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Abstract

This thesis is about one of the basic concepts of International Relations, a highly valued theory that has been used to explain multiple cases in world history: the security dilemma. The originally interstate concept was intended to explain those conflicts where states were involuntarily drawn to conflict. Not only has the security dilemma been applied to interstate conflict as it was originally intended, there is also a sizable literature available on the security dilemma applied to ethnic conflict. But in order to account for ethnic conflict the security dilemma has been stretched and a while authors like Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe assert that the conflict in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia was a consequence of the security dilemma. This thesis will illustrate the opposite, showing that the security dilemma neglects and fails to account for essential processes that have contributed to and even caused the ethnic violence in Croatia in 1991. The revisiting of the case study of the ethnic conflict between the Serbs and Croats in Croatia will serve to lay the foundations for the broader theoretical claim that the security dilemma cannot be successfully applied to intra-state conflict.

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The Insecurity of the Security Dilemma

Like Robert Jervis already noted: “when a good idea comes along, we tend to expand, extend and apply it widely without considering its problems and limitations”.¹ This is exactly what has happened with one of the good ideas from International Relations, namely the Security Dilemma. It has since been widely applied to address the questions of International Relations theory and security policy. While the idea behind a security dilemma already exists for thousands of years, the term ‘security dilemma’ was first coined by John Herz in 1951. The concept has been turned into one of the basic concepts within International Relations, and has successfully been used to explain multiple cases in world history.

Not only has the security dilemma been applied to inter-state conflict as it was originally intended, there is also a sizable literature available on the Security dilemma applied to ethnic conflict. As the security dilemma requires anarchy, International Relations scholars saw the collapse of central authority and emergence of *de facto* anarchy within ethnic conflicts as a justification to apply the security dilemma to ethnic intra-state conflicts. Scholars have since analyzed many ethnic conflicts using the security dilemma and even provided specific solutions to resolve ethnic conflict by applying the security dilemma. However, the literature on the security dilemma in intra-state conflict is not coherent. Scholars do not appear to completely agree on the exact definition of the security dilemma, and contrast each other in their findings and case studies. My question is therefore, how effective and successful has the security dilemma been in explaining ethnic conflict. My hypothesis is that there is a mismatch between security dilemma and ethnic conflict, and that the concept of security dilemma was adapted and stretched too far in order to explain ethnic conflict. This, I believe, created a mismatch that has led to false and misleading conclusions on ethnic conflict. The knowledge gained from understanding the security dilemma has been deployed to develop policies for challenges within international politics such as, the managing of arms races², to avoid a possible conflict between China and the United States as the reigning hegemony³, but also to design a lasting peace to ethnic conflicts⁴. When false and misleading conclusions are used as a solution or are used for policymaking, the problem is no longer only theoretically relevant but might also have an impact

¹ Robert Jervis quoted in S. Tang (2011) ‘The Security Dilemma and Ethnic conflict: toward a dynamic and integrative theory of ethnic conflict’, *Review of International Studies*, vol. 37, p. 511.

² Charles Glaser (2004) ‘When are arms races dangerous’, *International Security*, Vol. 28, Issue 4, pp. 44-84.

³ Thomas J. Christensen, (1999), “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 49–80

⁴ Chaim D. Kaufmann, (1996), “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 139–75.

in practice. This is why this thesis will revisit the findings of other scholars to examine the theoretical mismatch between security dilemma and ethnic conflict.

Barry Posen⁵ was the first author suggesting that the security dilemma could also be applied to the intra-state level. As a supporting case study Posen refers to the former Yugoslavia, illustrating how this conflict was caused by an intra-state security dilemma. Since his article in 1993, other scholars have followed his initiative in using the security dilemma as a cause of ethnic and intra-state conflict.⁶ And like Posen, many authors have used the case of the former Yugoslavia to support their argument.⁷ While these authors argue that the conflicts in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are good examples to prove that the security dilemma applies to the intra state level, this thesis will illustrate the opposite. It will challenge the arguments and evidence provided by Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe as they assert that the conflicts were a consequence of the security dilemma. In their application of the security dilemma to the conflicts all authors have neglected one of the core elements from the security dilemma, the proposition of *misperception* and *unintentionality*. The revisiting of the case studies of the former Yugoslavia will serve to prove the broader theoretical claim that the security dilemma cannot successfully be applied to intra-state conflict.

In order to examine the application of the security dilemma to ethnic intra-state conflict, the structure of this thesis will be the following: The first chapter will provide a literature review of the security dilemma, illustrating the origins of the concept in interstate conflict and the application of the security dilemma to ethnic intra-state conflict. This will be followed by a closer look at the limitations of the application of the security dilemma to intra-state conflict. The work of the authors Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe will be revisited. Highlighting the flaws and weaknesses in the application by these authors to the case of ethnic conflict between the Serbs and Croats in Croatia. While these authors have argued that Croatia can be best explained by a security dilemma, the case study of this thesis will highlight the process of strategic policy by the Serbian and Croat elites that caused the violence along ethnic lines in Croatia. The final chapter will examine the general theoretical limitations to the intra-state security dilemma based upon the flaws in the case study. Concluding that, unlike the arguments made in the articles of Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe, this thesis proves that the security dilemma was not in place in the case study of Croatia. Nor do I expect the security dilemma to ever be completely compatible with ethnic, intra-state conflict.

⁵ Barry Posen (1993) 'The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict', *Survival*, Vol. 35, Issue 1, pp.27 – 47.

⁶ See: Buzan (1993); Collins (1996); Lake and Rothchild (1996); Glenn (1997).

⁷ See: Kaufman (1996); Melander (1999), and, Roe (2001)

The development of the Security Dilemma

The idea of the security dilemma can be traced back thousands of years. When reading the following quote by Xenophon, on his account of the Greek march to seize the Persian throne, one can already see how a sense of insecurity might trigger one to act pro-active and protective. "I observe that you are watching our moves as though we are enemies, and we, noticing this, are watching yours too. I also know that in the past people have become frightened of each other and then, in their anxiety to strike first before anything is done to them, have done irreparable harm to those who neither intended nor even wanted to do them harm."⁸

Although apparently valid already thousands of years ago, the term and concept of the security dilemma was scholarly introduced in 1951 by John H. Herz. He introduced the concept of security dilemmas in his book "Political Realism and Political Idealism". Unlike other scholars at that time, Herz did not agree with their claim that the causes of war and conflict lie in innate human aggressiveness. Herz argued that in some cases of conflict there was no notice of any aggressivity, instead defensiveness would prevail. Therefore Herz' realized that the explanation would rather be found in the "anarchic nature of a system of units without any higher authority offering protection from interference with their existence and independence"⁹. In an anarchic world states will feel the necessity to provide themselves with means of protection, in order to increase their level of security. However by increasing their own level of security, other states will interpret its actions as threatening and in turn feel insecure and suspicious. The security dilemma refers to these situations in which "states are drawn into conflict, possibly even war, over security concerns, even though none of the states actually desire conflict"¹⁰.

The interstate security dilemma

Although John H. Herz introduced the term Security Dilemma, the scholars appear to agree on the fact that three scientists lie at the roots of the Security Dilemma.¹¹ These three scientists being: Herbert Butterfield¹², John H. Herz¹³, and Robert Jervis¹⁴.

⁸ Xenophon (398 BC) *Anabasis*.

⁹ John H. Herz (2003), 'The Security Dilemma in International Relations: Background and Present problems', *International Relations*, Volume 17, pp. 411 - 416

¹⁰ Omario Kanji (2003) 'Security' in Burgess, G. and H. Burgess (eds.). *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado.

¹¹ See for instance: Roe (1999), Tang (2009), Tang (2011), Melander (2009), Roe (2000).

¹² Herbert Butterfield (1951) *History and Human Relations*, London: Collins

Like Herz, Herbert Butterfield wrote on the Security dilemma in the year 1951. Butterfield, however, did not use the same exact term, instead Butterfield referred to it as the "absolute predicament and irreducible dilemma"¹⁵. In his book on 'History and Human relations' Butterfield argues that even though states have no intention of doing harm to another state, these states can be driven to war through the absolute predicament and irreducible dilemma while they both are anxious to avoid a conflict. Butterfield introduces six propositions on the security dilemma: First, its ultimate source is fear, which is derived from the "universal sin of humanity"; second, it requires uncertainty over others' intentions; third, it is unintentional in origin; fourth, it produces tragic results; fifth, it can be exacerbated by psychological factors; and sixth it is the fundamental cause of all human conflicts.¹⁶ John H. Herz argued that the start of the Security dilemma is not whether man is by nature peaceful or aggressive, instead he illustrates that the importance lies in man's uncertainty and fear towards its neighbors' incentives and intentions. Herz thereby also introduces six propositions of the Security dilemma. First, the ultimate source of the security dilemma is anarchy—the lack of "a higher unity"; second, an immediate cause of the security dilemma is states' uncertainty and fears about each other's intentions to do harm under anarchy; third, states' means of self-help—trying to escape from the security dilemma by accumulating more and more power—generates a cycle of power competition; fourth, states' attempt to escape from the security dilemma by accumulating more and more power may not increase their security at all, becoming self-defeating and even tragic; fifth, the security dilemma can cause war, but is not the cause of all wars; and sixth, the dynamic of the security dilemma is a self-reinforcing "vicious cycle".¹⁷ Robert Jervis did a great effort to introduce the Security dilemma into the different international relations theories. Although not providing a clear and systematic definition, he defines the security dilemma as "one state's gain in security often inadvertently threatens others"¹⁸. Jervis argues that the sense of insecurity that states might get from the increase in another states' security is due to the anarchic situation of the international political arena. One of the main contributions to the Security dilemma by Jervis was the realization that the dilemma can be regulated by both physical/material factors and psychological/perceptual factors.¹⁹

¹³ John H. Herz (1951) *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

¹⁴ Robert Jervis (1978) "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167–214.

