Croatia's independence at that time and preferred instead to recruit and mobilize through the party and the interpersonal relationships among recruiters and recruits. Špegelj explained the situation as,

This was the problem: I was trying to organize HV, as a state, not a political organization... . This is what I wanted to accomplish with the organization of the Territorial Defense, that had been here 20, 30 years. The Territorial Defense was militarily trained and called territorial only because of the way a potential war would

have been fought. Otherwise, it is an army like any other army. I wanted to organize it so that in a relatively short period of time it could be mobilized, armed and have a good balance of power toward the opponent. But he [Tuđman] did not want that. He wanted mercenaries who will be under his political control. And there arose a problem. I could not control him and that's why in the fall of 1991 I resigned. (Zagreb 11/19/2012)

The disagreement between Špegelj and Tuđman appears to be one over the importance of individuals' attachment to the central cleavage and how assured the regime could be of such individuals' participation. Špegelj believed he could mobilize the TO based on his authority as Defense Minister and through his own personal relationships with the commanders in the JNA in Croatia.<sup>4</sup> Špegelj had been a general in charge of the 5th Army of the JNA in the 1980s. As Špegelj said in the interview he had Serb commanders willing to defect to the Croatian side. We see then, with Špegelj's plan an individual's position on the Croatian Cause or a close orientation to the central cleavage was not seen as a necessary precondition for participation, rather it was his own personal relationship and the subsequent relationships shared with the commanding officers in Croatia. While there is no way to know if Špegelj's plan would have worked as well as he believes it would have, the contrast between him and Tuđman does reveal that from at least part of the Croatian leadership, community solutions involving the central cleavage were seen as important to the Republic's mobilization efforts. Špegelj explains that everything was organized through HDZ and not as he wanted it, through the Croatian state, in order for Tuđman to be assured of

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<sup>4</sup> Here I do not quote Špegelj because during the interview his wife, Stanka Špegelj interjected and related all of this information. Špegelj just confirmed it. Here is the quote: "Martin was the commander of the Western District during Yugoslavia- Croatia, Slovenia and part of Bosnia. And he had control of all the barracks, warehouses, people he knew where everybody was. So the Serbs were terribly afraid of him... . And since he knew it all, he organized it to take their weapons. He went for example to Varazdin, met with a group of people who he organized to take control of the barracks. He got the commander of the barracks to go along, although he was a Serb." (Zagreb 11/19/2012)

individuals' "loyalty to the party" (Zagreb 11/19/2012). Tuđman appears to have understood that those individuals who were already disposed to the idea of Croatian independence, Croat grievances and connected to individuals in HDZ with the same disposition, would be more likely to participate if recruited. As most of the interviews with early joiners demonstrate, this was the strategy used by the earliest organizers.

While the central cleavage may not be important to most of a conflict's participants, in the early stages of the war, prior to the availability of vast resources to the weaker organization and before the escalation of violence to the point that it induces expanded participation, leaders will target their recruitment efforts on those who they know share a strong inclination to the conflict's central cleavage or grievance. This orientation is created by the norms of a particular community. The fact that it is confined to a community of a certain size may explain why at the aggregate level, the relevance of grievances often fails to show a significant relationship with the onset of conflict. While the boundaries of a community are a necessary precondition, it is the members' involvement with each other in that community via mechanisms for reciprocity and a shared understanding of mutual commitments that helps facilitate collective action.

## **Conclusion**

Indiscriminate violence is capable of inspiring increased participation in conflict; however, it is necessary to understand where this initial violence or actions provoking such violence first come from. By focusing on the first fighters we see that they came from a community whose boundaries were determined by members' orientations around the central cleavage, in this case Croatian independence from Yugoslavia. We also see that while the norms, values, and social

standing of members in this community helped mobilize them into participating in the early days of the conflict, the central leadership of HDZ first initiated the organizing efforts. These findings reveal three insights into the dynamics of conflict: First, it shows us that grievances are relevant to understanding domestic conflict. Despite the fact that most aggregate studies fail to find significance between grievances and conflict, at the micro-level grievances belong to a potent minority. Secondly, we see that the initial combatants were not mobilized by their own or even local initiative, but were recruited by a national organization at the behest of its leadership, demonstrating that the central cleavage alone is insufficient for mobilizing participants. Thirdly, the process of recruitment reveals that the an individual's position on the central cleavage was essential to recruiting participants.

Understanding who the earliest participants is useful to understanding conflict. From this chapter we see that the purported importance of material incentives, via the looting mechanism, played no role in the recruitment and mobilization of conflict's earliest entrants. When it comes to exploring conflict through macro economic models and variables it appears, at least in the Croatian case, that correlations at the aggregate level between economic circumstance and the onset of conflict can easily overlook the micro level processes that have little relation to macro level findings.

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- Former member of the 108 ZNG, interviewed in Slavonski Brod on 04/10/2012
- Former member of the NZ, interview 1, interviewed in Drniš on 02/24/2012
- Former member of the NZ interview 2, interviewed in Drniš on 02/24/2012

Former member of the 116th Brigade, interviewed in Solin on 05/07/2012

Former member of the 1st Brigade, interviewed in Zagreb on 03/20/2012

Former Minister of Defense, Martin Špegelj, interviewed in Zagreb on 11/19/2012

## **Chapter 4: Stability and Self-interest in Ethnic Conflict**

### **Introduction**

Why are ethnic civil wars stable? Stability indicates that the conflict is in equilibrium, meaning that: 1) bursts of activity occur before falling quickly to zero; or 2) the activity, in this case violence, is almost constant (Francisco 2000; Francisco 2009). In ethnic civil wars it is the latter that keeps the conflict stable. At first glance, near constant ethnic violence seems to support nationalist and ideological explanations of the conflict. Once violence begins it is increasingly difficult to stop. Unstable ceasefires and an illusive compromise can appear to be the result of intransigent ethnic hatred. Yet, research on other civil wars show that non-ethnic civil wars are also stable (Francisco 2009). Furthermore collective action theory tells us that nationalist ideology alone is insufficient for mobilizing participants in domestic conflict (Lichbach 1998; Kalyvas 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2004; Francisco 2010). Therefore we have to ask if the same dynamics in civil wars are active in ethnic conflicts.

