

The Bosnian War 1992-1995

To what extent was intra-elite rivalry a cause for the mass indiscriminate violence that occurred during the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995?

Anne Lammertink

S1906992

Leiden University

International Relations

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Supervisor: Dr. E. van der Maat

Second reader: Dr. M.J. Frear

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List of Abbreviations

ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
JNA	Yugoslav National Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
UN	United Nations
US	United States
VOPP	Vance Owen Peace Plan
VRS	Army of the Republika Srpska

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Figure 1: Van der Maat, Eelco. 2015. 'Figure 1: Genocidal consolidation schematically displayed' in: "Genocidal Consolidation: Final Solutions to Elite Rivalry".

1. Introduction

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina¹ began on April 6, 1992, and ended with a cease-fire on October 12, 1995 (Kaldor 2012, 34). Around two-thirds of the population were displaced, driven from their homes; between 100,000 and 260,000 people lost their lives (Kaldor 2012, 34).

Mass indiscriminate violence is characterised by its target selection: the violence is aimed at *identity* rather than behaviour. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia began in 1980, such violence took place during wars for independence in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. These wars took place from 1992 to 2001 and resulted in thousands of deaths and victims of rape, torture, displacement. Mass violence occurred at several points during the wars in Bosnia that took place between 1992 and 1995, but two incidents are highlighted in this piece: the massacres in Prijedor in 1992 and in Srebrenica in 1995. There is chosen to focus on these two incidents, since they both include mass indiscriminate violence, and cover the beginning and the end of the Bosnian war and therefore gives a complete view of the conflict. An estimated 3,000 people were killed in Prijedor, and 7,000 in Srebrenica. Key figures in this war were the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević; the president of Republika Srpska, Radovan Karadžić; and the commander-in-chief of the Army of the Republika Srpska, Ratko Mladić.

The International Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) headed the attempt to try all of the individuals accused of war crimes in Bosnia. Mladić and Karadžić were both found guilty of genocide, among many other charges. Milošević was never convicted by the ICTY, because he died during the process in prison in 2006. The ICTY determined the events that took place in Prijedor and Srebrenica to be genocides.

The root cause of the violence committed during these wars for independence has remained unclear; despite the plethora of existing research on this topic, more is required. This study highlights the inconsistencies in the existing explanations as to why mass indiscriminate violence took place. The principal problem is that other studies have in a large part focused on the acts of violence; however, the periods preceding and following the violence need to be considered in order to find the root causes of the conflict (Kalyvas, Sambaris 2005, 191).

In this paper, a new theory to explain the genocides is tested. This theory has been introduced by Eelco van der Maat; it argues that not outgroup threat, but elite ingroup rivalry drives leaders to initiate mass indiscriminate violence in order to remain in power (Van der Maat 2015). This theory is at the core of this paper and is used to answer the following question: *To what extent was intra-elite rivalry a cause for the mass indiscriminate violence that occurred during the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995?*

The relevance of this research is twofold. First, further investigation of the Bosnian War and especially of the mass violence in Prijedor in 1992 and in Srebrenica in 1995 will contribute to the

¹ In the remainder of this piece Bosnia-Herzegovina will be called 'Bosnia'.

existing knowledge on this conflict and on mass indiscriminate violence in general. Second, scrutinising Van der Maat's new theory will offer more insight into the subject through new perspectives. Van der Maat's question about why leaders resort to mass indiscriminate violence in unstable periods is assessed specifically in respect to the violence in Bosnia.

This paper begins with an overview of current explanations for mass indiscriminate violence. Then the research strategy and research design are explained. Subsequently, the observable implications are given. In the analysis, relevant events before and during the violence are described. Finally, the research is summarised and concluded with recommendations for avenues of further research in mass indiscriminate violence.

1.1. Definitions and Justifications

When discussing mass violence and international conflicts, it is necessary to clarify the definitions of these terms. This paper deals with mass violence, also known as genocide, a complex concept with a history. The United Nations (UN) defined genocide in 1948 as 'acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group' (UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948). The discussions among the UN and Western governments have complicated the use of the term *genocide*, stemming mainly from the fear that the word 'genocide' could create unwanted social and political pressures to political leaders to react (Glanville 2009, 472). This response also carries legal consequences: declaring acts of mass violence to be genocide forces witnessing states to come to action. Consequently, during the Bosnian War, state leaders who were unwilling to intervene preferred the term 'ethnic cleansing'. Due to these difficulties regarding the use of 'genocide', this paper uses the label 'mass indiscriminate violence' for the violence that occurred in the Bosnian War.

The violence that took place during the Bosnian War can be called massive, as an estimated 100,000 people were killed between 1992 and 1995, 80% of whom were Bosniaks. The massacre in Srebrenica in 1995, was the largest on European grounds since 1945 ('Bosnia-Herzegovina' Website United States Holocaust Museum).

In this piece, the term 'elite' is used frequently. As political scientist Nina Caspersen defines it, the elite consists of 'actors who have significant influence over policies directly affecting the development of a conflict' (Caspersen 2010, 9). This statement is nuanced by political sociologist Eric Gordy, who noted that the Serb leaders in Bosnia were part of the 'new elite' that did not have the same societal position as the 'old elite'; this new societal position may have increased insecurity and influenced their political performance (Gordy 1999). Often 'the elite' is used to refer to political figures. Later in this piece, arguments are given to include the military when speaking of an elite as well, due to their important position at the negotiating table. The term 'elite' is used for influential members of the Serb ethnic group, including Milošević, his party members, Karadžić, and Mladić. These are politicians at the top of Serb political parties, but also high-ranking persons inside the

military, such as Mladić. Even though Mladić was lower in rank and commanded by Karadžić, the power of the army should not be underestimated, as is argued later.

A third concept important in this paper is the term ‘intra-elite rivalry’. This means competition *inside* the party, not to be confused with *inter*-elite rivalry, which means rivalry between different elites. The rivalry predominantly holds competition over dominance within the ethnic-group (Caspersen 2010).

2. Existing Explanations

As associate professor of Government Benjamin Valentino states: ‘Since 1900, these and related forms of political violence have likely killed well over 100 million people, the majority of whom were civilians’ (Valentino 2004). This number has had a large impact on humankind; it is therefore reasonable that this subject be extensively researched.

New research has left behind the once widely accepted view that large-scale violence against civilian populations is irrational, random, or the result of ancient hatreds between ethnic groups (Valentino 2014, 91). This so-called ‘pre-1990 view’ stemmed from the traditional assumption that civilian deaths were the unavoidable result of warfare or unalterable primordial hatreds along ethnic lines ‘emanating from uncontrollable, individualistic, subconscious inclinations’ (Kaplan 1993). The result of the first option is that civilian deaths were not seen as the result of the state’s rational decision-making, but simply as a logical part of the process of war (Cheeseman, 2015). The second option implied that the outbreak of war and mass violence were insurmountable in areas where various ethnicities lived. In this perspective, the state and political apparatus were seen as weak and a cause for the emergence of violence.