¹⁵ Paul Roe (1999) "The Intrastate Security Dilemma: Ethnic Conflict as a 'Tragedy?'" *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 36, No. 2. (March 1999), pp. 183-202.

¹⁶ Herbert Butterfield (1951), pp. 19-22.

¹⁷ John H. Herz (1951) pp. 3-12.

¹⁸ Robert Jervis (1978) pp. 169-170

¹⁹ Shiping Tang (2009) 'The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis', *Security Studies*, Vol. 18: 3, p. 592

The differences in their perception of the Security Dilemma lie in the fact that Butterfield believes the Security dilemma can draw states to war even if their intentions are not to harm each other. Butterfield thereby argues that the ultimate source of the dilemma is the 'universal sin of humanity'²⁰. Both Herz and Jervis, argue that the source of the security dilemma can be found in the anarchical structure of the international political arena. Each of these scholars identified a number of aspects of the Security dilemma, as can be seen in table 1 below. The fact that the theories from the three main scholars do overlap but fail to provide a coherent definition, triggered multiple scholars to research, evaluate, develop, apply and improve the concept of the Security dilemma over the last decades.

The concept of the Security dilemma is a well recognized theory for interstate conflicts within International Relations. The term finds its academic roots in publications of John Herz, Herbert Butterfield and Robert Jervis. Since 1951 the Security dilemma has been widely discussed and several authors have elaborated on, revised, adapted and also applied the Security dilemma to cases throughout history. The current notion of the Security dilemma is based upon the fact that states are drawn into conflict because of the anarchic nature of the international political system. Within this anarchic system all states will feel the necessity to protect themselves, but due to a sense of insecurity, mistrust, miscommunications and fear states may find themselves being involuntarily drawn into conflict.

The Security dilemma applied to ethnic, intra-state conflict

Following the end of the Cold War a wave of ethnic conflict swept across the former Soviet Union and Africa.²¹ Although ethnic conflict was not a new phenomenon, the sudden eruption of ethnic tension leading to violent conflict within the former Soviet Union brought ethnic conflict to the front page.²² As a response numerous research was focussed on finding explanations for the eruption of ethnic conflict or on finding solutions and management of such conflicts. While the security dilemma was originally introduced to explain interstate relations, several scholars found that the security dilemma could also be used to address the questions of ethnic, intra-state conflict.

²⁰ Herbert Butterfield (1951) p. 20

²¹David A. Lake & Donald Rothchild (1996) "Containing Fear: the origins and management of ethnic conflict", *International Security*, Vol. 21, Issue 2, p.41

²² Donald L. Horowitz in Shiping Tang (2011) p. 512.

The first author to adopt the security dilemma as an explanation for ethnic and intra-state conflict was Barry Posen. In his article in 1993 Posen argues that an intra-state security dilemma can occur when the situation is comparable to the anarchic nature of the international system.²³ The collapse of multi-ethnic states can, according to Posen, be seen as an emerging anarchy as there is no longer an effective central government in place. Leaving the numerous ethnic groups within the state to provide for their own security and to make judgements as to the intentions of the other ethnic groups. Following the attempt by Posen, several authors followed his assumptions that security dilemma would be an effective concept to explain ethnic conflict. Authors like Stuart Kaufman, Paul Roe, Erik Melander, William Rose and Chaim Kaufmann also used the interstate theory of the security dilemma on intra-state and ethnic conflicts. However in order to apply the security dilemma to ethnic conflict these authors have had to adapt and stretch the original concept. While these authors still perceive the security dilemma as a useful concept in explaining the outbreak of ethnic conflict, they do critique each other on the “failure to operationalize the security dilemma in terms of its original Butterfieldian conception.”²⁴ In a later article Paul Roe himself devalues the element of ‘unintentionality’ within a security dilemma and argues that a security dilemma can still arise within an ethnic conflict with malign intentions on one or both sides.²⁵ In order to successfully apply the security dilemma to their theoretical claims and case studies, the authors have proposed different sets of elements that indicate a security dilemma.

The definition of the security dilemma by Posen is: “What seems sufficient to one state’s defence will seem, and often be, offensive to its neighbours. Because neighbours wish to remain autonomous and secure, they will react by trying to strengthen their own positions. States can trigger these reactions even if they have no expansionist inclinations. This is the security dilemma: what one does to enhance one’s own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure.”²⁶ Of the eight major aspects of the original security dilemma by Butterfield, Herz and Jervis, Posen pays attention to six in his article. Anarchy, fear, lack of expansionist or malign intentions, self-defeating result, an action-reaction spiral that can drive two states to preventive and pre-emptive actions, and last, the regulation of the security dilemma by indistinguishability of offense and defence weapons. In theory the application of the security dilemma to intra-state conflict by Posen is thereby successful as it matches the original interstate security dilemma. However, in the next chapter more attention

²³ Barry Posen (1993) ‘The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict’, *Survival*, Vol. 35, Issue 1, p.27.

²⁴ Paul Roe (1999) “The Intrastate Security Dilemma: Ethnic Conflict as a Tragedy?”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, Issue 2, p. 200.

²⁵ Paul Roe (2004), ‘Which Security Dilemma? Mitigating Ethnic Conflict: The case of Croatia’, *Security Studies*, Vol. 13, p. 288.

²⁶ Barry Posen (1993), p. 28.

will be paid to the case study of the former Yugoslavia, and it will be illustrated that the security dilemma is not applicable.

Since the article by Barry Posen in 1993, a sizeable literature has developed on the security dilemma in ethnic conflict. Authors have since examined the theoretical basis and also applied the theory to several case studies. The first case in which the security dilemma has been used to explain the eruption of ethnic conflict was by Posen, he claimed that the conflict in the former Yugoslavia between Croats and Serbs was a clear example of a security dilemma. While especially the conflicts of the former Yugoslavia have been used as case studies for the security dilemma,²⁷ other cases that the security dilemma has been used to explain ethnic or intra-state conflict are, amongst others: Georgia²⁸, Angola²⁹, Cote d'Ivoire³⁰, Moldova³¹ and Malaysia³². However the cases that have been referred to the most are the conflicts of the former Yugoslavia. And while the authors use the ethnic conflicts of the former Yugoslavia as evidence that the security dilemma accounts for an explanation of ethnic conflict. The following chapter will re-evaluate the case of the former Yugoslavia and illustrate how the conflict was not due to a security dilemma. It will show that the security dilemma is not successful in this case, and that authors like Posen, Melander, Kaufman and Roe have stretched and misused the original concept of the security dilemma in order to fit the case of ethnic conflict.

²⁷ See: Stuart J. Kaufman (1994) and (1996), Paul Roe (2000), and, William Rose (2000).

²⁸ Robert Nalbandov (2010) 'Living with Security Dilemmas: Triggers of Ethnic conflicts', *Transcience Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, pp. 47 – 62.

²⁹ Jakkie Cilliers in Cilliers and Dietrich (eds.) (2000) *Angola's War Economy*, Institute for Security Studies Africa

³⁰ Matthew Kirwin (2006) 'The security dilemma and Conflict in Cote d'Ivoire', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 15, Issue 1, pp. 42-52.

³¹ Stuart J. Kaufman (1996) 'Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War', *International Security*, Vol. 21, Issue 2, pp. 108 – 138.

³² Allan Collins (1998) 'The Ethnic Security Dilemma: Evidence from Malaysia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 20, Issue 3, pp. 261 – 278

The Croatia Case best explained without the Security Dilemma

In order to dismiss the use of the security dilemma in the field of ethnic intrastate conflict, I will provide other explanations for the outbreak of conflicts that have earlier been said to be a reaction to the security dilemma. In this chapter I will show how the cases in the former Yugoslavia between the Serbs and the Croats, used by previous authors³³ to proof the use of the security dilemma can be explained differently and more effectively.

The conflict between the Croats and the Serbs

Barry Posen, Stuart Kaufman, Erik Melander and Paul Roe all wrote case studies about conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, stating that these conflicts were due to a security dilemma. In the following section a closer look will be taken at the events prior to the conflicts and it will be shown that they were not caused by a security dilemma.

Separation of conflicts

First of all, it is important to notice that the conflicts in the Former Yugoslavia are difficult to separate completely. Where Posen writes on the conflict between the Croats and the Serbs in Croatia in 1991, Melander writes on the conflict between Bosnian Croats and Serbs. The main actors identified by the two authors are however the same in both conflicts, making it impossible to view the conflicts as completely separate.