In this chapter I test to see if the War in Croatia was stable. Then I explore why. Francisco tested seven dissimilar civil wars and found all of them to be in equilibrium. At the same time he acknowledged that, “The findings tell us that stability exists, but nothing about the reasons that caused it” (Francisco 2009: 81). The challenge is to understand why once started, violence remains steady. Using quantitative data from the War in Croatia and interviews with the War’s veterans I find that the material self-interest of both national and local leaders depended on the conflict’s persistence. Interviews with war veterans reveal that in order to participate in the conflict it was necessary for many individuals to purchase their weapons and ammunition from local leaders. At the same time a generalized linear model shows that increased violence resulted

in increased participation, indicating that as violence went up so did the number of individuals wanting to participate. Using the simple logic of supply and demand, I conclude that as more individuals wanted to participate the demand and sale of weapons rose as well. While the relationship between war-profiting and a conflict's duration is not new (Ross 2004; Fearon 2004) I add to this understanding by focusing on a conflict that did not involve natural resources. This contributes to our broader understanding of civil wars as it demonstrates that profit of any kind can give combatants cause to keep fighting. Second, my findings are more robust since I empirically confirm that the conflict was stable by using daily interval event data, rather than assuming the level of interaction from macro level data and models (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2004).

## **Ethnic Conflict**

The concept of ethnic conflict has a very large and diverse literature. From the primordialist view (Kaplan 1993) who see ethnicity as something innate, to constructivists who regard ethnic identity as something constructed by elites (Gagnon 2006), the concept of ethnic conflict alone is rife with controversy. For the purposes of this chapter I use Brubaker and Laitin's definition (1998) which regards ethnic conflict as:

violence perpetrated across ethnic lines, in which at least one party is not a state (or representative of a state), and in which putative ethnic difference is coded-- by perpetrators, targets, influential third parties, or analysts--as having been integral rather than incidental to the violence, that is, in which the violence is coded as having been meaningfully oriented in some way to the different ethnicity of the target. (1998: 428)

The War in Croatia meets this definition for several reasons. First the fighting began when Croatia was still a part of Yugoslavia, thus the fighting was internal and did not involve the influence of an external state. Moreover, Serb forces in Krajina, while supported by Belgrade, were more than just surrogates of Serbian policy. This provides further evidence that the War in Croatia was a war between people in the same country and not one between two separate independent states. Finally, the nature of violence is indicative of its ethnic nature. The destruction of Serb and Croat cultural symbols, the forced eviction of Serbs by Croats (Tanner 1997; Drakulić 2004) and of Croats by Serbs (Nazor 2011) demonstrate the fighting was largely conducted along ethnic lines. A look at the wartime propaganda further reveals the importance of ethnic differences in the conflict. A famous Croatia poster from the War declaring that “*Osijek nikad neće biti Osek,*” translated as “Osijek will never be Osek” is one example. The name of the town Osijek is spelled in Latin characters and in the Croatian ikavian dialect, while Osek is the Serbian name for the same town, spelled in Serbian Cyrillic and in the Serbian ekavian dialect. Similar statements and pieces of propaganda, highlighting the differences between Croat and Serb language and culture were common during the War (Thompson 1999).

Based on the definition provided and the brief evidence given it is quite clear that the War in Croatia was an ethnic conflict. I now proceed to test and see if the conflict was stable.

## **Stability**

In the most extensive work on the dynamics of domestic conflict, Francisco contends that individual self-interest first brings individuals into action by overcoming their collective action

problem (Lichbach 1998; Francisco 2010). It is then dissidents' ability to adapt that explains why mobilized dissidents can survive the state's efforts to defeat them. Adaptation can also explain the regime's ability to withstand insurgents' efforts to topple it (Lichbach 1987; Francisco 2010). Cases of two-sided adaptation contribute to the emergence of civil war (Francisco 2010: 37). What I am interested in here is detailing how actors' self-interest keeps the conflict going. Adaptation may be the key tactic to continue fighting, but the continued pursuit of self-interest underlies the reasons for the fighting and subsequent adaptation. Self-interest can also evolve during a conflict. As Ross (2004) found, material interests are rarely responsible for the first steps in fighting; however, they can result in extending the duration of a conflict. Examining the details will help us understand the origins of violence and why it is maintained.

I first proceed by seeing if the first months of the War in Croatia were stable. The reason I only focus on the early months of the conflict is due to the fact that Croatia had yet to announce mandatory military service. Therefore, the first months of fighting are a hard case which if stable, grant us cause to explore participants' motives in greater detail. Once the coercive forces of the state are introduced into the mobilization process, the calculus of interests and participation is altered from one in which non-participants chose between fines or prison and participation. In a period during which participation is voluntary, understanding how mobilization occurs becomes more central to understanding the motives and interests underlying the causes of the conflict.

When we read a conflict's history, it is common for authors not to dwell on the regular, strategically unimportant incidents. Instead, focus is placed on the significant battles that turned the tide. The skirmishing and indiscriminate fighting are considered aberrations from the

mainstream fighting. In the Balkans, such incidents were considered examples of Serb and Croat savagery. Yet, instead of regarding such incidents as mere noise to the larger, more consequential, seemingly purposeful events in conflict, Kalyvas (2003) argues that we should acknowledge that such incidents are more than a sideshow; they are fundamental to the nature of civil war, and therefore one of its defining characteristics. The regularity of such violence is rarely captured in history books, but dense event data make note of them. Daily interval event data coded from newswire service stories show that during the War in Croatia from January 1, 1991, to October 4, 1991<sup>5</sup> this ‘noise’ made up the bulk of the conflict. There were 110 attacks, 119 battles, 34 bombings, 38 shellings, 17 bombings, 63 firefights and 372 incidents of blockade. It is this noise that illustrates a conflict’s dynamics.