Related to this ‘pre-1990 view’ is the *weak-state paradigm*, that explained the connection between the appearance of ethnic divisions and financially, bureaucratically, and militarily weak states (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 88). The weak state paradigm unquestionably contains valid points since violence often takes place in poor states that do not have a stable government. In addition, this paradigm does not imply that mass violence must occur in weak states, since there are many poor states and states with multi-ethnic populations in which mass violence has not occurred (Cheeseman 2015).

Given this point, one could question what should be seen as the main driver for mass violence. As argued by Valentino, most scholars now understand that mass violence is often used to achieve political or military goals, instead of being a side effect of civil war (Valentino 2014). Most scholars studying political violence now understand it to be primarily, if not exclusively, instrumental and coordinated by powerful actors seeking to achieve tangible political or military objectives (Valentino 2014, 91). As Gagnon argued, ‘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. Indeed, in the case

of the former Yugoslavia there is much evidence that the “masses” (...) did not want war (...) The current major conflicts taking place along ethnic lines throughout the world have as their main causes not ancient hatreds, but rather the purposeful actions of political actors who actively create violent conflict’ (Gagnon 1994, 164). In this new understanding, three motivations for mass violence can be distinguished: leader ideology, outgroup threat, and intra-elite rivalry. These are described in the following sections. One of these motivations is then chosen and assessed in the case of the mass killing in Bosnia.

2.1. Leader Ideology

The leader ideology theory claims that leaders initiate mass violence to stimulate more attachment to an ideology among their people. One of the proponents of this theory is Valentino, who claims that it is hardly deniable that political ideas and ideologies have played a central role in many bloody conflicts (Valentino 2004, 197). He argues that if leaders succeed in transferring their ideological beliefs onto their people, greater loyalty and obedience can be obtained.

An important driver for people to adhere to an ideology is the security that is acquired once they have become part of an ideological structure. Being part of the ideological structure means that people will act upon an ideology and follow the accompanying measures, such as exclusion and violence. For example, the individuals’ chances of survival increase when they join the mainstream ideological programme and when they help to exterminate others who do not obey. For a leader, this mobilisation of the people is an important tool for gaining more power.

For example, Straus states in his study of the Rwandan genocide that ‘the logic of extermination in Rwanda depended on the idea that Tutsis are fundamentally alike. The genocidal mandate from the hardliners was to equate “enemy” with “Tutsi” and to declare that Rwanda’s “enemies” (the Hutu’s) had to be eliminated’ (Straus 2006, 9). This example reveals how ideology can be used to exterminate a group.

2.2. Outgroup Threat

Proponents of the outgroup threat theory argue that mass violence is an instrument used to remove an outgroup during civil war. Roy Licklider is one of the proponents of this theory, and argues that mass violence often occurs after one party won the civil war (Licklider 1995, 685). The outgroup is an insurgent group, often a guerrilla group. During civil war, it is often assumed that mass violence is needed to eliminate the guerrilla support base (Licklider 1995; Kalyvas 2006, 91). Also, the habitat of the guerrilla forces is often destroyed, as Mao described it: to ‘drain the seas’ in order to destruct the habitat of ‘the fish’ (i.e., the guerrilla forces). When this support base has been removed, the guerrilla movement and the civil war will end. This outgroup then is a support base that is endangering the existence of the ingroup. The motivation for violence toward the outgroup threat is to increase the ingroup leader’s popularity (Tir and Jasinski 2008, 641). Simply labelling the group as a threat can

result in more support for the leader; the removal and destruction of this outgroup is moreover sometimes necessary to solidify this leader's power.

Another way to gain more public support is through dehumanising the outgroup. This occurred during the Bosnian War when the Muslims were portrayed as aggressors against all Serbian people. The Serbs argued that they had been the victims of genocide themselves during the Ottoman wars in the fourteenth century (Alvarez 2009, 121). In this way, the perpetrators of the mass violence against the Muslims could argue that their actions were defensive rather than offensive (Alvarez 2009, 121). The famous myth of the Battle of the Field of Blackbirds (a battle where the Serbs were defeated by the Islamic Ottomans in 1389) also strengthened the perceived threat posed by the outgroup. The Serbs' dehumanising of the Muslims is evidenced by a declaration of the Army of the Republika Srpska, '(...) Legend tells how over all the centuries since the arrival of the Turkish army, because of the inaccessible natural terrain, the dangerous high mountains and ravines, and because it is inhabited by the most extreme and bloodthirsty descendants of the worst part of the Serbian nations, not one soldier of any army has ever set foot in Zepa. Never—until today' (Thomas 1999, 238).

But this second theory lacks logic when it comes to practical matters. First, as Tir and Jasinski argued that violence towards an outgroup may increase the ingroup leader's popularity, it is also likely that violence against a selected group may increase the outgroup's anger and determination to resist (Kalyvas 2006, 152). A fitting example to Kalyvas' argument is how the Vietcong was smaller in number, but as Trullinger states: "Every time the Army came they made more friends for the V.C." as a Vietnamese peasant said about the South Vietnamese army attacks (Trullinger 1994, 85).

Second, exterminating an outgroup is extremely costly, since it requires high quality information about the outgroup's location (Downes 2007, 441). And third, targeting an outgroup is more likely to be successful when the target group and the geographical area they are in, are both relatively small, otherwise it decreases the method's effectiveness (Downes 2007, 420). Concluding: it is illogical that leaders only commit violence on a large scale to remove an outgroup, since its effectiveness is questionable and does not explain why leaders target both the civilian population and the ingroup elite.

2.3. Intra-elite Rivalry

The third theory argues that division among the elite who are striving for power results in the choice to turn to mass violence. The elite rivalry explanation argues that political elites commit mass killings for their self-defence and survival at times of serious political insecurity and when they face threats from other elite groups (Van der Maat 2015, 7). Their 'pillars of support' for their position of power are both formal and informal networks; these networks are nurtured via patronage systems that reward loyalty with benefits (Van Der Maat, 2015, 9). Even though these pillars of support are meant to increase security, they decrease security due to competition, strained relations, and volatility at the top of the regime (Van Der Maat, 2015, 9).

This alternative view on the reasoning behind mass violence occurrence has been researched and developed by Caspersen (2010) and Van der Maat (2015). Others that have contributed to the notion that there is division among the political elite are Petrovic (2006), Gagnon (1994-1995), and Roessler (2011). Petrovic defines the character of the Serbian political elite as polycentric rather than centric (Petrovic 2006, 205). He contradicts the notion of the political elite being a united block striving for one Serbian nation.

Often the political elites to which warmongering leaders belong are seen as unified (Caspersen 2010). Despite the Serbian motto claiming 'Unity saves all Serbs', there was little unity among the political Serb elite. Caspersen illuminates an alternative theory and argues that Serbian unification and nationalism were characterising Serb politics because of significant disunity at the elite level. This disunity was characterised by divisions among leaders, among competing Serb parties, and eventually also among leaders in the Serb state and in Belgrade. Nationalism was thus contested and nationalist claims to homogeneity did not reflect the reality of Serb politics (Caspersen 2010, 1).