In his case study on the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, Melander especially points towards the meeting of president Tudjman of the Croatian republic and the Serbian president Milosevic in March 1991. In this meeting the presidents negotiated the partition of Bosnia into what would be 'Greater Serbian state' and 'Greater Croatian state'.³⁴ This so-called Karadjordjevo Agreement would act as a barrier to hostilities between Serb and Croat nationalist groups, since both factions would benefit greatly from adhering to Karadjordjevo.³⁵ Melander argues that this agreement between presidents defines a status quo between the two factions, creating a situation in which neither group would be tempted to revise this agreement. Or as Roe states: "both the Bosnian Serbs and Croats alike were non-

³³ See previous chapters on Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe's contributions to the study of security dilemma in ethnic conflict for more details on their application of the security dilemma to the conflicts between Serbs and Croats in the Former Yugoslavia.

³⁴ Erik Melander (1999), p. 137.

³⁵ Paul Roe (2000), p. 385.

revisionist, status quo factions”³⁶. Melander therefore asserts that the following outbreak of hostilities between the Serbs and Croats in April of 1992 can only be explained by a security dilemma. A security dilemma in which the Serbs got the impression that the Croats were showing incentives towards defecting from the agreement. Melander then goes on to state that this is a misinterpretation of Croats intentions, which appears to match the Herz and Butterfield notion of security dilemma. However, the context of the Serb-Croat relation in which Melander applies the security dilemma is problematic. The Karadjordjevo agreement and the resulting war in Bosnia both took place against a wider background of Serb and Croat hostility. The main actors identified by Melander, the presidents of both Croatian nationalists and the Serbian nationalists, are the same protagonists as in the 1991 Croatian war that is examined by Posen and Kaufman. The argument that the Bosnian Serbs and Croats were status quo actors is therefore largely untenable.³⁷ The Karadjordjevo agreement is not a sign of benign intentions, instead it is a decision on both sides to temporarily put a stop to hostilities between Serbs and Croats. The in general conflictual relationship between Serbs and Croats was merely put on hold, as the agreement deferred violence. Or as Roe states: “The agreement was designed simply to put off for a while what both sides were fully expecting to happen sooner or later – a Serb-Croat war in Bosnia”³⁸. The Herz and Butterfield concept of the security dilemma creates conflict, it leads benign states or groups into hostile conflict that without the security dilemma would not have taken place. With the so-called security dilemma of the Karadjordjevo agreement this does not appear to be the case as a war between Serbs and Croats in Bosnia would have eventually taken place either way.³⁹ The relationship between Serbs and Croats cannot be examined without taking into consideration the wider background of Serb and Croat history. This accounts for when we examine the events leading to the Bosnian war in 1992 as it was preceded by a war in Croatia just a year earlier, but it also holds when we look at the causes of the Croatian war.

While many people have claimed that the conflicts from the former Yugoslavia were caused by the deep hatred between ethnicities that dated back for centuries. However, the truth is not that simple. Prior to the conflicts, the ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Montenegrins, Macedonians and Slovenes already lived side by side. Mixed towns and villages were very common. Another popular explanation is that the conflict was caused by politicians wishing to further their own ambitions. Before we jump to conclusions on what exactly caused the conflicts it is important to have a clear overview of the order of events leading to the 1991 Croat war.

³⁶ Paul Roe (2000), p. 385.

³⁷ Paul Roe (2000), p. 386.

³⁸ Paul Roe (2000), p. 386.

³⁹ Paul Roe (2000), p. 386.

Theories: Ethnic nationalism versus strategic policy

When trying to account for the outburst of violence in the wars in Bosnia Herzegovina and neighboring Croatia and Kosovo the majority of the Western journalists, academics and policymakers resorted to language of the pre-modern: tribalism, ethnic hatreds, cultural inadequacy and irrationality; making the Balkans the antithesis of the modern West.⁴⁰ The press at that time would focus on the ethnic hatred that erupted after being suppressed under communism. Quotes like: “The graves [of Vukovar] stand as a stark reminder of the bitterness of ethnic hatreds, suppressed by decades of Communist rule, that have exploded after the collapse of Communism across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.”⁴¹ However evidence from on the ground proves to tell a different story than the Western press and most academic literature have done about the causes for conflict in the former Yugoslavia. While many authors have pointed towards ethnic solidarity and ethnic hatred being at the basis of the conflict, the evidence on the ground shows otherwise. An example of the evidence can be seen in the parts of Croatia that were claimed as Serb lands called Krajina, this region was ethnically cleansed by forces of the Croatia’s Serb nationalist party joined by the Yugoslav Army. The press showed images of villages being destroyed and people being forced to hand over their property, illustrating a ‘radical restructuring of the ethnic composition of the regions’⁴². However, one would expect the violence to end when non-Serbs have left the region, but it did not. Violence continued towards moderate Serbs who criticized the leadership. During the existence of the Krajina republic, extremists with power in the political parties resorted to violence against all Serbs or foreigners that called for a moderate policy.⁴³ The evidence on the ground illustrates that ethnicity: ethnic solidarity plus ethnic hatred do not rest at the basis of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. While they play a part, they are not the cause to the conflict. A view that most academics and journalists have ignored in their stories. Although the accounts on the ground put into question the importance of ethnic identity, evidence of the former Yugoslavia also shows that the massacres and expulsion of people does happen along ethnic lines. The Yugoslav wars in the 1990’s are therefore puzzling and call for a more in-depth explanation than theories focused solely on ethnic hatred, historical determinism or a security dilemma between ethnic groups. The question is why did the violence break out in the former Yugoslavia? This country had been seen as the prime

⁴⁰ Valere P. Gagnon (2004) *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*, New York: Cornell University, p. 1.

⁴¹ John F. Burns, (1992) ‘Yugoslav Town's Memorial to Hatred: New Strife Deepens Bloody Heritage’, *New York Times*, March 4, 1992.

⁴² Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 5.

⁴³ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 6.

candidate to join the European Community⁴⁴. The agreements made between the European Community and Yugoslavia showed how open the country was to western ideas, its citizens enjoying the right to free travel to the West. In this chapter I will show that the wars in Yugoslavia occurred in a country with a relatively open and cosmopolitan society, as a direct response to economic and political trends of liberalization by modern, urban elites with their own political agenda.

When the security dilemma is used to account for the outbreak of violence in Croatia the focus is on the actors being the ethnic groups Serbs and Croats, approaching both groups as unitary actors. Posen argues that both groups identified the other as a threat due to the violent past behavior of both Croatia's Serb and Croat populations. He also argued that the Serbs' appeared to have the offensive advantage. Due to Serbia's relative power advantage over the Croatian republic, this led to high preventive war incentives. Leading Posen to the conclusion that the violent conflict between Croatia's Serbs and Croats was the result of a security dilemma.⁴⁵ Posen hereby approaches the groups as unitary actors, as one homogenous group. Kaufman, already appears to come closer to the truth as he argues that a security dilemma was in place due to the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic's policies, which created the conditions for a structural security dilemma as "Serbs and Croats could not protect themselves without threatening the other"⁴⁶. Kaufman goes on to argue that the elite-led violence in the Croatian republic was driven by the war policies of the Serbian president. Stating that elite-led cases intentionally cause both mass hostility and a security dilemma rather than reacting to one, as he recognizes "Milosevic's skill in creating a security dilemma in Croatia"⁴⁷. While Kaufman does highlight the importance of Milosevic's role in the process, and the fact that the conflict was elite led, the conclusion that it was still due to a security dilemma remains false.

Instead the conflict was due to strategic policy chosen by the elites that were facing political pluralism and popular mobilization. Part of the Yugoslav elite chose to deploy a strategic policy to respond to these challenges of pluralism and popular mobilization. Violence was used in order to demobilize the key parts of their population by trying to impose political homogeneity on heterogeneous social spaces. Studies have shown that such a strategy is frequently used by elites confronted with a serious threat to their interests and values, especially in situations of political mobilization, economic and political liberalization and democratization elites resort to strategic

⁴⁴ Commission of the European Communities (1987) *The European Community and Yugoslavia*, Europe Information External Relations, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Barry Posen (1993), pp. 33 – 35.

⁴⁶ Stuart J. Kaufman (1996a), p. 162.

⁴⁷ Stuart J. Kaufman (1996a), p. 161.

policy responses.⁴⁸ The policies of violence along ethnic lines by presidents Milosevic and Tudjman was used as a demobilizing strategy. Through the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, they attempted to force a re-conceptualization of ethnicity for their own political ends. By ensuring that the violence was focused on ethnic groups, ethnicity was now regarded a hard category, and ethnic groups were considered to be monolithic entities. However, on the ground the ethnicity was not such a hard category but rather a fluid and complex process of identification. Ethnic identification is based upon social processes, since ethnic identity is constructed in everyday life. The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia show that ethnic conflict is not the product of modernity and liberalism but instead educated urban elites use violence along ethnic lines to demobilize populations as a response to modernization and liberalization.⁴⁹ Thus, while the conflict in Croatia did happen along ethnic lines, this does not proof that it is really about ethnicity, instead it only proofs that the perpetrators either are perceiving or intentionally framing the violence as ethnic.