Given the density of the data, I expect that the first months of the War in Croatia were stable. Francisco tested seven civil wars and found all of them to be in equilibrium (2009), giving us good reasons to anticipate the same for the War in Croatia. Moreover, using similar data he tested the wars in Croatia and Bosnia from 1992-1993 and also found these years to be stable. Like Francisco (2009; 2010) I use the Lotka-Volterra, or predator-prey model. In the model, the predator is the remains of the Yugoslav state, including the Yugoslav People’s Army and Serb paramilitary forces, and the prey are Croat forces. The reason I am confident in identifying rump Yugoslavia (Serbia, Montenegro, parts of Bosnia and parts of Croatia) as the predator is due to the fact that Yugoslavia had a standing army, the JNA, and all of the fighting took place in Croatia. The goals of the JNA and the Serb paramilitaries fighting in Croatia were to prevent Croatia from leaving Yugoslavia or to take as much territory as possible from Croatia in the

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<sup>5</sup> I am using these dates because conscription in Croatia was announced on October 4, 1991.

event that the republic succeeded in seceding (Kadijević 1993; Silber and Little 1996). As Croatia was faced with maintaining an insurgency in the face of a large scale military assault, I am confident with identifying Croat forces as the prey in our model. The model consists of two simultaneous difference equations.

$$\frac{dC}{dt} = aC_t - g(C_t * R_t)$$

$$\frac{dR}{dt} = bR + h(C_t * R_t)$$

Here  $C$  is the number of Croat forces and  $R$  is the repression of the state (arrests, injuries, and deaths),  $a$  is the rate at which insurgent actions decline in the absence of repression,  $b$  is the rate at which repression declines in the absence of insurgent actions,  $g$  is the rate at which the interaction of insurgent actions and state coercion affects the decline of insurgent activity, and  $h$  is the rate at which the interaction of insurgents and state coercion increases coercion. The basics here have been adopted and modified from Francisco (2009: 5). I use difference equations since we cannot assume continuity, even insurgents do not fight 24 hours a day. I also test for auto-correlation and heteroscedicity.

**Table 6: Lotka-Volterra Results for Croatia 01/01/1991-10/04/1991**

Variable	Estimate	t-value	p(t)
a	1.036721*	10.53	0.0001
b	0.271449*	4.31	0.0001
g	0.0000492*	9.05	0.0001
h	0.0000492*	9.05	0.0001
Eigenvalues	$\lambda_1 = 1.0367$	$\lambda_2 = 0.0000361731$	
N=278			

The results in Table 6 show that each variable is significant, indicating a large amount of interaction between Croat and Serb forces that was all nearly constant. Since the eigenvalues are all real numbers there is a strong indication that insurgent and state interactions were in equilibrium (Francisco 2009: 48).

### **Explaining Stability**

As the results of the model show, there was a high, almost constant amount of interaction between Croat and Serb forces. In the remainder of the chapter I explore what facilitated this high rate of interaction by looking at the incentives available to actors involved in the fighting. These incentives extend well beyond the central goals or presumed reasons for the conflict. What I find is that many actors, both central and local leaders profited from the war itself, thereby conceivably curbing any ambition to stop the conflict. Before introducing the evidence to support this assertion I first review its theoretical basis.

The public good alone is incapable of mobilizing most insurgents. Most of the research on civil war accepts this perspective (Lichbach 1998; Kalyvas 2003; Kalyvas and Kocher 2007;

Weinstein 2005, 2007; Fearon and Laitin 2004; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Collier and Sambanis 2005; Taydas et al., 2011). The scholarship holds that insurgents are mobilized more by local interests, rather than public goods. There exists a debate within the literature as to whether or not these interests are largely material or non-material (Fearon and Laitin 2004; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Kalyvas 2003; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). For our purposes I adopt the approach taken by Kalyvas (2003) and Lichbach (1998). Both authors see local factors as more contingent and ambiguous than purveyors of macro level models. Local material incentives and local grievances are both capable of inducing greater participation. As Lichbach summarizes, “The [collective action] approach implies two related maxims: all grievances are local; all collective dissent is local. Dissident struggles are thus rooted in local quarrels or grievances rather than national struggles or issues” (1998: 231).

Local concerns are used by national or central leaders to induce cooperation and participation from local actors. Kalyvas explains the relationship,

Actors seeking power at the center use resources and symbols to ally with peripheral actors fighting local conflicts, thus making for the ‘joint production’ of action. This microfoundation is fully consistent with the observed disjunction between center and periphery, which can now be reconceptualized as an interaction between various central and local actors with distinct identities, motivations, and interests. (2003: 476)

Given that the combatants are not all centrally structured we should not attribute all of the violence in domestic conflict to the goals of the central leaders. Instead we should regard such

violence as a largely local phenomenon, concerning local interests. At the same time, as Kalyvas' above quote details, the presence of alliance shows that there is a relationship between peripheral and central actors. The bearing alliances can have on the dynamics of the conflict is apparent in the fact that the more parties involved the more difficult it is to satisfy all of the actors with a peace agreement (Cunningham 2006). Since one of the characteristics of civil war is a diverse set of parties with a diverse set of interests in an alliance with each other (Kalyvas 2003; Cunningham 2006) we can expect that once violence becomes an accepted means to an ends, the parties involved will pursue those ends by any means. This diversity helps contribute to the noise of war, the daily, near continuous fighting.

During the wars in Croatia and Bosnia alliances existed between the Serb leaders in Belgrade and Serbs in the secessionist Serbian Krajina in Croatia and Republika Srpska in Bosnia. Additionally, alliances existed between the Croatian authorities in Zagreb and the fighters all over Croatia and in Herzegovina, including the paramilitary groups HOS and the HVO (Silber and Little 1996; Tanner 1997; Judah 1997; Holbrooke 1998). While some have argued that the central-peripheral relationship was largely top down (Maas 1997), evidence shows a more complicated relationship existed between the center and local events (Bax 2000; Andreas 2008; Weidman 2011). Attacks on citizens, ethnic cleansing and fighting were not always, or even necessarily coordinated from the center (Bax 2000). Actors at the center and periphery often had convergent sets of interests, not identical ones.