Gagnon claims that elites incite violent conflict along ethnic cleavages in order to create an internal political framework in which ethnicity is the only politically significant identity (Gagnon 1994-1995, 132). Whereas Roessler argues that leaders often resort to mass violence because of a chance calculation they make: 'Given the higher mobilizational costs necessary to seize power in an armed rebellion than a coup ... rulers often hedge their bets on civil war and employ ethnopolitical exclusion as a coup proofing strategy' (Roessler 2016, 99). Authoritarian leaders are deemed to look towards historical precedent in determining the high threat level of coup d'états (Roessler 2016, 57).

Van der Maat contributes to elite rivalry theory by arguing that not outgroup threat, but elite ingroup rivalry drives leaders to initiate mass indiscriminate violence (Van der Maat 2015, 9). Initiating mass violence is part of a political process; the first step is to control 'a machinery of violence' and militias (Van der Maat 2015, 11). Second, these militias will instigate mass indiscriminate violence, after which they can capture the local government and security institutions (Van der Maat 2015). In the final phase, they neutralise rivals' support pillars in order to remove all competition at the top (Van der Maat 2015).

Van der Maat conducted quantitative research leading to some interesting conclusions. For example, intra-elite rivalry can be linked to a greater likelihood of so-called genocidal consolidation than instances where intra-elite rivalry was absent (Van der Maat 2015, 29). Genocidal consolidation is a concept introduced by Van der Maat that holds that instigating genocide leads to consolidated power, which corresponds to a greater probability of elite purges. Van der Maat also found that leaders who initiate genocidal consolidation have significantly lower probability of being imprisoned, dying, or even being deposed by others from within their regime, when compared with similar leaders (Van der Maat 2015, 17).

While attempting to unearth the reasons behind mass violence, it is important to keep in mind that instigating such violence is always extremely risky. Neither the political nor personal survival of

instigators can be safeguarded in such violent circumstances. This exposes the contradiction between the risk of inciting violence and the will to survive that underlies the violence.

In this paper, Van der Maat’s theory is applied to the case of the mass violence in Bosnia because the theory is innovative in three ways: first, it offers a new explanation for the causes of genocide, based on a leader’s motivations for his or her own survival. Second, it provides newly collected data on indiscriminate violence and elite purges, and illustrates one of the processes through which violence profits leaders. Van der Maat concludes that leaders are actually in search of personal survival instead of more secure power for the state.

Third, Van der Maat’s paper illuminates the relatively unknown concept of authoritarian consolidation, that holds the coalition building and disempowerment tactics adopted by authoritarian leaders to manage rivalry (Van der Maat 2015, 4). Van der Maat calls the use of violence in order to gain more power ‘genocidal consolidation’, an idea intimately connected to authoritarian consolidation (Van der Maat 2015, 1). The central question in his research is why authoritarian leaders sometimes unleash mass indiscriminate violence on outgroup civilians, while at the same time purging regime elites: why do leaders simultaneously target these two distinct groups (Van der Maat 2015)? As illustrated in Figure 1 below, Van der Maat argues that leaders in heightened elite rivalry adopt mass indiscriminate violence against outgroup civilians to coerce ingroup civilians and local leaders into being supportive (Van der Maat 2015, 1). He states that resorting to mass violence allows the leaders to capture state institutions from a bottom-up approach and consolidate their power. This simultaneously undermines support for elite rivals (Van der Maat 2015, 1).

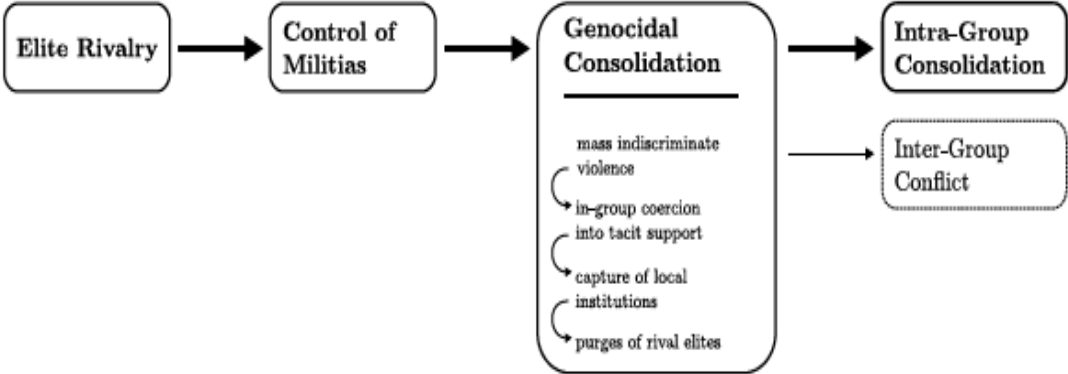


Figure 1: Genocidal consolidation schematically displayed.

3. Research Design

In this piece, the method called *process tracing* is used to answer the research question posed in the introduction. Process tracing can be employed to analyse causal mechanisms. The specific type of process tracing used here is *theory testing*: the theory that argues that mass indiscriminate violence was used in order to resolve intra-elite rivalry is tested.

As argued by Beach in Pedersen, in theory-testing process tracing ‘a causal mechanism is hypothesized to be present in a population of cases of a phenomenon. The researcher selects a single case where both X and Y are present, and the context allows the mechanism to operate’ (Beach and Pedersen 2010, 58). The aim of this method is to scrutinise whether there is causality between X and Y. The researcher carefully defines the relation and mechanism between X and Y in order to observe whether the nature of the relation is more than a correlation or association (Beach and Pedersen 2010, 58).

Theory testing can be described as follows. Every theory holds several observable implications: events or patterns that need to be observed in the course of the case’s events. The test will be to prove whether a hypothesised causal mechanism actual exists in practice (Beach and Pedersen 2010, 58).

In order to successfully apply process tracing to the case of the war in Bosnia, the researcher should collect data, which can be challenging. As Bennett argues, ‘Actors may go to great lengths to obscure their actions and motivations when these are politically sensitive, biasing available evidence’ (Bennett 2010, 219). Since it is difficult to collect facts about decision making, this piece will use both primary sources such as interviews and secondary sources that incorporate these interviews, secret documents, and even telephone taps in order to draw conclusions. Since Milošević, Karadžić, and Mladić have all been tried at the ICTY, there is extensive evidence that can be used to gain more insight into their motivations to instigate acts of violence. Also, proving the level of regime instability within a group of elite can be a subjective matter. Hence, observable implications that fit the theory of elite rivalry need to be provided, in order to set standards on which conclusions can be drawn. On these observable mechanisms will now be elaborated.

3.1. Observable Implications

Each theory has an ultimate goal that must be achieved. The leader ideology theory aims for broad acceptance of an ideology, and subsequent strengthening of this ideology. In the outgroup threat theory, the goal is to remove and destroy the outgroup threat, the guerrilla movement. In the intra-elite rivalry theory, eliminating the rivalry among the elite is the objective. By first considering a group’s ultimate goal, the analyst can construct causal mechanisms or observable implications of each action. An observable implication is a matter that should be observed when the theory is valid. Observing these implications leads us to determine which theory best fits the case of the Bosnian War.