When we rely solely on the security dilemma to explain for the eruption of violence in the former Yugoslavia between Croats and Serbs, it does not take into consideration the individual political ambitions of the elite. Nor does it question the role of ethnicity. Since the conflict happens along ethnic lines, the theorists using the security dilemma are limited to viewing ethnicity as a hard category, with monolithic groups that act as a unitary actor. The security dilemma, therefore does not provide an effective explanation of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia as it ignores the role of strategic policies by the Yugoslav elite. When we take a closer look at the policies of war as drafted by president Milosevic⁵⁰, we can no longer argue that the conflict was due to miscommunication and fear between ethnic groups as the security dilemma states.

⁴⁸ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 7.

⁴⁹ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 10.

⁵⁰ Stuart J. Kaufman (1996a), p. 161.

Movement for liberalization in Croatia

In order to get a full understanding of the issues leading to a Croatian war in 1991, it is important to quickly look at the political developments in both Croatia and Serbia from the 1960's. It was already in the 1960's that the focus of conflict in Yugoslavia was the future of the country's socialist-self-management political and economic system.⁵¹ While the system of socialist self-management had proven to be successful from the 1950s till the 1960s, it was in the early 1960s when the economic system began to show its shortcomings and proved to be increasingly dysfunctional. Due to the extremely high economic growth rate at the end of the 1950's, the socio-economic structure of the population in Croatia had changed. In response the League of Communists of Yugoslavia with the backing of Tito, adopted reformists plans by 1965 as official party policy. Plans that were perceived as extremely threatening to conservatives. The reform involved loosening of party control and decentralizing of the Yugoslav federation as decision making responsibilities were given to republic state organization and no longer lay with central party and state bureaucracy.⁵² The popularity with which these reforms were received increased the sense of threat for conservatives, being faced with reformist leaders that could mobilize the population to support further changes to the current structure of power. Changes that would degrade their position, and eventually could "remove all power from the conservatives who dominated the center and eliminate the possibility of a conservative comeback"⁵³. In response to these reforms the conservatives in the Serbian party pointed to the danger of the reforms, stating they would lead to nationalist conflicts as they blamed the reformists for the revival of Croatian nationalism. By linking the reforms to the atrocities of hundreds of thousands of Serbs in the Second World War by the Croatian leaders, the conservatives of the Serbian party managed to convince Tito to act against the reforms.⁵⁴ As the conservatives linked the reforms to a threat to Serbs and Serbia, it moved the discussion away from a reformists – conservatives debate and put the focus on alleged nationalist threats. While this put a stop to the reform for a while, the debate over reforms started again after the death of Tito in 1980.

Since the debate over the reforms in the 1960s much had happened to the Yugoslav economy, a global recession, the oil shock, and the increasing Yugoslav foreign debt, making the reformist proposals in 1980 even more radical. The economic crisis created a situation in which the reforms called for were more radical and the population was more receptive than in 1960s, making the reform proposals even more threatening for conservatives. Especially the Serbian reformists were

⁵¹ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 52.

⁵² April Carter (1982) *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia: The Changing Role of the Party*, London: Frances Pinter Publishers, pp. 42 – 50.

⁵³ Slobodan Krstic in Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 56.

⁵⁴ See: Pedro Ramet (1984) *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia: 1963 – 1983*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

extremely active and quickly the Serbian party became the most liberal in the country as members called for: “totally removing party influence at the local levels of the economy; for greater reliance on private enterprise and individual initiative; multiple candidates in state and party elections; free, secret elections in the party; and recognition and adoption of all the positive achievements of bourgeois civilization”⁵⁵. In response the Serbian conservatives chose a strategy to shift the focus toward ethnic issues again. Milosevic, at this time still a party chief in Belgrade, started a nationalist campaign seeking to defend the national dignity of Serbia and to protect Serbian interests in Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ The Serbian strategy proved useful as the question of the radical reform was again put aside, now to deal with the issue of Kosovo and an ethnic genocide. Although stopped at times by the conservatives and their strategy of putting the focus on ethnic threat instead, this period of popular mobilization for liberalization and reform continued until 1990. In order to prevent the reformists from imposing the planned significant changes to the structure of power in both political and economic arena, the conservatives focused on recentralizing the country. Through mass rallies and the usage of images and a discourse of Serbs as innocent victims of grave injustices the conservatives aimed to shift the focus of political debate towards a threat to Serbs and the socialist system. This strategy had a two-faced effect, while it did succeed to overcome the reform within the League of Communists of Serbia and allowed Serbian conservatives to take over party leadership in Montenegro and Vojvodina.⁵⁷ At the same time it triggered a backlash in the other republics, including Croatia. The strategy of Serbian conservatives to take over the communist parties of the republics proved to no longer be feasible after the 14th Congress in 1990 failed, resulting in the final breakup of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

During this time in the rest of Eastern Europe the mobilization of the population against communist ruling grew strong, and communists continued to take control. The threat to conservative Serbs therefore increased as the movement in favor of fundamental change in structure of power was growing as pressure was coming from the IMF and western states as well as from within Yugoslavia. When the Yugoslav federal prime minister at that time, Ante Markovic argued in favor of political and economic liberalization. The difference between popular mobilization for liberalization in Serbia and Croatia compared to the rest of Eastern Europe was that while just like in the other countries the majority of the population called for changes in political and economic power structures. The ruling parties in Serbia and Croatia were not willing to allow for these changes, unlike in Hungary or

⁵⁵ Valere P. Gagnon (1994) ‘Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia’, *International Security*, Vol. 19, Issue 3, p. 145.

⁵⁶ Mira Markovic in V.P. Gagnong (1994), p. 147.

⁵⁷ Valere P. Gagnon (1994), p. 152.

Czechoslovakia. Instead, the Serbian and Croatian leadership chose a strategic policy to demobilize the population.

Security dilemma versus strategic policy of demobilization

The war in Croatia in 1991 was portrayed by the Western media and scholars as: the result of ethnic hatreds whose source was identified particularly with the Serbs⁵⁸, and by the authors Posen, Melander, Kaufman and Roe as a result of a security dilemma between Serbs and Croats. However, this section will illustrate how the violence in the republic of Croatia was not the result of ethnic hatreds or fear but instead was the result of a strategy by the ruling elite in Serbia and Croatia to demobilize their population and silence the anti-regime popular mobilization. The citizens calling for fundamental changes in the structure of power, were silenced by the elites through images of violence and the actual violence in Croatia and Bosnia. Besides the incentive to demobilize the population, the Serbian elite had a second motive; 'to redraw the contours of the political space that had been Yugoslavia'⁵⁹. The two elites that we are referring to here as main actors of the demobilization are: the conservatives in the ruling party of Serbia that support the extremist minority in the Serbian Democratic Party of Croatia, and the influential right-wing extremists within the HDZ, the ruling party in Croatia and supported by Croatian president Franjo Tudjman. Both elites were faced with overwhelming popular mobilization calling for liberalization and democratization (see previous section). Already in the earlier calls for reform we have seen how the conservatives managed to shift the attention from the political debate to threats of nationalism and ethnic violence. This thesis will in no way claim that the violence in the Croatian war of 1991 was not along ethnical lines. What it intends to prove is that while it happened along these ethnical boundaries, ethnicity was not the cause or main motive for the conflict. Nationalism and ethnic hatred were used to demobilize the population and shift their attention from the debate on reforms of structure of power.

The situation on the ground in Croatia in the year leading to the conflict shows plenty of evidence of ethnic hatred and nationalism supported or even initiated by both presidents. President Tudjman wanted Croatia to be independent, stating that being part of the Yugoslav federation was preventing economic progress. After his election, Tudjman declared that he was ready to guarantee "civil and ethnic national rights not only to Serbian, but also to any other population living in Croatia"⁶⁰. However at the same time Tudjman was openly very nationalistic, making statements as: "Thank

⁵⁸ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 87.

⁵⁹ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 88.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: Eastern Europe, 8 May 1990, pp. 55 & 56.