While the above has established that civil wars contain numerous actors, pursuing numerous goals through violence this alone is not a satisfactory explanation for a conflict's stability. What we need is a more systematic understanding of what goals actors pursue. I do this

in the following section by first looking at what motivated the first participants and the subsequent participants. I then look at how both the central and local leadership benefitted from the conflict. Finally, I show how leaders, specifically local leaders were able to profit from the conflict itself. I use this to explain both the conflict's escalation, duration and ultimately why it remained in equilibrium.

### **Self-interest and participation**

In the last chapter I showed that the earliest participants were mobilized through personal relationships and norms of reciprocity. While these individuals belonged to a nationalist and dissident community, their support for the nationalist cause alone remains an unsatisfactory explanation for their participation. Instead, I found that it was the level of one's integration into the dissident community, through interpersonal relationships that strengthened the likelihood of their participating in the conflict. Local leaders knew who would and who would not feel social pressure to join when asked. They targeted their recruitment accordingly. We see that even among first fighters that self-interest, while social rather than material pushed individuals into participating.

While the work in the last chapter help explained who fought first, it does not explain how and why mobilization was able to increase amid increased violence. In another chapter I empirically confirmed that increases in local violence share a statistically significant relationship with increases in participation. The results of the model are theoretically supported as well. Joining an insurgent organization may actually be less costly than not participating. Kalyvas and Kocher (2007) found members of the Viet Cong were safer from US counter-insurgency

operations than non-members. Insurgent organizations are often better able to protect individuals from indiscriminate violence. This relationship can help account for a conflict's stability: more violence breeds more participants, which breeds more violence.

Along with its quantitative support, this relationship is supported in interviews with Croatian war veterans. In one interview a war veteran from Sisak explained his decision to join the Croat forces, saying: "I saw my neighbors and thought they would shoot me" (Zagreb 03/12/2012). He went on to recall his horror when he saw Yugoslav Army tanks approaching the town. The subject related that, while he knew the threat was really coming from Serbia and Milošević, he was more concerned with his Serb neighbors and the nearby Serb occupied towns.<sup>6</sup> Another subject from Osijek, explained that while he knew about the fighting in late March and early April at Plitvice lakes, and the deaths of 12 Croatian police officers in the village Borovo Selo, the war did not really begin until tanks raced through the streets of Osijek, destroying several cars on June 27, 1991 (Osijek 11/04/2012). Another veteran commented that the day the war began in his mind was when Serb forces occupied his village near Osijek (Osijek 04/10/2012). Other veterans on the coast explained how the arrival of JNA warships motivated them to participate in the local defense organization and later in the war (Omiš 07/05/2012; Štobrec 05/08/2012). From these interviews we see that it was individuals' instinct for their own personal well-being through the very tangible experience of local violence that brought them to participate. Whether or not insurgents are mobilized through personal relationships or acts of violence we see that their participation is certainly dependent on more than nationalist or

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<sup>6</sup> See the previous chapter for a description of the interview methodology.

ideological zeal. Additionally, we see that local events rather than national events are often the catalysts for their participation.

Before participants can join an organization, one such organization must already exist. Leaders must foster resources and command pre-existing organizations in order to take advantage of catalytic, violent events, like tanks crushing cars or battleships moored off of the coast (Francisco 2009). Since the beginning of any domestic conflict is disruptive and its outcome unclear, central leaders must look to forge alliances with local leaders (Kalyvas 2003). During the Yugoslav Wars both Zagreb and Belgrade created alliances with the leaders of the remains of Communist Yugoslavia's various Territorial Defense organizations (TO) throughout Croatia and Bosnia. In Serb majority towns in Croatia, the Belgrade government sent arms to the leaders of the TO. In Croat majority areas the HDZ regime used members of its own party within the TO to recruit and arm participants. Without a local defense organization or paramilitary unit, would-be participants would not be able to participate. Here it is necessary to ask what motivated these leaders to recruit and organize both Croat and Serb paramilitary forces. What was in it for the leadership? In the conflict's aftermath the politicians and historians may claim that the process of mobilization through preexisting organizations was the result of the leadership's undying love for the homeland or the defense of the people (Kalyvas 2003). Yet, collective action theory illustrates that though leaders claim to organize their followers in order to obtain the public good, they too must have additional incentives for organizing the insurgency (Lichbach 1998). As Francisco offers, "Dissident entrepreneurs work for themselves as much (or more) as for their followers" (2010: 12).

A look at the benefits accrued to leaders during the War in Croatia supports Kalyvas (2003) and Lichbach's (1998) arguments that leader's most likely engage in dissent in order to receive the selective benefits that come with leadership both during and after the conflict. There are several examples of the benefits of leadership in the War in Croatia. Franjo Tuđman became the autocratic ruler of an independent country. Gojko Šušak went from being the owner of a pizzeria in Canada to becoming the Croatian Minister of Defense and a war hero. Branimir Glavaš went from lawyer to major-general in the Croatian military while becoming one of the most powerful people in Slavonia, eastern Croatia. Not too mention all of these men became rich. According to Hockenos, Šušak and Tuđman both, used an estimated 100 million dollars pooled from the Croatian diaspora for the war effort as their own personal expense account (Hockenos 2003: 87).

On the Serb side, Goran Hadžić was a corrupt warehouse manager who became President of Serbian Krajina. The notorious paramilitary commander Arkan went from being a European bank robber to a mansion-owning warlord, paramilitary commander, politician, Serbian soccer club owner, and husband of a famous Serbian pop-star. Karadžić was a convicted embezzler before becoming the President of Republika Srpska. Least of all Milošević went from one of eight Communist Party leaders in Yugoslavia before becoming the undisputed dictator of Serbia and Serbian parts of Yugoslavia. We see then that for victors, leadership pays off in both the short term and the long term. For those on the losing side of the conflict being a leader still has its own rewards.