3.1.1. Leader Ideology

As mentioned earlier in this research, the leader ideology theory claims that leaders unleash mass violence to increase attachment to an ideology among their people. The leader ideology theory requires some causal mechanisms that should be observed in a case in order to be valid. The first key observable evidence for the theory of leader ideology starts with the absence of rivalry at the top. The reasoning is that in order to establish an ideology, it is important that the leader's position is stable, since effort, power, money and other means are necessary to successfully establish and use an ideology (Valentino 2004). Therefore, it is very illogical that leader ideology is an explanation for mass indiscriminate violence. When leaders push their ideological goals, they need to be in a position in which their power is of strength and therefore rivalry should be absent (Van der Maat 2015, 7).

Timing is an important part of this theory. The most effective way to strengthen an ideology is to make clear what rules people should follow, so that the persons that do not comply with this standard can be eliminated (Bellamy 2012 and Valentino 2004). This elimination will take place in accordance with the ideological prescriptions, and will also engender increasing support for the leader from the population.

Leader ideology theory seems to not adequately explain mass violence in general. Numerous ethnic supremacist and communist leaders advance their own ideologies and do not engage in mass violence (Valentino 2004). An example is the Maoist Enver Hoxha in Albania, who followed the Maoist ideology to lead Albania, but never used mass violence. In the case of the Bosnian war, the ideology that can be observed is nationalism and accompanying vision of a 'Greater Serbia'. At the core of the Serbian nationalist ideology was the quest to unify all Serbs into a single nation-state through merging the Serbian land (which spread further than the current borders) and the national-religious community (Cigar 1995, 16). This endeavour for 'Greater Serbia' was used in politics as part of a 'policy prescription' that mandated all Serbs to gather in one area (Cigar 1995, 16). Even though nationalism did play a role in the Bosnian war, the leader ideology theory and its observable implications do not explain why intra-elite rivalry concurred with mass indiscriminate violence.

3.1.2. Outgroup Threat

'The aim is to control the population by getting rid of everyone of a different identity (and indeed of a different opinion) and by instilling terror.' (Kaldor 2012, 9)

As the name 'outgroup threat' suggests, the first perceivable observation about this second theory is the presence of a defined outgroup. The outgroup is often an underrepresented group with a specific demand. Frequently this outgroup is an ethnic minority that is being suppressed and is fighting for

their existence or representation in their country. An example is the North Vietnamese communist guerrilla fighters living in South Vietnam, who were killed by the US Army and South Vietnamese forces.

Again, as described in the previous section on leader ideology, it is most likely that elite rivalry is absent when outgroup threat is the reason for leaders to instigate mass violence. Intra-elite rivalry is likely to be absent because, in order for the ingroup to remove an outgroup, the ingroup must have intensive control over the state so that they can focus on their military operations instead of on being in competition.

The 'drain the seas' tactic is, as mentioned earlier and as the name suggest, not very precise at selecting the target group, so this violence is non-selective. The target group is often highly mobile, because they hide in rural areas and use unconventional warfare tactics such as hit and run, where the main aim is to damage the opponent instead of seizing territory. This makes causing harm only to the outgroup even more difficult and thus results in violence towards others in their surroundings as well.

In the case of Bosnia, the outgroup that can be perceived are the Bosniaks. Even though this group is perceived as a threat to the Serbs, they were in a minority in terms of military power and predominance. Just as argued with the leader ideology case, intra-elite rivalry is very illogical to appear, since removal of the outgroup required extensive control over the state. For example, as Downes argument mentioned earlier, high quality knowledge is needed to successfully target the outgroup. Whether outgroup threat is an explanation for the mass violence in the Bosnian War, will be thoroughly examined in the analysis chapter.

3.1.3. Intra-elite Rivalry

As mentioned earlier, demonstrating the occurrence of regime instability and rivalry requires scrutiny. To clarify the occurrence of intra-elite rivalry the following observable implications are used, in which two types of actions can be distinguished: actions by the perpetrator of violence, and actions by the perpetrator's rivals. Observable actions by the perpetrator of the violence include declaring a state of emergency, imposing martial law and a curfew, side-lining opponents, changing the party system, and arresting rivals (Caspersen 2007, 625). These actions are often followed by acts from the opponents, such as attempted coups and the establishment of new parties and alliances in order to topple the adversary.

These kinds of actions and responses can imply elite rivalry, but in order to fit within the theory of Van der Maat, the rivalry should occur in conjunction with mass indiscriminate violence. This means that the timing of the purging of the elites and the mass violence is of great importance: rivalry should be present before the violence and should reach its most extreme when the regime instability is at its highest. This order is needed so that the intra-elite rivalry can be removed and instability be raised (Van der Maat 2015, 7). Since the opponent is expected to react to the

perpetrator’s actions, it is important that all observable effects occur in short succession or simultaneously.

4. Case Analysis

The goal of this research is to test the intra-elite rivalry theory in the case of the mass violence in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. In this section, the course of events before and during the violence in Bosnia are scrutinised. After this, answers can be provided to the question of whether a causal link can be observed between intra-elite rivalry and the instigation of mass indiscriminate violence in Bosnia. The work of Robert Donia is pertinent; he described the roots of the conflict in his work *Radovan Karadžić: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide 2015*. His expertise was of great importance during the ICTY case against Karadžić, and this work comprises more recent insights into the motives of the key figures of the Bosnian War.²

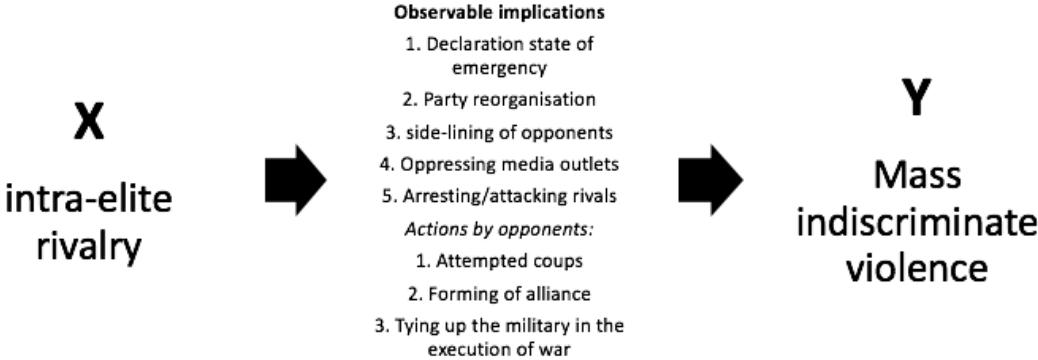


Figure 2: schematically display of probable causality between X and Y

² As the ICTY acknowledged: ‘The Accused has not challenged Donia’s status as an expert, and the Chamber is satisfied on the basis of the information contained in his curriculum vitae that he is indeed an expert in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He will, therefore, be permitted to testify as an expert witness in this case’ (2/19/2010 ICTY Case No. IT-9S-SI18-T, p. 3). This piece focuses on the former Yugoslavia rather than Bosnia, since several leaders of the states around Bosnia were also involved in the war.