God, my wife is not a Jew or a Serb”⁶¹. And although promised otherwise, under the regime of Tudjman life was made difficult for the Croatian Serbs: Those employed by the government were dismissed, the Latin alphabet which was not used by the Serbs was declared the official alphabet, and, to get insurance and a driving license one had to proof they were of Croatian blood.⁶² With the awakening of Croat nationalism President Tudjman produced a hostile atmosphere. Tudjman had given multiple hints of hostilities towards the Serbs in Croatia. However the Serbian minority in Croatia was supported by Milosevic, who also showed clear intent of ethnic violence. Milosevic used rallies and press to promote his image and stir up Serbian nationalism. It is due to these nationalist policies that the war in Croatia has been characterized as the result of ethnic hatred, implying that Croatia was a land filled with nationalism and ethnic hostilities between Croats and Serbs, waiting to explode into nationalist bloodshed.⁶³ However the evidence on the ground does not support this view. In the elections of 1990, half of the Serbs in Croatia voted for the reformed League of Communists of Croatia, while on 13,5 percent voted for the Serb nationalist party.⁶⁴ The main focus of the population in the elections was the reform, the fundamental change in power structure, there was no evidence that ethnic hatred and tension was common among the Serb and Croat population in Croatia. A survey carried out in 1989 throughout Croatia showed that both Croats and Serbs perceived the inter-ethnic relations in their own community as positive and did not perceive any threat to their ethnic group.⁶⁵ The survey indicated that from the Croat respondents 66 percent considered the inter ethnic relations in their own community as very or mainly good, 25,5 percent perceived it as average and only 8,7 percent considered it to be mainly or very bad. The results among the Serb population in Croatia were even more promising as 72,1 percent stated that the inter-ethnic relations in their community were very or mainly good, 23,4 percent average and only 3,5 percent considered it as bad. On the question whether they perceived a threat to the national rights of their ethnic group the percentages were once again close, as 82,7 percent of the Croats and 87,3 percent of the Serbs answered ‘no’. Thus, while positive about the inter-ethnic relations within their own communities, the vast majority of the population was not as positive when asked about these relations at state level. As 77,6 percent answered very or mostly bad to the question of how

⁶¹ David Taylor (2001) *The wars of former Yugoslavia*, Oxford: Heinemann Library, p. 18.

⁶² James D. Fearon (1995) ‘Ethnic War as a Commitment Problem’, paper presented at 1994 Annual Meetings of the American Political Science association, New York, August 30 – September 2, p. 18. Accessed through: <http://www.stanford.edu/~jfearon/papers/ethcprob.pdf>

⁶³ Coverage of the Croatian war by the New York Times between January – December 1991 using terms like “ancient hatreds” and “traditional enmities” when referring to Serbs and Croats. See archive of New York Times on Croatia, accessed through: <http://global.nytimes.com/>

⁶⁴ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 35.

⁶⁵ Survey results by Nikola Dugandzija (1993) ‘The Level of National Absorption’, *Croatian Society on the Eve of Transition*, ed. Katarina Prpic, Blazenka Despot and Nikola Dugandzija, Zagreb: Institute for Social Research, pp. 135 – 152.

they perceived inter ethnic relations at the level of Yugoslavia. As there was almost no sense of hostility among the population, we see a big difference between the intentions of the majority of the population and the motives and intentions of the elite. The strategy of deferring attention from the reformations to ethnic tensions by Croat and Serb elites had only worked in the populations perception of inter ethnic relations outside their own community. The only way for the elite to drastically change these perceptions, was through violence. The fact that the evidence shows such a wide gap between perceptions of ethnic tensions by the mass population and by the elite indicates that the ethnic hostilities in the Croat war came from the elite, as they stirred up nationalism and promoted ethnic tensions. Showing a clear sign of malign intent by the ones in power. This in itself is already a sign that the security dilemma is not a useful concept in the case of the conflict between Serbs and Croats. With this many clear signs of malign intent from both the Serbian and the Croat elites, the security dilemma should have been ruled out immediately. The security dilemma is built upon the principle that groups or states are drawn to conflict due to fear and miscommunication, in spite of their benign intentions. Both the Serbian and the Croatian elite show several signs of malign intent, making the resulting conflict not possible to explain through a security dilemma. Furthermore the security dilemma treats ethnic groups as unitary actors, which the survey has proven to be impossible. While the elite aimed to promote and further ethnic nationalism and tensions, the population of Serbs and Croats did not perceive or intent for these tensions in their own community. By stating that the Serbs and Croats were in a situation of security dilemma, implies that the entire (or at least vast majority) of these ethnic populations was in fear of how they other group might limit their national rights, but the survey showed that neither the Serbs nor Croats perceived this threat at community level. It is therefore impossible to explain the conflict by only taking into consideration two groups: the entire Serb population, and the entire Croat population in Croatia. A difference has to be made between elite and mass population as both played an entirely different role in the creation of the conflict. A role that the explanation through the security dilemma completely fails to discuss. It is therefore that this thesis focuses on the role of the elite, and their strategy of violence to demobilize the population.

While at the time, the New York Times in their coverage of the Croatian war in 1991 wrote mostly about the ancient hatreds and traditional enmities⁶⁶, in 2006 when publishing an article on Milosevic they looked back at the conflict and acknowledged the role of both Tudjman and Milosevic as they stated that: “the stage was set for a deadly showdown between Yugoslavia's two largest ethnic groups, whose leaders *manipulated* centuries of historical differences — the Serbs are Orthodox Christians, the Croats Roman Catholic; the Serbs endured Ottoman rule, the Croats the Hapsburgs —

⁶⁶ See page 19

into a brutal civil war that spread from Croatia into Bosnia-Herzegovina.”⁶⁷ Manipulated, acknowledging that while there were historical differences present the population did not care for them until the leaders manipulated these ethnic differences with their policy of war. From the winter of 1990-1991, extremists on both the Croat and the Serb side increasingly resorted to violence in order to construct a climate of fear and to silence reformists and moderates.⁶⁸ This violence did not come from below, nor was it an expression of ethnic hatred it was mostly a strategic policy. The theory of strategic policy was coined by Valere Gagnon as he argued that: “violent conflict along ethnic cleavages is provoked by elites in order to create domestic political contexts where ethnicity is the only politically relevant identity.”⁶⁹ This is exactly what both the Croat and Serb elite did. In 1990 the threat for the Serb elite came from three directions. Most importantly, the Serbian population was encouraged by the fall of communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe and called for multi-party elections. Secondly, Markovic, Prime Minister, implemented policies of liberalization as he pushed for multi-party elections and called for a legalizing of a multi-party system. These policies made Markovic extremely popular among the Serbian population, and he posed a definite threat to Milosevic’s power. Thirdly, the upcoming spring elections in Croatia in 1990. As a backlash against Milosevic anti-socialist parties committed openly to a loosening rather than tightening of political ties.⁷⁰ And the Croatian government rejected Serbia’s calls for re-centralization. The people were mobilized to call for multi-party elections and a multi party system, a mobilization that the Serb elite needed to counter in order to remain in power. But to complicate matters, the idea of Yugoslavia was popular among Serbs. Therefore, while in their policies the Socialist Party of Serbia aimed at the destruction of Yugoslavia, in their propaganda they proclaimed to attempt to preserve it. After the victory of the Croatian Democratic Union in Croatia the Serbian conservatives accused the party of planning to massacre the Serbian residents of Croatia.⁷¹ Furthermore the Serbian press which was under the control of Milosevic printed several stories on the anti-Serb massacres of the Second World War by the Croatian Ustasa regime, linking them to the Croatian Democratic Union.⁷² Besides these speech acts of formulating the conflict along ethnic cleavages, the moderates within the Serbian Democratic Party were replaced throughout 1990 with more extreme party members and took the following course of action: “held mass rallies and erected barricades in those regions of

⁶⁷ Marlise Simons & Alison Smale (2006) ‘Slobodan Milosevic, 64, Former Yugoslav Leader Accused of War Crimes, Dies’, *New York Times*, March 12, 2006, accessed through:

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/12/international/europe/12milosevic.html?_r=3&pagewanted=all

⁶⁸ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 149.

⁶⁹ Valere P. Gagnon (1994), p. 132.

⁷⁰ See: Milan Andrejevich (1990) ‘Croatia Goes to the Polls’, *Report on Eastern Europe*, Vol. 1, Issue 18, May 4th 1990, pp. 33 – 37.

⁷¹ Branka Magas, (1993) *Destruction of Yugoslavia*, London: Verso, p. 262.

⁷² Robert M. Hayden, in Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 93.

Croatia they claimed as Serb lands, they threatened and intimidated moderate Serbs and non-SDS members who refused the confrontational strategy, provoked armed incidents with Croatian police and they stormed villages bordering regions already controlled by Serbian force to annex them to their territory.”⁷³ However before we only focus on the role of the Socialist Party of Serbia, we should notice that the extremists within the Croatian Democratic Union did give the Serbs cause for concern as the Croatian conservatives were aiming for similar goals. Both elites are responsible for the violence, as the extremist within the Croatian Democratic Union mirrored the actions of the Serbian elites. For instance in the area of western Slavonia extremist members of the Croatian Democratic Union were placed in the local police force and started to harass Serbs and even frighten local Croats.⁷⁴ In response, many Serbs were attracted to the Serbian Democratic Party for protection. Another clear example of elite led violence from the Croatian side was in April of 1991 by the deputy minister of defence Gojko Susak, when he attempted to provoke a violent response as he launched missiles into a Serb village called Borovo Selo.⁷⁵ What should be emphasized is that while the violence happened along ethnic cleavages and took place in the most heterogeneous areas of Croatia, it was not violence that came from the ground level. The evidence shows that the violence was imported from outside, was committed by paramilitary groups instructed by the elites to go against the civilians, creating an atmosphere filled with fear in which the surviving civilians were forced to divide themselves along ethnic lines.