Since resources and organization usually accrue from the center, local leaders are dependent on these resources. At the same time, if increased mobilization stems from local,

catalytic events we see that the center is also dependent on the local leaders organizing and mobilizing local participants. During the beginning of the War, weapons and other resources smuggled from Eastern Europe were sent through the political party HDZ to local commanders. Without the motives of the central leadership there would be no, or few, resources for local leaders to use in organizing participants. At the same time, without local participants, the central leaders would have had fewer participants. The alliance between these two groups is essential for the insurgency to develop to the point where it becomes a civil war. However, once local leaders become involved in the fighting and mobilizing process, and once individuals become participants, their interests are capable of evolving beyond what originally inspired their involvement in the first place. Just as the state and dissidents adapt tactically to the other side's actions, participants adapt to the changing fortunes created by the conflict. In some cases their self-interest becomes dependent on the continuation of the conflict.

Andreas' (2008) extensive research on the siege of Sarajevo demonstrates this last point. During the siege the city's defenders were able to profit immensely from the conflict, making their positions dependent on the siege's continuation. Actors intentionally engaged in violence to increase the prices of black market goods in the besieged city. At the behest of Bosnian gangsters, many of who were also the commanders in charge of defending the city, "one low-level Serb commander" would fire on planes landing or taking off from Sarajevo's airport, thereby limiting shipments of humanitarian aid and raising the price of such goods in the city (Andreas 2008: 45). Control of supply trucks carrying humanitarian aid and the routes they took involved Croatia's Secretary of Defense, the already mentioned and profiteering Šušak.

Lichbach notes that both leaders *and* rank followers can be mendacious. Lurking behind the motives of national liberation are motives for profit and other forms of personal gain (Lichbach 1998: 265), or what Kalyvas refers to as the difference between public and private interests (Kalyvas 2003). Examples from the War in Croatia include loot taken from the battlefield. Less obvious, but perhaps more significant, was the selling of weapons to Croat volunteers. Interviews with participants revealed that even while Serb attacks were escalating on Croatian towns, local leaders were demanding that volunteers pay for their own weapons. In an interview with former Defense Minister Martin Špegelj, the Minister acknowledged that such incidents did happen, but that they occurred at the local level. Explaining that the central government provided weapons to local commanders and that these commanders then chose to sell the weapons (Špegelj 11/19/2012).

According to one interviewee, his involvement in the War was initially precluded as he did not have the 300 German Marks (*DM*) needed to purchase an AK-47 from the military organizers in Osijek. It was not until the local leadership learned he had training with land mines that he was allowed to join. Even then he was not given an AK-47, but a cumbersome, bolt action M-48 (Osijek 04/11/2012). Another participant in Split discussed how after capturing a huge JNA weapons cache his unit was only allowed to use a few of the stockpiled arms (Split 05/08/2012). The rest, according to the interview subject were to be sold. Another interviewee in Omiš also mentioned that participating in the local defense was conditional on purchasing a weapon. The price of an AK-47 was between 300-500 *DM*, while bullets cost 1 *DM* (Omiš 05/07/2012). Even in the Croatian Parliament, PM's were selling weapons in the beginning days of the War (Zagreb 04/18/2012).

The individual incentives created by a conflict are capable of accounting for its long and perpetual duration (Ross 2004; Fearon 2004). The profit motive, while insufficient to explain all of the violence and all of the conflict's participants does offer us an insight into why the fighting failed to stop in the early months of the War. Just as the besieged and besiegers made greater profit when there was ongoing violence in Sarajevo, in Croatia we see that the sale of arms could have operated with similar dynamics. The price of weapons was almost certainly dependent on the level of violence. As we have seen in other chapters, more violence resulted in larger demand for participation, allowing us to infer that with an increase in demand for participation there came an increase in demand for weapons, which subsequently increased the sale and possibly the price of weapons. Given this logic, it is likely that local commanders selling weapons to participants made more money when there was more violence. This form of profiting from the conflict may help explain why so many cease-fires failed to hold during the War's early months. With a ceasefire, the demand for participation and subsequently the price for guns would certainly fall, leaving those local commanders selling arms with few incentives to honor any such agreement. We see then that near continuous violence while not solely the outcome of private, material interests, is certainly influenced by individual self-interest.

After a war's end the self-interest that motivated the fighting and the fact that alliances were often dependent on allowing individuals to pursue their own interests are often overlooked or conveniently forgotten. As Kalyvas explains, "Once a war has ended, the master narrative or cleavage provides a handy way to *ex post facto* simplify, streamline and cover up the war's ambiguities and contradictions" (Kalyvas 2003: 487).

## **Discussion**

Much of the macro level literature sees material incentives as one of the primary motives behind individuals' participation in conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Collier and Sambanis 2005; Taydas et al., 2011); however, this chapter reveals that at the micro level the situation is much more complicated. At the same time we see that economic motives remain important and account for much of the conflict's violence, its intensity and duration.

The difference between the macro level and micro level is apparent in how we explain the participation at the mass level. Evidence from the War in Croatia suggests that most participants were not materially motivated. The first fighters were social joiners, while the latter participants joined in the aftermath of some local violent event. Yet, these explanations for participation alone, are not sufficient to explain why the conflict was stable. If violence was the main instigator for participants, than a cessation in violence should result in less participation. This is where understanding the relationships between leaders and mass participants becomes crucial to understanding of the dynamics of the conflict.

It is clear that central leaders stand to benefit from the outcome of a conflict in ways that extend beyond the sought after public good (Lichbach 1998; Francisco 2010). The winners become presidents and party chairmen, while the losers become exiled or dead. This does not necessarily explain why other, lesser leaders or even their followers continue to participate in the fighting. The common notion is that these individuals are dupes, and that they have been persuaded by their leader's great oratory and propaganda (Thompson 1999). Or, that while the leaders are mendacious and cynical, their followers are the true, though manipulated, believers (Brubaker 1996). My research provides a simpler explanation. National leaders profited during

the war and stood to profit after the war. Local leaders, while not in line to become president or secretary of defense obtained access to resources and power they would not have possessed in a time of peace. In an alliance with the central leadership they organized and mobilized members of the local population. The role violence itself played in this endeavor through fostering greater participation is of paramount importance. From this observation we can understand that it was in local leaders' interest to instigate such violence, and as the violence facilitated mobilization, they were able to profit from the sale of arms. That violence became necessary to both mobilizing and profiting from mobilization goes a long way in explaining why the violence was nearly constant.