4.1. Nationalism

‘Elite driven explanations of wars must be interpreted within the context of a history of ethnic violence and prior conflict.’ (Kalyvas 2006, 322)

The key event that started the unravelling of Yugoslavia was the dissolution of the independent state of Kosovo in 1989. The subsequent Slovenian independence and the Croats’ wish for theirs accelerated the nationalist processes. As the nationalist leader of Croatia Franjo Tuđman pushed for independence, the Serb minority (12% of the Croat population) resisted and mobilised (Naimark 2017, 124). Underlying this resistance was a sense of inevitability among the Serb populations in Croatia and Bosnia, as they observed the political climate change towards greater control of themselves as the perceived hostile group; they feared that their rights would soon be reduced (Kalyvas, Sambanis 2005, 205). This resulted in stronger Serb unification across Croatia and Bosnia, supplemented with increased nationalism in mainland Serbia (Hechter 2001). In November 1991, the Serb-populated Croatian city of Vukovar fell to the Serbs after three months of fighting and bombing (Naimark 2017, 125).

4.2. Milošević

Milošević’s road to political success started in 1986 when he succeeded his mentor and the president of Serbia Ivan Stambolić as chief of the Serbian Party (Djilas 1993, 88). In 1987, he managed to discredit his old friend Stambolić by indirectly accusing him of not defending the Serbian national interests (Djilas 1993, 90). He launched a media campaign against Stambolić and convinced the Serb people that he was not defending their interests (Djilas 1993, 90). Stambolić was voted out of office, and Milošević was elected ‘President of the Presidency of the League of Communists of Serbia’ by the parliament of Serbia in May 1989 (Djilas 1993, 90). Milošević soon proved to be an excellent demagogue capable of surrounding himself with obedient followers.

Milošević reached this position very soon after being only an allegedly unknown politician. He accomplished this first by discovering that nationalist propaganda has strong influence on the masses, and by using it to side-line his mentor Stambolić. His position was paradoxically strengthened by the way the media portrayed him as a weak defender of Serbia. Second, Milošević applied the principle that people who obtain power should not be kept in the same position in order to prevent them from becoming too powerful. This systematic shift of power positions has been called ‘revolving door politics’.³ Milošević put this into practise (on others, but not himself) by first attracting other leaders; then when they disagreed or gained too much power, he forced them to leave office or

³ See Thompson (2011) for the ‘revolving door principle’.

discredited them. A characteristic example of this is when Milošević repressed the demonstrations issued by his opponent Vuk Drašković in 1993 and ordered him to be arrested, beaten, and jailed for 50 days (Bruce, Sandford 1999). This measure is an example of Milošević's working method: he never attacked his opponents or party members directly but always ordered other people to attack opponents, and never propagated hard line statements towards Bosniaks or Croats (Djilas 1993, 90).

Milošević reacted to demonstrations against his leadership by following a more conservative line in his official political behaviour and accepting the principle of Yugoslavia as a confederation. However, outside of public view, he stimulated a crisis atmosphere to keep attention away from his challenged position (Gagnon, 137-138). In line with his moderated position, Milošević was not the typical war-leader who visited his forces at the front (Sell 2002, 107). Moderation gave space to bring a more radical Serbian figure to the fore: he used the extremist figure Vojislav Šešelj, the leader of the Radical Party, to do his 'dirty jobs' (Svarm 1995).

During a period of instability and crisis in the spring of 1992, in order to keep the international community at distance, Milošević wanted to get rid of his radical image. He introduced two figures in the hopes that they would help him gain a more modest image, Dobrica Ćosić and Milan Panić (Thomas 1999, 122). The first was a famous nationalist author, and the latter a rich American businessman with Serb roots, who was chosen as a prime minister (Caspersen 2010, 34). Neither Ćosić nor Panić entirely agreed with their roles, and both pushed for more independence inside the party. Milošević succeeded in side-lining the two men: Panić during the elections in December 1992 and Ćosić by May 1993 (Cohen 2002, 209-214).

As can be read in the memoirs of president of the Socialist Party of Serbia Borisav Jović, by July 1992, Milošević's party members were determined to remove their leader from power because they did not agree with his policy and they feared removal themselves. Nevertheless, they did not succeed in defeating him. There were two main factors in this failure: first, the control over all media outlets enabled Milošević to keep up his own image and bring down that of his opponents. Second, in the political structure of Serbia, Milošević had all the power. This second conclusion can be drawn from both secondary and primary sources, which give evidence that despite rivalry, he dominated politics. It can be concluded that intra-elite rivalry was increasing, due to the building up discontent of other Serb leaders with Milošević.

4.2. Violence in Bosnia: Prijedor

Even though Milošević wanted to follow a conservative line in 1992, violence increased. As argued by the ICTY, 'In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conflict was to be the deadliest of all in the disintegrating Yugoslav Federation' ('The Conflicts', icty.org). The conflict started when the Bosniaks were striving for independence. They voted for independence in March 1992 (Kalyvas, Sambanis 2005, 193). This triggered countermeasures from the Bosnian Serbs, who installed roadblocks on the roads leading to the Serbian countryside. The recognition of an independent Bosnia by Europe and the United States

sparked Serb aggression and resulted in several measures from the international community, beginning with UN economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro.

The Serb aggression escalated into mass violence just after the declaration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on April 27, 1992. Despite the wishes of the leader of the Bosniaks, Alija Izetbegović, open warfare between the ethnic groups broke out in Bosnia (Naimark 2017, 126). The Serbs began the systematic killing of non-Serbs in camps and prisons; this started in and around the municipality of Prijedor. This event has been called as an ethnic cleansing, which is defined by the UN as ‘rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons from another ethnic or religious group’.⁴ Taking the aforementioned measures into account one could argue that both ideology and outgroup threat played a large role. Even though the warfare broke out along ethnic lines and the Bosniaks were defined as the outgroup, the presence of intra elite rivalry rejects the probability of the theories on ideology and outgroup threat. The presence of this intra-elite rivalry will become cleared later in the analysis.

Non-Serbs, Muslims, and Bosnian Croats were removed from positions of responsibility by Serb forces, who took control of the municipality (‘Bridging the Gap in Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina’ icty.org) After these positions were cleared, thousands of non-Serbs were put in the Omarska, Keraterm, and Trnopolje camps (‘Crimes before the ICTY: Prijedor’, icty.org). The discovery of the camps by British journalists from *ITN* and the *Guardian* in the municipality of Prijedor led to the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (‘Crimes before the ICTY: Prijedor’, icty.org).

In an attempt to moderate the situation, the UN in May 1993 proclaimed Sarajevo and five Muslim enclaves ‘safe areas’ that would be protected by UN peacekeepers. In cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the UN proclaimed that airstrikes would be used if the peacekeeping forces were attacked. This proved to be necessary when Sarajevo came under siege; this transformed the peacekeeping mission into an enforcement mission (Kalyvas, Sambanis 2005, 193). In addition, the UN established a ‘no-fly zone’ over Bosnia and deployed UN peacekeepers in Macedonia (Kalyvas, Sambanis 2005, 193). In February 1994, the UN issued an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs that if they would not cease the use of heavy weapons, air attacks would be made on the Bosnian Serb forces (Kalyvas, Sambanis, 2005, 194). The threats of air attacks prompted agreements and negotiations, including two ceasefires, but these did not hold until even until the new year of 1995.