The policies of violence paid off, and the attempts by both elites strengthened each other. The Serbian elite provoked conflicts in Croatia that were then publicly characterized as ethnic conflicts. In Serbia these conflicts were then portrayed as proof of the malign intentions of the Croatian regime, insinuating that the counterattacks by Serbian military were merely to protect innocent Serb lives. Or as Gagnon states: “By provoking extremist forces in Croatia into action – or more accurately, giving them an excuse to carry out their own strategy of conflict – thus in effect became a self-fulfilling prophecy as the Serbian regime pointed to those atrocities as proof of their original charges.”⁷⁶ The violence and the conflict in Croatia was accordingly not the result of a security dilemma, nor the result of ethnic hatred. The violence that proceeded over the summer of 1991 throughout Croatia was a strategy of military force by the Serbian and Croat elites with the main goal of destroying the heterogeneous communities and the calls for reform of structure of power by the population.

⁷³ Lenard Cohen (1993) *Broken Bonds: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, p. 131.

⁷⁴ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 150.

⁷⁵ Louis Sell (2002) *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, p. 138.

⁷⁶ Valere P. Gagnon (2004), p. 107

Understanding of Croatian war better without security dilemma.

Although Posen and Kaufman argue that the following conflict was due to a security dilemma, the events leading up to the war in Croatia clearly show the difficulty of applying the concept to this conflicts. While the majority of the population was living in peace, inter ethnic communities functioned without problem and without fear for their national rights, mixed marriages and friendships were part of everyday life. It proves to be the initiative of the elite to emphasize the ancient ethnic cleavages, promote the nationalist movement and make hostile statements against the other ethnic group as well as against moderates of their own ethnicity. It is therefore impossible to view either of the ethnic groups in this conflict as a unitary actor. Where authors as Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe approach the conflict and identify two actors: the Croats and the Serbs. The evidence on the ground and the situations described in this thesis indicate that the security dilemma neglects the importance of the elite. It does not take into consideration the fact that the ethnic hatred was not the cause, but was a strategic result planned by the elite of both the Croats and the Serbs. Thus, if we approach the case of Croatia solely through the security dilemma, we do not get a full account of events. This does not mean that the logic behind the security dilemma played no role at all in the escalation of the conflict. Because the situation of fear created by the policies of war did help to escalate the violence. But then we should look at the aspect of anarchy and the order of events. The security dilemma claims that it is a consequence of anarchy rather than its cause. However when we look at the disintegration of Yugoslavia, one can argue that it was the actual perception of threat by different communities within the Yugoslav Republic and their hostile response that led to the destruction of public order and created a domestically anarchic situation. If we place the conflict on the model of the security dilemma and its continuum on page 28 of this thesis, we see that due to the malign intentions the situation in former Yugoslavia already is in the spiral, and does not start with a genuine security dilemma. This does not make the logic of the spiral any less valid, but does proof that the security dilemma was not applicable in this case study. Furthermore, the logic of information failure combined with fear and uncertainty over other's intentions is a clear and well accepted argument for escalation of conflict. However, these hostile perceptions, these perceived intentions are usually deeply rooted in historic events and antagonistic group narratives. The question therefore arises, would the conflict not have escalated if there were more symmetric and full information as well as credible commitment. The answer in the case of former Yugoslavia is: probably not. While we can of course not state this with complete confidence, based on the clearly expressed motives of the leaders it is unlikely that more symmetric and full information between the Serbs and the Croats would have prevented a conflict. The cause for the conflict can therefore not have been a security dilemma, the explanation has to be found elsewhere.

The events on the ground have shown that the ethnic violence was part of a strategic policy. A policy drafted by the Yugoslav elite to use violence along ethnic lines to demobilize the population and further their own political ambitions and motives. While the population was largely in favor of fundamental changes to the structure of power, the conservative elites employed this strategy of demobilization to shift the attention from political reform to ethnicity. The theoretical framework of political strategy by Gagnon states that: "Violent conflict described and justified in terms of ethnic solidarity is not an automatic outgrowth of ethnic identity, or even of ethnic mobilization. Violence on a scale large enough to affect international security is the result of purposeful and strategic policies rather than irrational acts of the masses."⁷⁷ Violence in the case of Croatia and the former Yugoslavia did not come from the ground, as there has been much evidence to show that ethnic hatred was not an issue in the ethnically mixed communities, the violence in Croatia was imposed from above, imposed by forces from outside such as the elites and the conservatives within the ruling parties. We should therefore not be too quick in jumping to conclusions on ethnic conflict, conflicts happening along ethnic cleavages do not necessarily happen due to ethnic hatred or traditional enmity, as this case study has shown.

⁷⁷ Valere P. Gagnon (1994), p. 164.

Theoretical limitations of the intra-state security dilemma

Based upon the articles by Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe we can state that the security dilemma has been widely applied to the intra state level. However as argued in this thesis their application to the case of the former Yugoslavia proves to be problematic on several aspects due to an expansionist mentality. Convinced that the concept of the security dilemma is applicable to multiple situations these authors have stretched and adapted the interstate concept to fit the understanding of ethnic, intra-state conflicts. After having seen that the case of the former Yugoslavia was best explained without the security dilemma, the next step in this thesis is to highlight the general theoretical limitations of the security dilemma in ethnic conflict. While this thesis does not aim to provide a new theory for explaining ethnic conflict, it does aim to illustrate why the security dilemma is not a successful explanation for ethnic conflict: not solely in the case of the former Yugoslavia, but also in theory.

The original security dilemma as introduced by Herz and Butterfield is based upon several aspects⁷⁸, the most essential for this analysis being: Firstly, the source of the security dilemma is anarchy or lack of a higher unity. Second, it requires uncertainty and fear over others' intentions to do harm in anarchical situation. Third, the situation has an unintentional origin. And finally, the results produced are considered tragic. Thus, states are drawn into conflict despite of their benign motives, due to fear and uncertainty over the others' intentions. However when we examine the applications by the authors Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe we find that they do not uphold all these aspects in their applications of the security dilemma. As they attempt to apply the concept, which was originally focused on interstate relation, to ethnic conflict within a state it appears that the concept does not match. While these authors all discuss the case of the former Yugoslavia, they have different definitions and different approaches to explain the outbreak of conflict with the security dilemma. It appears that all authors refer to the original concept of Butterfield and Herz, but acknowledge that in order to operationalize the concept within an intra-state setting the concept has to be adapted.

While some alterations are only little, such as replacing the essential element of international anarchy with a situation of emerging anarchy within a state, meaning a fall of government or lack of central authority. Other alterations made by the authors unfortunately completely contradict the original concept of the security dilemma.⁷⁹ While authors like Posen and Melander do include the aspect of unintentional origin in their definition of the security dilemma, as soon as they apply their

⁷⁸ For more elaborate explanation of interstate security dilemma see page 7-9.

⁷⁹ For a more complete overview of the flaws made by the authors discussed in the thesis, see the table in the Appendix.

concept to a case study they seem to disregard the necessity of unintentional origin and include cases with malign intentions. When one has malign intentions then the following conflict can never be regarded as a tragedy⁸⁰. A conflict is only tragic when despite their benign intentions two groups or states are drawn into conflict, which is crucial to the security dilemma. Another important issue with the application of the security dilemma is the operationalization. While the concept was intended to describe a situation in which the security dilemma might lead to conflict. Authors like Kaufman and Melander operationalize the concept after the outbreak of hostilities and thereby applied the security dilemma as a product of conflict. This obviously was not the way the concept was intended to function as the order of events is completely altered by these authors.

Since Posen's application of the security dilemma to ethnic conflict several authors have acknowledged that the concept has to be adapted to successfully account for intra-state conflicts. While each author took a different approach, their attempts have proven that the concept has to be adapted so drastically that it no longer complies with the original concept. Which leads us to the question, is the concept of the security dilemma applicable to intra-state conflict and should we aim for a dynamic integrative theory of ethnic conflict or should we accept that the security dilemma is not successful at explaining ethnic conflict? Paul Roe seems to believe that his means of qualification, the categorization of the security dilemma into three types of security dilemma is the solution. While Shiping Tang feels that neither Posen, Kaufman, or Roe has found the solution and calls for a more integrative theory of ethnic conflict. He argues that until now the literature on the security dilemma in ethnic conflict has been based upon imprecise and even a mistaken understanding of the concept. Though he states that this has led to imprecise and false conclusions on ethnic conflict he does believe that an integrative theory is possible in the future. He himself does not provide this integrative theory as he merely points in the direction, stating that "the security dilemma *can* be applied to ethnic conflict, provided our application is grounded upon a sound understanding of the concept."⁸¹

However I believe that even after extensive new research and reformulating of the current definitions the security dilemma will not manage to account for ethnic conflict. The essential aspects of the security dilemma are too focused on state actors and switching to ethnic groups requires too many alterations. This does not imply that the underlying idea of the security dilemma does not apply to ethnic groups, as this idea already exists for thousands of years and can apply to individuals, groups and states. But the definition of the security dilemma as coined by Herz and Butterfield in

⁸⁰ Tragedy in this case refers to the aspect tragedy as identified by Herz and Butterfield. It does not aim to put a value on a conflict, stating that some conflicts are not tragic does not imply they cannot be tragic for those involved.

⁸¹ Shiping Tang (2011), p. 512.