While I have provided evidence demonstrating the above relationship between violence, leadership and mobilization we must acknowledge that there are other circumstances involved. As Kalyvas reminds us civil wars involve complex and ambiguous processes (2003: 475). Violence emerges from many other facets of the conflict. For leaders in office, ending the war may be unpopular with their constituents. They may also be intent on obtaining both the public and private rewards of victory. Those mobilized by violent events may feel that they will not be safe until they win the war. Still more troubling is the fact that some enjoy fighting. As Chekov said, a gun shown on stage in the first act has to be fired by the third act, once weapons and violence are introduced some participants may feel compelled to use them, even for enjoyment. Tim Judah gives one such account:

In another scene from the beginning of the siege, a group of soldiers clustered around a rocket unit whooping with joy as houses exploded into dust. A soldier wiggled a joy-stick, pressed a button and the lethal 'wire-guided' rocket shot off, dancing down over the rocky hillside contours like a demented firework. They were aiming at houses on a bay just south of the ancient city. As each house exploded they would all point at different buildings yelling, "Hit that one!" or "Take that one out!" as if this was the greatest video game ever invented.

(Judah 1997: 183)

Working out of the observations made here, we must ask if self-interest and war profiteering are able to keep the fighting constant, what brings conflicts to an end? While Croatia's Operation Storm routed Serb forces in Krajina, helping bring an end to the War, there was also considerable external pressure and intervention from the US and other European countries. Such pressure can shift leader's calculations. Sanctions and NATO military bombardment are some of the reasons attributed to Milošević withdrawing support and pressuring Bosnian Serbs to assent to peace talks (Holbrooke 1999). More research should be done at the micro level to see if a loss in war profiteering accelerates the cessation of the conflict.

Clearly violence in a civil war has many sources; however, just as self-interest allows us to understand the problems and solutions of collective action, it too can provide us with a more systematic understanding of why violence endures. The observation that individuals in both central and local leadership positions were able to profit from the violence, and in many ways depend on that violence for their newly acquired power and position illuminates why such violence stayed almost constant.

## Conclusion

The first ten months of the War in Croatia were stable, meaning the fighting occurred at an almost constant level. Using the results of an earlier generalized linear model and interviews with participants I have argued that most of the early Croat combatants joined the fighting as a result of social pressure or violent events. While this explains participation at the mass level, an anecdotal review of the national leaders showed us that during the war many of them gained positions of power and wealth as a consequence of the conflict. As civil wars often necessitate alliances between the center and peripheral actors, to understand that dynamics of the conflict I have looked at the incentives that existed for local leaders as well. Interviews with veterans also revealed that local leaders were selling weapons to those who wanted to join the fighting. Given that increased violence created increased demand for participation, I argue that this resulted in greater demand for the weapons being sold by the local leadership. In the end I concluded that profiting from the violence discouraged local leaders from honoring ceasefires or having any ambition to end the hostilities. Dependence on the fighting itself goes a long way in explaining why the violence was nearly continuous and the conflict stable.

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Former member of the Special Police, interviewed in Split on 05/08/2012.

Former member working for Krizni Štab in Sisak, interviewed in Zagreb on 03/27/2012.

Former member of the 3rd Guard Brigade in Osijek on 04/11/2012.

Former member of the 106th Brigade, interview 1, interviewed in Osijek on 04/10/2012.

Former member of the ZNG, interviewed in Zagreb on 04/18/2012.

## **Conclusion**

In the previous chapters I explored the relationship between violence and mass mobilization in the War in Croatia, the differences between first and later joiners, and sources of the conflict's stability. As they relate to much of the dominant theories of domestic conflict, the results for each investigation are informative and surprising. Material incentives appear to have played no role in the earliest entrants' decisions to participate, nor were they instrumental to the mobilization of later participants. At the elite level, however, war profiteering provides an important motive for national and local commanders to encourage the continuation of the conflict.

As it relates to our understanding of the War in Croatia as a specific case, my research reveals that the prosecution of the war was not dependent on ethnic hatred or nationalist zeal. Rather, the sources of participation were more dependent on one's proximity to violence, one's social relationships, and elites' material gains. These findings support those who have refused to view the conflict as the product of ethnic antagonism (Gagnon 2006; Mueller 2000; Andreas 2008). At the same time my research demonstrates a conflict whose dynamics and mobilization processes were much more complicated than those who subscribe to the elite-thesis give it credit for. Based on the research presented here, it would be too much to say that the majority of Croatian participants were manipulated into fighting. The often emphasized importance of elite propaganda and nationalist ideology have been overplayed (Thompson 1999; Kurspahić 2003). Instead, my work shows that the earliest joiners, joined as a result of their belonging to a dissident community, which existed long before the nationalization campaign in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Secondly, it shows that the later joiners decided to participate after being confronted, not with nationalist media, but with violence.

In this concluding chapter I first discuss how my research contributes to our understanding and theories of participation in domestic conflict. I then discuss how the findings inform the literature on the War in Croatia.

### **The problem with macro level inferences**

Based on the research I have conducted on the War in Croatia it is clear that the greed/grievance dichotomy is not empirically supported. Though the Collier-Hoeffler model (1999; 2004) correlates civil war onset with low economic development, the research and findings presented here show that the sources and origins of the conflict are much more complex at the micro level. This calls into question the validity of inferences made at the micro level from macro level models and data. In the following section I review the findings of each chapter and demonstrate how they conflict with the assumptions and inferences made by the macro level oriented literature (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Taydas et al., 2011 Hoeffler 2011) about participants and participation in internal wars.

According to much of the civil war literature, insurgent participation is dependent on the looting mechanism and the availability of material rewards taken from the battlefield (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Weinstein 2005, 2007; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). Given the collective action problem (Olson 1965) it is reasonable to assume that violent forms of collective action are often dependent on such material selective incentives (Lichbach 1998); however, the purported importance of loot in domestic conflict, as far as the literature is concerned, is predicated on the aggregate level of economic development (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Weinstein 2007). Low economic development is believed to produce fertile ground for

individuals to loot. Yet, as we saw in the second chapter, the conditions of the local economy did not share a significant relationship with increased participation, showing that the assumed need for loot was not present. Moreover, interviews with the war veterans revealed that many of them were already employed at the time of their joining the Croatian forces.

While these findings challenge the macro level literature they are not in themselves surprising. As it relates to the collective action problem there are alternatives to material solutions (Olson 1965; Lichbach 1998; Weinstein 2005, 2007; Ross 2002). In the case of the War in Croatia, as chapter three showed, social incentives were particularly important in motivating the War's earliest entrants. Another alternative explanation for mobilization is the use of force itself. As we saw in chapter two, incidents of violence led to increases in participation. Municipalities with a higher incident of Serb attacks had a higher number of Croatian participants. Kalyvas and Kocher (2007) offer that as violence increases, individuals may see non-participation as more costly than participation. Lichbach (1998) supports this idea by noting that provoking reprisals as a means of escalating the conflict is often a rebel strategy for increasing participation. Therefore, based on the evidence from the War in Croatia, the emphasis on the importance of material incentives and the looting mechanism as a means of motivating individuals, at the micro and mass level, has been overstated.

From this perspective we see that participation may depend more on the presence of a pre-existing rebel organization for individuals to join than it does on the availability of material incentives; however, focusing on the insurgent organization moves us one step back from explaining mass mobilization and leads us to explain who joins and first forms the insurgent organization.

In chapter three my research reveals that those who first joined and formed the Croatian forces belonged to a pre-existing community of dissidents. The boundaries of this community were delineated by members' position on the issue of Croatia's membership in Yugoslavia, the role of Croatia in the Second World War, and the Communists' prohibition of publicly expressing patriotic or nationalist Croatian sentiments. In other words, the first participants belonged to a group whose membership was based on members' grievances against Yugoslavia and Communist rule. What is interesting is that in research based on macro level models and macro level data, the variables for grievances are often seen as having no significant relationship with the onset of civil war (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Taydas et al., 2011; Hoeffler 2011). As this community was a minority of the population it would be hard for their grievances to have significance in the aggregate. As chapter three revealed the members of this community did not all spontaneously decide to fight for Croatia's independence, rather they were recruited by members of, or those close to the ruling political party, HDZ. Their main reason for participating was to maintain the social relationships they had with each other and the more important members of the community. Again we see the presence of a community oriented around grievances alone, is insufficient in explaining conflict as this community existed for most of Socialist Yugoslavia's existence, but only became involved in the fighting in 1991.

In order to understand the onset of the conflict and individuals' participation in the fighting, we must look at the conflict's leaders. Leaders are an indispensable part of conflict (Tilly 1978; Francisco 2009). As Lichbach (1998) notes that the majority of collective action solutions involve leadership. By viewing conflict from the micro level we see that leaders are necessary as they are able to organize the first participants, provide resources for participants,

and perhaps most importantly, exploit catalytic events. During the course of my field work participants related how after an attack or the deployment of Serb forces, they decided to join the Croatian forces. Though Croatian leaders were not directly involved in Serb attacks or the deployment of Serb forces, they were responsible for providing the resources and organization that allowed them to take advantage of such incidents in increasing the number of individuals willing to fight.

What's more is that while material incentives were not seen as significant at the mass level, they appear to be highly important at the elite level. This is quite contradictory to our understanding of conflict from macro level studies. It is indeed ironic that elites are the ones that profit from conflict, but also the ones least effected by low economic development. Thus the looting mechanism is certainly important at the elite level, Croatia and Serbia's leadership were able to loot Yugoslavia's public companies, sell the weapons taken from the battlefield and raise millions of dollars from each country's diaspora. Meanwhile the majority of participants joined the fighting because they felt they had to.

Material rewards at the elite level also help explain why the conflict was stable. Once the fighting began it quickly reached the point where it was nearly continuous. This is an interesting finding as it seems counter intuitive given the collective action problem. We might assume that mobilization should continue to be a challenge throughout the conflict; however, understanding that violence itself can serve as a catalyst supports the finding that once the fighting started, there would be enough participants to continue fighting. The relationship between violence, mass participation, elite material rewards, and the continued fighting is also better understood in the context of the conflict's stability. Interviews with war veterans revealed that local and national

commanders were selling weapons to participants. Based on the fact that violence served to motivate more people to participate and therefore buy weapons from the commanders responsible for much of the fighting, we see that there existed a strong disincentive among elites to end the fighting. When we consider how insignificant ideology or the public good have been in explaining individual participation in conflict, it follows that an internal war's initial stability is not the result of ideological goals or even the pursuit of the public good. Rather, it appears violence continues because once it begins it is easier to mobilize participants, there are few disincentives for elites to keep the peace, and many more material incentives to make sure the fighting continues. This is especially an important understanding for the beginning stages of a conflict before the conflict has evolved into a civil war. During this period it would first appear that a cessation in the fighting would be easier to attain; however, given the relationship between violence and individual profit, it is not really surprising that peace is so illusive.

Macro level correlations of conflict gloss over the core micro processes involved in mobilizing individuals into war. The findings from this project show many of the observed processes directly contradict those inferences made at the macro level. Mass mobilization in Croatia was not achieved through the promise of material rewards (chapter two and chapter three), while the conflict's elites made windfall profits (chapter four). Instead, participation in the conflict was dependent on social incentives and the escalation of violence. More importantly, we see that each of these sources for participation were in turn dependent on the strategic decisions made by both local and national leaders, and their followers.

Based on the case of the War in Croatia we can understand that conflict is dependent first on leaders with resources (Tilly 1978; Lichbach 1998; Francisco 2009). After that, everything

else is a strategic choice. The relationship between economic conditions and structural grievances appears to provide little in the way of explaining why people participate in conflict or why it occurs. At the micro level, grievances matter, not as a dependent variable on their own, but by operating as a likely means for leaders to find individuals first willing to participate in the fighting. What is revealed by the case in Croatia, is that it was not grievances themselves that motivated individuals, rather it was the involvement of individuals in a community whose membership was based around grievances that lead them to participate in the War. As events unfold it is the leadership and the insurgent organization's ability to respond to events that increases mass mobilization. Even though violence may fuel individuals' inclination to participate, insurgents still face a collective action problem, it is the leadership and the organization that are able to provide its solution.

### **What we know about the War in Croatia**

While it is common to view the Wars in Yugoslavia as the product of nationalist inspired propaganda produced by elites (Kurspahić 2003; Thompson 1999; Silber and Little 1996), my research shows that in fact the War, while elite driven was not produced by sensational media or the resurrection of ethnic animosities. By using the broader approach of collective action theory to understand the War in Croatia we see that the motives for individuals to participate involved much more than elite statements and propaganda. In the following section I sum up my findings as they relate to the existing literature on the War in Croatia.

The puzzle that has surrounded the War in Croatia is the seemingly contradictory evidence of ethnic harmony during Yugoslavia and the unfolding of a violent ethnic war. There

exists a strong amount of evidence demonstrating that ethnic grievances were relatively small in Croatia and the other Yugoslav Republics up until the war began (Gagnon 2006; Jović 2009; Klanjšek and Flere 2010). Attempts to explain the peaceful relationships among Croats and Serbs in Croatia have frequently revolved around the nationalization policies of Tuđman and Milošević (Brubaker 1996; Thompson 1999; Kurspahić 2003). What's surprising is that in my research, participants appear not to have been motivated by nationalist sentiments. Though the earliest participants were quite nationalist, my fieldwork demonstrates that these feelings alone were insufficient to induce participation. As chapter three shows, these individuals first participated as a result of maintaining their social relationships within the dissident community. When asked by senior members of that community to join the Croatian forces, the recruits, fearing social reprisals agreed to participate. For later participants the choice to become involved revolved around the threat of violence rather than nationalist sentiment. Both of these findings explain the discrepancy between ethnic harmony and ethnic war. A minority of extremists hoping to keep their friends were organized into paramilitary organizations. The rest, fought after they were attacked.

These processes are best explained through theories of collective action. Nationalist goals are a public good and therefore subject to the free rider problem. As a result, what we now know about the War in Croatia is that it took the HDZ leadership to first recruit participants, then respond to the increased attacks and aggression of Serb forces in Croatia. In this sense we see that the elite thesis is correct in that elites were important in planning, preparing and responding to the War's events; however, their role in mobilizing the masses through nationalist policies and sentiments has been overemphasized.

## **Understanding domestic conflict**

This project approached the question of participation in the War in Croatia through collective action theories of domestic conflict. Based on the findings, it suggests that collective action theory remains a viable approach towards a better understanding of conflict. By orienting my research at the micro level, we were able to see the limitations macro level inferences have when it comes to understanding the processes involved in mobilizing individuals into war. We were also able to see the limits to the often over stated role of nationalist propaganda and mobilization. Instead we see that individual self-interest goes a long way in explaining why people choose to participate in what is the most violent form of domestic conflict. Most importantly, we can clearly see that participation in conflict is not dependent on structural or environmental circumstances. Instead, participation is fostered by the relationship between participants and their leaders, and both sets of actors' strategic responses to each other and events. Social incentives and self-preservation better explain mobilization in the War in Croatia than nationalist solidarity, declining economic development, and the allure of material incentives.

The research and findings in this project confirm Kalyvas' assertion that civil wars involve complex and ambiguous processes (Kalyvas 2003), making it difficult to reduce their causes into a distinct dichotomy. While I have been able to reduce the sources of the conflict to friendship and violence, this was only possible by using a set of rich, daily, interval event data and extensive field work. Though it is difficult to always have access to a conflict's participants a large body of literature drawing on veterans of war is developing (Weinstein 2005, 2007; Wood 2003). More to the point is, and what I hope is conveyed by this research, is that we first must

orient the study of conflict away from macro level theories and utilize theories that operate at the micro level. Future research should accept that wars are complicated and ambiguous affairs.

After accepting this approach we can then engage in the kind of research necessary for making systematic observations about domestic conflict's origins, participants and dynamics.

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## Appendix A

Information	primary questions	additional questions
Life long before the war	Could you tell us what life was like a few years before the war? What was your job? How were things in general?	How did you feel about the Communists? Why? (Family background)
Life shortly before the war	Had things changed much just before the war? When did they change?	In what way? What do you think brought those changes? Or why did they change?
Feelings toward Serbs	During Yugoslavia what was life like between Croats and Serbs? Were there problems? If so what kind of problems?	When did problems appear? What do you think were the causes of these problems?
Participation in “struggle” for Croatia	When did and how did you begin serving for the Homeland? <i>Kad ste se i kako stavili u službu domovine?</i>	How did you understand what was happening in the country at the time? How did you become involved in that? What did you think about doing such things?
Risk and threat from Serbian aggression	How did you understand the threat facing Croats? <i>Kako ste doživljavali prijetnju s kojom su se suočavali Hrvati?</i>	What do you think the Serbs wanted in the war?
Joining HV or HOS	Could you describe how you joined ZNG/HV/HOS? How did you decide to join? Where? How did you feel once you joined? (If HOS, ask why not HV)	What was happening in the country at that time?
Life in HV or HOS	When did you begin to be paid? What kind of equipment did you receive?	

Information	primary questions	additional questions
Goals	What were your goals for Croatia in the War in Croatia?	
Political and ideological organization	Which party did you support in the 1991 election? Why that one?	What do you think were the main differences between HDZ, HSP, and SDP?
Perceptions	In your mind, when did the war begin?	

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