Underlying all these measures was Milošević’s tactic to create a crisis atmosphere that reinforced the call for unity and consequently strengthened his hold on power (Caspersen 2010, 34). Parts of this tactic were curfews and the imposition of martial law. Curfews helped make fleeing

⁴Final Report of the Commission of Experts Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992), S/1994/674, 27 May 1994, vol. I, annex IV, par. 84.

impossible, and martial law was imposed in order to maintain control: ‘It was reported that paramilitary groups in the city “have taken control of many aspects of life in the city, causing residents to speak of Sarajevo as ‘gangster city’ (‘Remembering the Genocide in Bosnia and Beyond’, 1/25/2017). Robberies of cars and other valuables had become common since a martial-law decree authorised army and police units to commandeer civilian property for war use”’ 1514/’ (Final Report of the United Nations Commission of Experts). It can be concluded that the reported curfews and imposition of martial law are observable implications, and therefore meet some of the requirements the intra-elite rivalry theory demands for.

Another part of this tactic was control over the media, which proved a powerful medium to upgrade Milošević’s own image and downgrade others’. According to several scholars (Gagnon 2004, Valentino 2014, and Snyder and Ballentine 1996), ‘Control over media can be used to hide crimes, silence opponents and convince the public that other ethnic groups pose threats that justify extreme violent measures’ (Valentino 2014, 97). Therefore, controlling the media is vital to obtaining and remaining in power. Control over the media is also a devious way to circumvent accusations of personal involvement in instigating mass violence (Valentino 2014, 98). Moreover, Milošević used the media to influence the public opinion against peace negotiations such as the Vance Owen Peace Plan: 70% of the Serb population was against the Vance Owen Peace Plan (VOPP) when the government opposed it on April 9, 1993. By April 27, when the regime turned in favour of the peace plan, only 20% was opposing (Gordy 1999, 71, 41).

4.3. The Distribution of Power

‘It was not a question of the constitutional balance of power; everyone knew who was in charge: the military.’ (Philip Corwin 1999, 89)

Perspective used to be that only political heads were of great significance in war times and especially at the negotiation table. But as the above quote by Corwin suggests: the role of the military has been underestimated. In the Bosnian conflict, the role of commander Mladić during the violence and subsequent peace negotiations has proven to be unmistakably important.

This became clear during the negotiations in 1992, when the VOPP was established to solve the conflict in Bosnia. One of the key negotiators of the plan was the eponymous Lord Owen, who argued earlier that participation in the negotiations should be restricted to political leaders, since other figures did not have the authority to be involved (Boonen 2015, 164). Owen told the journalists reporting the negotiations: ‘I am telling you, and believe me I have been in politics a long time, I know that Milošević is on board and that is what counts’ (Silber and Little, 1995, 314).

This proved mistaken; as journalists Silber and Little found, the ‘decisive speaker’ in the Bosnian Serb Assembly was General Mladić (Silber and Little, 1995, 316). During the assembly,

Mladić showed on a map what the consequences of the VOPP would be. It would leave the Serbs isolated and vulnerable to violence. After the assembly, it became clear that the Serbs agreed with Mladić: 96% of the voters voted 'no' to the VOPP (Boonen 2015, 164). The contrast between the position of Milošević and Mladić towards the VOPP show the rivalry between the allegedly 'unified' elite. This rivalry also had its effect on the public consent, as shown by the majority that voted against the VOPP.

Even though Lord Owen was convinced that Mladić did not have the authority to be at the negotiation table, he admitted that Mladić was a determined general. He characterised him as 'not joking when he talked about Greater Serbia.' 'I did not believe that anyone would stop him' from securing an area for the Bosnian Serbs, Owen later said (Owen 2013, 157; Boonen 2015, 163).

As decisive as Mladić was in the division of Bosnia, Milošević was more conservative on this point. As Robert Donia argues, 'To a surprising degree, Milošević preferred persuasion over brute force to influence his fellow Serbs [...]' (Donia 2015, 308). Donia argues that even though one should not underrate the violence Milošević has been held responsible for, he was 'less able, less resolute and by his own choice, less autocratic' than he is portrayed in a large part of the literature (Donia 2015, 308). Milošević's image is more that of an important figure that acted on the background, playing people against each other and letting others do the dirty jobs, as mentioned earlier about Šešelj, but also with paramilitary groups. Approximately 83 paramilitary groups existed, consisting of ultra-nationalists, criminals, and football fans (LeBor 2003, 186). Two of the most important were the Tigers, led by Željko Ražnatović, who was better known under the name Arkan, and the Chetniks, led by Šešelj. These groups attracted young and unemployed men, who were the perfect agents to carry out atrocities against non-Serbs. Arkan had a deal with Milošević that he would channel the disorderly nationalist groups in favour of Milošević's policy. Milošević made sure the necessary legal approval was given, which put 'volunteer units' like Arkan's Tigers under Yugoslav National Army (JNA) command (LeBor 2003, 189). The Serbian government supplied Tigers and Chetniks with weapons, ammunition, and transport (LeBor 2003, 191). As Šešelj told author Tim Judah: '[...] Of course I don't believe he signed everything; these were verbal orders. None of our talks was taped. I never took a paper and pencil when I talked with him. His key people were the commanders. Nothing could happen on the Serbian side without Milošević's order or his knowledge' (Judah 2000, 188).

Milošević also restructured the military in his favour. An important political player was the loyal JNA. It still fought for Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Milošević by defending the Republic, even though he was destroying it with the measures he took to consolidate Serbian power. Notwithstanding that JNA was a Yugoslavian army in origin, it became the Serb National Army after most non-Serb army employees were replaced by Serbians, resulting in an army that was 85 to 90% Bosnian Serbs by 1991 (Weitz 2003, 213). The nationalist character of the JNA imposed by Milošević can be seen as an ideological measure taken, but it was not taken at time (1991) when there was mass violence being

committed. Therefore, it does not explain the mass indiscriminate violence that took place in Prijedor in 1992, and disproves the explanatory power of the leader ideology theory in this case.

Even though Milošević was the preeminent powerful figure in Serbia, he was not the only promising the Serbs unification. As becomes painfully clear in the coming paragraph about the mass violence in Srebrenica, Mladić, and Karadžić each tried to outdo the other as the most avid promotor of the Bosnian Serb project (Donia 2015, 309). The genocide in Srebrenica in 1995 can be seen as the climax of their rivalry.

4.4. Srebrenica

‘Here we are, on 11 July 1995, in Serb Srebrenica. [...] We give this town to the Serb people as a gift.’ — General Ratko Mladić (ICTY website documentary)

The UN and NATO became more involved in the conflict in February 1994, when they imposed an ultimatum to the Serbs that if they did not lay down their arms in UN-monitored zones, the UN would issue air strikes on the Bosnian Serb zones (Kalyvas Sambanis 2005, 194). This ultimatum staved off Serb violence until April that year, when the Serb forces attacked the safe area of Goražde. In May, the UN declared under Security Council Resolution 824 six ‘safe areas’ to dissuade the Serbs from invading them. These safe areas were only in place until December, when the US president Jimmy Carter negotiated a four-month cease of the violence (Kalyvas, Sambanis 1994, 194).