1951 is limited to interstate conflict. Fear and uncertainty can play an important role in the escalation of several types of conflict. However as long as the other essential aspects of the concept are not present, the situation is not a true security dilemma. The application of the security dilemma should be very limited, as the security dilemma is not made to explain for all outbreaks of conflict. It is a very specific concept that only is focused on those conflicts that arise despite of benign intentions but due to fear and uncertainty. Important to keep in mind is that not all conflicts that arise, start with a security dilemma. Nor do all security dilemma's end in conflict.

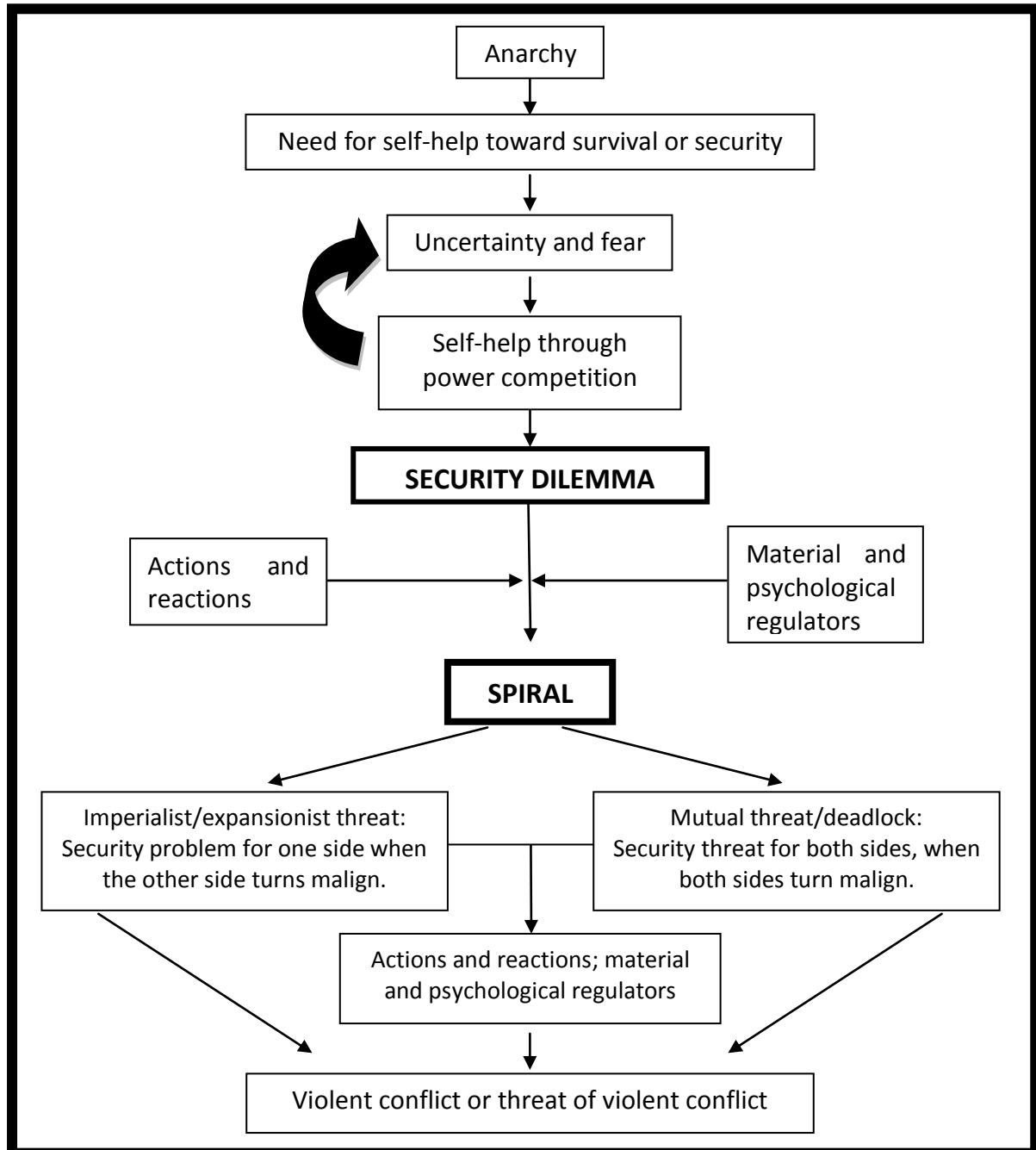
Security dilemma versus security dilemma spiral

The majority of the issues arise when authors start confusing the actual security dilemma with the relating security dilemma spiral. If we model the causal link of the security dilemma and its continuum, we get the model as depicted below. In order to successfully apply the concept of the security dilemma we should clearly differentiate the security dilemma from the spiral, both as phenomenon as well as a model or theory. A spiral is defined as “a process of progressive deterioration”⁸², meaning a situation that gets worse and worse. A spiral “merely denotes a situation in which tension between two states is continuously increasing because the process is driven by a self-reinforcing mechanism”⁸³. The definition of a spiral therefore does not include any statement on the situation or the forces that drive the process. Consequently it could be driven by a legitimate security dilemma between two benign states/groups, or it could be driven by a conflict of interest between a benign and a malign state or group. It is therefore wrong to assume that all spirals are driven by a security dilemma. Many of the attempts to apply the security dilemma to ethnic conflict proof to rather have been attempts to accommodate the spiral. The differentiation between the concept and the spiral makes the security dilemma dynamic, and is where the strength of the concept lies. Illustrating that a security dilemma can be transformed into a spiral when either or both sides decide that their security requires them to resort to offence. In this case the security dilemma stops to exist, as the situation further along the spiral. The order of events in an analysis or application of the security dilemma is therefore of great importance. Not all conflicts that end up in a spiral of conflict have done so due to a security dilemma. Nor will all security dilemmas escalate through the spiral to a situation of violent conflict.

⁸² (1999) *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 1384.

⁸³ Shiping Tang (2009), p. 616.

*The Security dilemma and the continuum.*⁸⁴



⁸⁴ Based upon tables from Shiping Tang 2009 and 2011.

Unitary actor?

When we aim to explain interstate conflicts it is useful and necessary to assume states as unitary actors for the analysis. However for understanding ethnic intra state conflicts it is wrong to approach these ethnic groups as unitary actors. In order to understand how ethnic groups function, it is of importance to understand the interplay between intra-group politics. Intra-group politics refers to the dynamics between the elite and the mass. Within each group we can identify at least two actors, namely the elite and the mass, or the leaders and the members. Instead of expecting the whole group to act equally, we should realize that they do not all act homogeneously. To complicate matters, “more often than not, neither the elite nor the mass will be united”⁸⁵. Therefore interaction between the two groups can be extremely complex; the security dilemma ignores this complexity. Since it is of mere importance to the security dilemma to view the ethnic groups as cohesive and organized, as it is the ability of an ethnic group to act as a cohesive unit that poses a threat to its neighboring ethnic groupings, or put differently: “the ‘groupness’ of the ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic collectivities that emerge from collapsed empires gives each of them an inherent offensive military power”⁸⁶.

Research has proven that ethnic groups are not given entities with unambiguous rules of membership.⁸⁷ Ethnic groups lack what states usually do possess, a legitimate leader or leaders that are capable of negotiating settlements. In ethnic groups there is rarely a single leader recognized as authoritatively entitled to speak for the entire group.⁸⁸ Furthermore, as was the case in Yugoslavia, high rates of intermarriage complicate the membership to an ethnic group as people are not sure where they belong in case of interethnic violence. Ethnicity is therefore always based upon individual identity. Which leads us to the question that Walt posed: “how are individuals persuaded to bear the costs and risks of revolutionary activity, and how do they sustain their commitment in the face of prolonged uncertainty, danger, and other difficulties?” An answer can be found in the theory put forward by Fearon and Laitin, based upon the theoretical framework by Gagnon used earlier in this thesis. Fearon and Laitin state that ethnicity is socially constructed, and call for a constructivist approach to explaining ethnic violence.⁸⁹ They illustrate how ethnic identity, meaning the content and boundary rules of ethnic categories, can be constructed by individuals seeking various motives. We have already seen how ethnic identity can be constructed through strategic action by elites in the

⁸⁵ Shiping Tang (2011), p.534.

⁸⁶ Barry Posen (1997), p. 106

⁸⁷ See: Fredrik Barth (1967) or Crawford Young (1965).

⁸⁸ Rogers Brubaker & David D. Laitin (1998) ‘Ethnic and nationalist violence’, *Annual Review Sociology*, Vol. 24, p. 438.

⁸⁹ James D. Fearon & David D. Laitin (2000) ‘Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity’, *International Organization*, Vol. 54, Issue 4, p. 847

case of Croatia, but Fearon and Laitin also highlight how strategic action can also come from the ground level as happened in the Basque country.⁹⁰ This thesis does not attempt to claim that strategic action, either by elite or on ground level, is the sole explanation to ethnic violence. However, it has become obvious that the security dilemma certainly does not provide an effective explanation to ethnic violence as it ignores important processes in the creation of conflict. By disregarding the intra-group relations and approaching each ethnicity as an unitary actor, the security dilemma fails to provide a full explanation of what led to ethnic violence. It has become apparent that not all violence that happens along ethnic lines is necessarily caused by ethnic cleavages or hatred. And it is especially the inability of the security dilemma to highlight the differences within an ethnic group as it approaches the group as an unitary actor that makes its explanation incomplete. The conclusion derived from an analysis through a security dilemma would fail to account for the switch from peaceful inter-ethnic communities to the sudden violent focus on ethnic lines as we saw in Croatia.

Anarchy?

While authors like Posen stated that in the contexts of ethnic intrastate conflict, anarchy can be a de facto or emerging anarchy. Meaning, a collapse of central authority rather than the actual existing anarchy of the international system. This situation of anarchy will allow for a security dilemma to arise as it creates a situation of uncertainty. While there is no hierarchically superior in the international system, no universal sovereign government, the international system is always in a state of anarchy. When we look at ethnic communities, the aspect of anarchy should not apply as, “they rarely find themselves in a situation of complete anarchy”⁹¹. Anarchy can, however be approximated, when ethnic groups effectively challenge the government's legitimacy and its control over territory. “If anarchy reaches the point where the government cannot control its territory effectively enough to protect people, while ethnic-based organizations can, then the ethnic organizations have enough of the attributes of sovereignty to create a security dilemma.”⁹² Under these conditions, each group might conclude that it should act to preserve its security, thereby provoking further insecurity in the other group and starting a power competition. Still the security dilemma also needs the essential element of unintentionality or benign intentions. Therefore it is also important to look at what brought about the emerging anarchy and which ethnic groups are challenging the government's legitimacy and control of territory. If the collapse of the central

⁹⁰ James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin (2000), p. 856.

⁹¹ Stuart J. Kaufman (1996a), p. 151.

⁹² Stuart J. Kaufman (1996a), p. 151.

government was initiated by one of the ethnic groups with the intention of taking over state control, then the situation following the state of emerging anarchy can never be considered a true security dilemma, as there were signs of malign intent from the start.

Did ethnic conflict lead to the breakdown of the state? Or did the dissolution of the state lead to ethnic conflict? This is an important question when one wishes to provide an explanation to the ethnic conflict, however it is also a question that the security dilemma cannot answer. In order to still operationalize the security dilemma on ethnic conflict authors have chosen different, but all unsatisfactory answers. Where Kaufmann ignores the entire question and states that “solutions to ethnic wars do not depend on their causes”⁹³, Posen states that ethnic conflict is the product of a process of imperial collapse rather than the nationalist card.⁹⁴ The tactic used by the Serbian elite to provoke violence to legitimize a coup d’état, is a possibility that the security dilemma did not take into consideration. The failure of the security dilemma to analyze what caused the emerging anarchy, will lead to incomplete and falsely applied security dilemmas as it can also include conflicts that on closer evaluation do not live up to the definition of the security dilemma.

⁹³ Stuart J. Kaufmann (1996a) p. 137.

⁹⁴ Barry Posen (1997), p. 105.

Conclusions

This thesis intends to analyze the application of the security dilemma to ethnic intra-state conflicts, specifically the application to the conflicts between Serbs and Croats in former Yugoslavia by Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe. And in doing so found that the originally interstate concept of the security dilemma has been adapted to match the cases of intra-state conflict. A closer examination of the case study Croatia, the conflict between Serbs and Croats has shown that the security dilemma does not provide a complete or effective explanation, and that the case is better understood through the theory of strategic policy by elites. While the scope of this thesis is mostly limited to the contributions of Posen, Kaufman, Melander and Roe and their case study of the former Yugoslavia, the relevance of this thesis goes beyond this one case. Based upon the examination of the case of Croatia and the security dilemma, this thesis aims to make the theoretical claim that the concept of the security dilemma is not applicable to ethnic intra-state conflict.

In order to make this theoretical claim this thesis first takes a closer look at the development of the security dilemma, from its introduction as an interstate concept to its application to intra-state conflict. While the concept of the security dilemma was coined by Herz in 1951 when Butterfield introduced a similar concept, the idea behind the security dilemma has been valid for thousands of years. The security dilemma as developed by Herz, Butterfield and Jervis refers to states that are drawn to conflict over security concerns due to a sense of insecurity, mistrust, miscommunications and fear in spite of the benign intentions on both sides. In light of this thesis it is important to stress the “in spite of benign intentions”. The security dilemma can only apply to a conflict when that conflict is a tragedy, an unintended and involuntary conflict. In response to the wave of ethnic violence that followed the end of the Cold War, many authors sought to explain ethnic conflict. Author Barry Posen found that while the security dilemma was originally intended for interstate conflict, it could also be used to address the questions of ethnic and intra-state conflict. He adapted the concept to account for ethnic groups within an emerging anarchy, stating that the collapse of multi-ethnic states can be seen as comparable to states within the anarchic nature of the international system. Authors like Stuart Kaufman, Paul Roe, Erik Melander, William Rose and Chaim Kaufmann followed Posen’s initiative and applied the interstate theory to multiple ethnic conflicts, including the case of Serbs and Croats in Croatia.

This thesis revisited the case of Croatia, illustrating how the security dilemma did not provide a full explanation of the causes and events leading to conflict. While the security dilemma was quick to assume that the Serbs and the Croats were two unitary actors, the evidence provided in this thesis shows otherwise. This conflict was not a conflict between two ethnic groups from the start. The majority of both ethnic groups lived peacefully in inter-ethnic communities, experiencing no sense of

threat to their national rights or ethnicity. In order to explain the ethnic violence in Croatia the focus should therefore not be on the actors: Serbs and Croats. Instead, for a complete explanation, the analysis should include the role of the elites, their motives and their strategies. The case study has shown that we should not be too quick to assume that all violence that happens along ethnic lines is caused by intense ethnic hatred or enmity, it has shown us another alternative. In the case of Croatia the Serbian elite chose to shift the attention to ethnic cleavages through violence, in order to take the focus off the call for fundamental change in structure of power that would not be beneficial for them. The elite chose a strategic policy of violence to demobilize the uprising mobilization for liberalization in Croatia. By creating an atmosphere of fear and hostility and provoking violence between ethnicities, the Serbian elite eventually managed to demobilize the population. The security dilemma does not allow for the insight that the mass and the elite both play a completely different role in the creation of the conflict. And while Posen, Melander, Kaufman, and Roe have argued that the ethnic conflicts in the former Yugoslavia have been due to a security dilemma, this thesis has shows that this is not the case, and that the security dilemma neglects essential events and processes leading to the conflict. In the final chapter of this thesis the evidence of the earlier case study is used to highlight the broader theoretical claim, the security dilemma was not just invalid in its application to the case of Croatia but the security dilemma theory in general is not applicable to ethnic conflict. Illustrating that the application of the original concept of the security dilemma becomes problematic in three areas. First of all the operationalization of the concept and the difference between the security dilemma and the relating spiral. Stressing that not all conflicts that arise, start with a security dilemma. Nor do all security dilemma's end in conflict. Secondly, the difficulty of approaching an ethnic group as an unitary actor. And finally, the problems surrounding the element of anarchy, as the security dilemma does not even look at what brought about the emerging anarchy.

While this thesis has indicated the shortcomings of the security dilemma's application to intra-state conflict, it has done this based solely on the contributions of four authors and one case study. To further the theoretical claim that there is a mismatch between the security dilemma and intra-state conflict more research is needed. Other cases of ethnic violence explained by the security dilemma should be revisited and proven to be incomplete or false. More research is also needed on the theory of strategic policy as an explanation to ethnic violence, as this theory has proven to be the explanation behind the ethnic violence in Croatia, this does not directly imply that it will be able to account for all ethnic conflict. Which brings us to the question that future research will have to answer: Is it possible to have one dynamic and integrative theory that can account for all ethnic conflict, or is each case of ethnic conflict too diverse to simplify into one theoretical framework?

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Appendix 1: Flaws in application security dilemma to intra-state conflicts.

Aspects of the Security Dilemma	Posen	Kaufman	Melander	Roe (1999, 2000)	Roe (2001, 2004)
Anarchy, or lack of higher unity	Yes. Situation of 'emerging anarchy'.	Yes. Absence central authority.	Yes. Situation of 'emerging anarchy'.	Yes. Situation of 'emerging anarchy'.	Yes. Situation of 'emerging anarchy'.
Uncertainty or fear	Yes. Assess others' capabilities to determine threat.	Yes. Inherent sense of fear by decision makers.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Unintentional origins	Only in definition. In application disregarded.	No. Includes intentional hostilities.	In definition, but in application no as he disregards earlier historic facts of intent.	Yes/NO. Even requires worst case presumption instead of just fear.	No. Greedy states also included.
Tragedy	No. Tragedy is disregarded.	No. Based upon malign intentions.	No. Conflict would eventually take place.	Yes.	No. Equates unintentionality with unintended consequences.
Operationalization: Security Dilemma is cause for conflict.	Yes.	No. Dilemma operationalized as product of conflict.	No. Operationalized after hostilities.	No. Pre-emptive war is not precondition but result.	No. Introduces new scheme of operationalization: three types.