The ceasefire lasted until July 1995, when Bosnian Serbs attacked the safe-area of Srebrenica. The shelling and coming through on the borders of the safe areas started on July 6, 1995 (CIA 316-354). The first UN-protected observation post fell on July 8, and the day after, Karadžić ordered the *Vojaska Republike Srpske*, the Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) to take over Srebrenica (“judgement” paragraph 252, ICTY). On July 11, the VRS took control of Srebrenica, after the civilians fled to the only UN-controlled station at Potočari (Donia 2015, 268). At midnight, the Bosnian Serbs ordered an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Bosniak men and boys to walk from Potočari to Tuzla, a town controlled by the government around 70 kilometres away (Donia 2015, 269).

The events exceeded the term ‘operation’ since the goal of the Bosnian Serb troops was to exterminate all Bosniak males (Donia 2015, 270). Karadžić confessed his role in the killing: ‘As the Supreme Commander, I stood behind the plan for Zepa and Srebrenica. I personally supervised the plan [...]’ (Bosnian Serb Assembly, 54th session October 15-16, 1995).

According to the ICTY expert historical witness Robert Donia, many factors contributed to Karadžić motivation to admit that his plan was to exterminate all Bosniaks. These included his ‘long simmering anger at Bosniak political leaders, the VRS collapse before the Army of Croat nationalists in Bosnia and the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mounting uncertainty about international intervention, his rivalry with Mladić, the strategic shift to harass and humiliate peacekeepers, and most of all, his unbending determination to fulfil the Bosnian Serb utopian dream’

(Donia 2015, 273). Karadžić's motivation to exterminate all Bosniaks and his anger against his Bosniak opponents lean towards the outgroup threat theory, but as the rivalry with Mladić was predominant at the same time, it rebuts the declarative capacity of the outgroup threat theory.

4.5. Rivalry between Milošević and Karadžić

Based on interviews, secret documents, and intercepted phone conversations, Donia argues that Mladić and Karadžić wanted to outdo each other as the most avid promulgator of the Bosnian Serb project (Donia, 309). Donia argues that the Srebrenica genocide of July 1995 was caused by the fierce competition between the two men (Donia 2015, 309).

Where does this rivalry find its roots? After Karadžić won the elections in November 1990, he learned how to hold sway over Milošević, the Serbian president to whom he was subservient (Donia 2015, 69). Even though Karadžić started as Milošević's promising pupil, he never lost sight of his own interests (Donia 2015, 72). Their phone intercepts of spring 1991 reveal both collegiality and competition, and they both narcissistically showed off their own achievements while never acknowledging the other's qualities (Donia 2015, 72). Milošević helped Karadžić understand the political tactic of waiting for your opponents to make mistakes, while he helped him 'to emerge as the most powerful Serb west of the Drina' (Donia 2015, 84).

Even though Milošević helped Karadžić rise, he also pushed him out of several positions in order to make him less mighty. This resulted in Karadžić's bitterness toward him. Karadžić underwent a 'metamorphosis': he grew frustrated by the limitations of his influence, cynical of his rival's intentions, and desirous of the elimination of great parts of the Bosniak people (Donia 2015, 99).

This frustration stemmed from his inability to gain control. His opponents were not cooperating: the Bosniak political leaders refused to surrender, and the European Community started to push for negotiations to end the war in Croatia (Donia 2015, 119). The Bosniaks stood in the way of his utopian Serb dream in which he would be the main leader (Donia 2015, 102). Taking back control would require eliminating the Bosniaks and coming closer to the plan of a Greater Serbia.

In conclusion: Donia divides the power between the three figures as follows: in the centre was Karadžić, who had local supporters around him. Next was Milošević, who endeavoured to script the course of events, but in reality, only intervened when the one assigned to the task do not act according to his plan (Donia 2015, 309). The third was Mladić, who publicly agreed with Karadžić, but in fact was trying to 'push Karadžić off the central stage' (Donia 2015, 309).

After the slaughter in Srebrenica, Karadžić insisted that he, and not Mladić started the orders to accomplish the operation (Donia 2015, 272). Once it became clear that the ICTY indicted Karadžić, he denied his actions and minimised the slaughters. He even argued that there was more to conquer for the Serbs: 'we have plenty of other places to conquer' (BCS 0214-4265).

On August 7, 1995, President Clinton chose diplomat Richard Holbrooke to revitalize the negotiations that should lead to peace in Bosnia (U.S. Department of State, 1997). Since the ICTY indicted both Mladić and Karadžić, Holbrooke refused to meet with them (Holbrooke 1998). The negotiations took place with other RS politicians that were not under indictment, and in the meantime Karadžić issued a directive to lower Mladić in rank and put him in an advisory position (Donia 2015, 275). This outraged other VRS generals (the army where Mladić was Supreme Commander of), who rejected Karadžić directive and promised to only obey Mladić in the future (Donia 2015, 275). Karadžić made the VRS general choose who they wanted inside the army organisation. They chose Mladić, which took Karadžić's authority away (Donia 2015, 276). Milošević was chosen by Holbrooke as the negotiator, and was summoned to control Karadžić.

In the entire post-Srebrenica time, Milošević was the key to international negotiators. But some hours before Karadžić obeyed to Milošević and agreed to the involvement of Bosnian Serbs at the negotiation table, the VRS bombed a marketplace in Sarajevo. This resulted in the Holbrooke's decline to continue the negotiations, since Milošević did not keep his word to control Karadžić (Donia 2015, 276-277). After some time of negotiating between Milošević and Holbrooke, Milošević requested on October 8, 1995 Karadžić, Mladić, and chairman of the Bosnian Serbs Krajišnik to sign the ceasefire (U.S. Department of State 1997, 145).

During the negotiations between Milošević and a Bosnia Serb delegation, the rivalry became very clear according to one of the delegates called Slobodan Bijelić: 'Milošević explicitly...criticised our leadership. He literally wants the heads of both Radovan and Mladić' (Donia 2018, 280). Karadžić stood in the way of achieving an agreement with Holbrooke and get rid of international pressure, and it took Karadžić until July 18, 1996 to agree with Holbrooke and Milošević and leave office and public life. By doing this, Karadžić turned his resignation into a sacrifice for the Bosnian Serbs, and made himself into a martyr (Donia 2015, 283). Rivalry put an end to Karadžić's career, and the genocide in Srebrenica resulted becoming Europe's most wanted man. After years of living in secrecy he was extradited to the ICTY in July 2009, where he was convicted for 40 years imprisonment and for among other counts: genocide, persecution, murder, deportation and terror ('Trial Judgement Summary for Radovan Karadžić'. March 24, 2016).

4.6. International Intervention

Before any mass violence took place, the EU and especially Germany were involved in the dissolution of Yugoslavia (Jones 2006, 324). Germany wanted to expand their economic and political influence and were assisting Croatia in their push for independence. The UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar warned that recognition of an independent Croatia would unleash 'the most terrible war' in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Glenny 1996, 164).

In Serbia, the elite were mainly occupied with keeping the international pressure at bay. This could only be achieved by stability, and Milošević's strategy aimed to keep the violence just below the

threshold at which an international intervention would take place. Lord Peter Carrington, head of the Yugoslavia Conference held in 1991, excluded Kosovo from the peace deal, in an attempt to keep Milošević on board (Sell 2002, 262). The US and the European Community were unwilling to risk another diplomatic debacle and wanted to focus on a stable Bosnia first.

Intervention did not take place until 1993, when the UN established six ‘safe areas’, in which the Muslim minority should be kept safe from the Serbs. This effort failed miserably as 8,000 men and boys that were living in the safe area of Srebrenica were deported. Under the eyes of Dutch UN troops, they were separated from the women and children, and under the authority of general Mladić, they were killed (Jones 2006, 325).

The whole world learned of the atrocities taking place, in disbelief at the level of the international community’s incompetence. Finally, in 1995 the Croatian president Tudman and Milošević signed a peace agreement in Dayton, Ohio. The Dayton Accords only froze the conflict, since in 1998 mass violence erupted in Kosovo. Then, after the internal monitors found forty-five bodies of Albanians killed by Serbs in a village called Račak in January 1999, the need for intervention could no longer be denied.

Amidst rising tensions, international powers did not start an armed intervention until NATO acted in March 1999. As mentioned before, Kosovo was geographically ‘locked’ in Serbia, which made intervention more difficult, and the risk of spill-over effects higher. The US was at the time mainly occupied with a crisis inside the White House, and did not respond. The task was taken up by NATO, which started bombing Serbia. NATO also proposed the Rambouillet Agreement, which was rejected by Milošević. This rejection was followed by the ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo. When Russia got involved in the conflict in May 1999, Milošević agreed with the ceasefire that brought an end to the conflict.

5. Conclusion

In this piece, the main goal has been to test whether the theory of intra-elite rivalry as defined by Van der Maat and supported by Caspersen could be used to explain why mass violence took place during the war in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. Two instances where mass violence occurred have been highlighted: the massacre of Prijedor in 1992 and the ethnic cleansing of Srebrenica in 1995. These two were chosen because they were peaks in the violence. A vital part of theory testing is correlation in time and place; the violence should quickly follow the intra-elite rivalry. In order to have causality, one event should be followed by observable implications leading to the next event.

Several theories to explain mass indiscriminate violence have been considered. The first was leader ideology. Notwithstanding that many mass killings are perpetrated under the umbrella of a certain ideology, it does not explain why mass violence concurs with intra-elite rivalry. This theory

does not relate the use of violence to the actual motivation of Milošević, Karadžić, and Mladić as they instigated mass violence at a time when their political position was not stable.

Success in establishing an ideology is highly improbable at times of heightened intra-elite rivalry, as a large support base is needed. Leaders seem to accept the risks that come with mass violence at the same time their position is unstable. Retribution, interruption by the international community, and personal endangerment are all possible results. For example, many key figures of the Bosnian War, including Milošević, Karadžić, and Mladić, were captured and put to trial in the ICTY. Considering these dangers, it is highly illogical for a leader to use mass violence to push an ideological agenda and also experiencing ingroup rivalry.

As seen in the analysis, rivalry was first seen in March 1991 when Drašković started a mass demonstration against Milošević's authoritarian regime (Gagnon 2004, 102). The reactions in the media and in the change of Milošević's policy displayed the unrest in Serbia, which strengthened the demand for unity and stability (Caspersen 2010, 32). The links between the rivalry, instability, and the will to unify the state led to Milošević's power increasing. His creation of a crisis atmosphere reinforced the call for unity and consequently strengthened his hold on power (Caspersen 2010, 34).

Milošević was able to fend off his opponents by portraying them as anti-Serbian traitors. However, one could question how significant the threat his opponents posed was, because Milošević had full authority, according to his party members. Nevertheless, considering his measures to discredit his opponents, he was aware of the possible threat they formed.

The next evident example of rivalry was between the three centre figures Milošević, Mladić, and Karadžić. As seen in the analysis, Karadžić and Mladić both pushed to become the main promulgator of the Serbian cause. Each took extreme measures to gain more power and to outbid the other. Milošević had a different role, working more in the background and not directly attacking Bosniaks or Croats in public. Whereas the rivalry between Dobrica Ćosić, Milan Panić, and Milošević in 1992 can be seen as less escalating than the rivalry in 1995 that was more explicit, since the war in Bosnia had already been ongoing since 1992. In 1995 the situation in Srebrenica brought the crisis to its absolute peak. In these two examples, competition among the three leaders motivated them to continue the fight for power. The most evident example of this so-called 'genocidal consolidation' can be seen with Karadžić, who became frustrated by how long it was taking to assert his will to unite Serbia and leave his opponents behind and resorted to extreme mass violence in Srebrenica.

The analysis showed that between the end of the Bosnian war and the extradition of Karadžić, Mladić, and Milošević to the ICTY, the latter rid of his two powerful opponents, Karadžić and Mladić that both resigned in 1996, and remained in power himself until he left office on October 6, 2000 (Sell 2002, xiii). However, they used mass violence to at least disturb the elite level and to escape the impasse they were pushed into by their former Yugoslavian counterparts and international pressure. The goals the three men set, to establish and be in charge of a Greater Serbia, was not achieved.

6. Discussion

Even though studying mass violence is important, the question remains of whether it can make a difference. Van der Maat concludes his research on genocidal consolidation with a note of pessimism. He stresses that we are likely to experience more instances of genocidal consolidation and that in the past it occurred with ‘relatively little warning, quick resolution, and the highest number of civilian casualties’ (Van der Maat 2015, 37). Nevertheless, he concludes by stating that a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying this particular type of violence can be a key step towards improving early warning systems.

Studying the conflict in Bosnia also is relevant for both the present and future. First, given the fact that there is still instability in the Balkans stemming from the events of the 1990s, understanding where this instability comes from is vital for trying to overcome it. Second, grievances linger among the relatives of victims and individuals who were involved, such as the UN peacekeepers. In light of transitional justice (the transition from war to the rule of law), bringing up ‘the truth’ by prosecuting the perpetrators is one step in the right direction. Additionally, understanding why the violence occurred can provide better understanding and ground for rebuilding relations between, for example, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims. Since the question of why mass indiscriminate violence is taking place remains at least partially unanswered, research is a way to provide these answers.

In order to gain a more complete understanding of the processes in mass violence, follow-up research could address psychological or sociological aspects. Further research can examine what role personality traits, age, and other circumstances have on a leader’s motives. In some literature, authors have remarked on the suicides of Milošević’s parents and the presence of his wife Mirjana Marković and questioned the roles these could have had in his decision making. Accordingly, as Gordy emphasised, the danger of focusing exclusively on top-level developments is that it excludes the social context in which these developments took place, which may lead to superficiality (Gordy 1999, 12). The importance ascribed to political actors as ‘representative characters’ may lead to underestimating and ignoring the importance of actors below the top level of political structures (Gordy 1999, 13). This tendency to ignore lower levels is best seen when scholarly work describes a state or a total population as one actor: phrases such as ‘Kosovo wanted’ or ‘the Serbs refused to’ are often mentioned in literature (Gordy 1999, 14). Research should focus on more than just the political level; the state and society as a whole should be assessed in complete research. This should lead to better comprehension of why leaders resort to mass indiscriminate violence.

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Images

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APPENDIX I

Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina

