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INTRODUCTION

On June 26, 1991, after some forty-six years without a war in Europe, violent conflict erupted in the territory of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The war started in Slovenia, but soon involved Croatia, reaching a nadir of violence and destruction in the tragedy that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It took more than four years of atrocities before a peace agreement was finally negotiated in Dayton (Ohio – US) in November 1995 and eventually signed in Paris on December 14 of the same year. The Yugoslav conflict shocked the civilized West because the violence was on such a scale that it recalled that of World War II.

From a scholarly point of view the event is interesting in many respects. It is interesting as a case of communal, domestic or 'ethnic' conflict (according to the different readings of the event), with its own dynamics, but also for what it represented in the context of international politics. The Yugoslav war was a violent dissolution of a state in the core of Europe (after more than forty years of 'peace') and for this could be regarded as an example of the over-denounced crisis of the nation-states or 'Westphalian states'. Furthermore, it could easily lead to further violent dissolution, since it took place in an area (the Balkans) that has always been regarded as a possible powder-keg. Moreover, it took place at a moment of 'change in the system', and this meant that it was both regarded as an opportunity and as a challenge for the international actors involved in the process of re-adaptation to the changed circumstances. It is in this latter perspective that this case is of interest for this study.

In the beginning, the enthusiastic feeling of the time influenced the way the Yugoslav war was perceived by the so-called international community[1]

1 In this work the nebulous term 'international community' is conventionally used to refer to the states, international organizations and other international actors which, because they broadly share common values and purposes, contribute to the collective

and influenced the international institutions' response to the conflict. International institutions, free from the paralyzing bipolarization of the world, were thought to be able to effectively deal with the conflict. Soon, however, the continuation and extension of war began to be regarded as evidence that the Cold War peace and stability was over, and that Europe would face a dark and gloomy future.[2]

The management of the Yugoslav war was undoubtedly affected by the fact that the main international institutions were involved in a process of re-adaptation (NATO; O/CSCE; EC/U). It is equally the case, however, that the management of the Yugoslav conflict *itself* influenced the way these institutions eventually evolved (such as in the case of the UN/NATO relationship) and interacted in conflict management and peace-building (as endorsed in the Dayton Peace Agreement). Therefore, amongst the many perspectives under which the Yugoslav war(s) can be analyzed I am interested in the relationship between the Yugoslav war(s) and the international institutional context in evolution. Moreover, as the European Community/Union[3] was the only international actor present in the management of the Yugoslav conflict from beginning to end, and given the particular interest generated by the European integration process, attention is focused on the institutional context provided by the European Union and its member states, particularly France, Britain and Germany – the most influential and active players of the Yugoslav game within the Union.

More precisely, the main puzzle is: *how did the major EC/U member states respond to the Yugoslav war(s) and which were the factors that mostly influenced state decision-makers when making a decision on this issue?* In particular, given the highly institutionalized context in which the member states

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regulation of international security.

2 It is worth admitting that the notions of 'Cold War' and 'post-Cold War' are not as clear-cut as they are presented here. First, the degree of polarization around the two main security 'poles' was not constant during the so-called Cold War. Second, the actual end of the Cold War cannot be connected with a specific event or date, rather it was the result of a rapid process of transformation for which many different interpretations have been provided. There is, nevertheless, a tendency to identify the 1989-fall of the Berlin Wall or the failed coup d'état in the USSR in August 1991 (Gorbachev, 1991; Rummel (ed.), 1992: 11) as the 'beginning of a new epoch' (Gorbachev, 1991: 31). In this work the expression 'fall of the wall' will be used because of its metaphoric power in relating the end of the Cold War to the reunification of the two blocks in which Europe was divided.

3 On November 1, 1993, the 'European Community' (EC) officially became a broader 'European Union' (EU).

behaved: *to what extent were states influenced by their membership of the EU, rather than by their power-politics concerns or their domestic constraints?*

Therefore, this study aims both at being informative on the empirical case and contributing to the theoretical debate on foreign policy decision-making in an institutionalized international context. This the book also overcomes two major weaknesses of most of the current literature on the European management of the Yugoslav wars; the lack of full and detailed descriptions based on clearly established criteria and a failure to make explicit the theoretical foundations and the methodology adopted in the analysis.

In order to understand the factors that, for the most part, influenced and shaped the interests and perceptions of the three states, this work employs the theoretical tools from what Robert Keohane (1988) has called the *rationalist*, as opposed to the *reflective*, 'research tradition' (Laudan, 1977). Equally, within this research tradition more than one approach is adopted. In this work, therefore, reference is made to the rationalistic 'neo-neo-synthesis' (Wæver, 1994), that is the effort to improve the neorealist approach by combining it with elements drawn from the neoliberal tradition. More explicitly, reference is made to Waltz's neorealism (1979), Keohane's neoliberal – or rational – institutionalism (Keohane, 1989; Keohane, Nye & Hoffmann eds., 1993), and Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism (1992, 1993, 1994, 1998) in order to make sense of the position of the EC member states at various times during the management of the Yugoslav conflict.

The debate between neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists was given a great stimulus by the end of the Cold War and by the lively debate that then opened on the role of international institutions as factors of peace and stability.[4] In 1990 John Mearsheimer wrote an article in *International Security* in which, by applying neorealist analytical tools to the new European situation, he depicted a gloomy future for Europe, a future in which international institutions would not function anymore as effective instruments for co-operation and the stabilization of peace. However, while an intense debate over Mearsheimer's theses took place, international organizations themselves undertook a major process of adjustment in order to cope more effectively with the changed international political framework, evidencing a determination to prove Mears-

4 On this issue, and on the debate on IR which took place at the end of the Cold War more generally, see: Gaddis, 1992/3; Allan & Goldman (eds.), 1992; Hopf & Gaddis, 1993; Keohane & Martin, 1995; Lebow, 1994; Mearsheimer, 1994/5; 1995; Waltz, 1993; Wendt, 1995.

heimer's theses wrong. Indeed, only three years thereafter, an analysis on the impact of institutions on co-operation and stabilization in Europe enabled Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and Stanley Hoffmann (1993) to edit a book which firmly established an opposing thesis to that of Mearsheimer. They claimed that the high level of institutionalization in Western Europe was a crucial element for stability in the area and a potential tool for the promotion of peace in neighbouring Eastern and Central European states.

Eventually, however, the aftermath of the Cold War has 'proven' neither the neorealist thesis, nor that of post-Cold War neoliberal enthusiasts. International institutions continued to exist and, indeed, develop, but the much heralded and hoped for 'New World Order' was not established. The behaviour of the institutions was mainly shaped by the interests and perceptions of the member states at various levels. It is most important, therefore, to understand how these interests and perceptions were shaped and what role membership of international institutions (as sources of both opportunities and constraints) played in the definition of states' interests and perceptions.

The theoretical approaches adopted in this work offer alternative, although complementary, ideas about the factors which mostly influence states' behaviour in foreign policy. Neorealism focuses on a state's rational calculations about relative gains at the systemic level. Rational institutionalism focuses on the impact of the institutional framework on a state's decision-making, while liberal intergovernmentalism attaches more importance to domestic concerns of the decision-maker and its calculations concerning internal power. Therefore, when applied to the case herein, each approach accounts for the interests and preferences of the member states in the various debates in a different manner. It is, therefore, possible to evaluate the relative influence of each set of factors and, thereby, assess the relative explanatory power of each of the three approaches. At the same time, however, because the three approaches represent three facets of the same research tradition, it is also possible to assess the relative explanatory power of the research tradition itself. As a matter of fact, contrary to what the theoretical debates *within* the rationalist research tradition suggest (for instance the debate about *absolute* vs. *relative gains*) this work shows that it is indeed possible to use the expression 'research tradition'. This is because the three main components (neorealism, rational institutionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism) share a substantial part of their ontological and epistemological assumptions and indeed reinforce each other on the basis of the principles of 'complementariety' and 'conditionality'. Therefore, the theoretical perspective of this work binds three theoretical approaches into a coherent re-

search tradition that are not unanimously regarded as belonging to the same 'paradigm'.

Furthermore, the traditional theoretical terms of reference herein are used neither in the conventional way, i.e. the application of theory to empirical data for the sake of a simple explanation, nor as an exercise in testing theory, because this book employs both approaches simultaneously. Indeed, the book seeks not only a theoretically grounded explanation of empirical data, but also an evaluation of the relative explanatory power of the research tradition in all its three facets. As with the case of Puchala's metaphor[5] the three approaches offer a different description of the object under examination (an elephant, in Puchala's metaphor, and states' behaviour in foreign policy, in the case of the three approaches) on the basis of what they focus their attention upon (parts of an elephant, in the case of Puchala's blind men, factors influencing states' foreign policy behaviour, in the case of the rationalistic approaches proposed herein). If in the case of the three blind men a composition of the three descriptions would offer a wider and more precise description of the animal, is it possible to affirm the same thing about the three theoretical approaches and their cumulative capacity to explain and understand the behaviour of states? Moreover, what is the relative interpretative power of each of them and of the research programme as such? What is still missing? How and with what results is this neo-neo-synthesis applicable? Those are some of the questions this work aims to answer while making sense of the European management of the Yugoslav conflicts.

The relative explanatory value of the three approaches is assessed by applying them to the same empirical problem: the explanation of the European response to the Yugoslav conflict. In particular, the book analyzes the position of France, Britain and Germany in the two major debates that shaped the main thrust of the European response to the Yugoslav conflict. First, the debate over recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent states in 1991. Second, the debate over military intervention that took place throughout the management of the conflict. In methodological terms, a set of questions are drawn from the theoretical approach to guide the analysis of the behaviour of Britain, France, and Germany's during the management of the conflict.

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5 According to Puchala's metaphor, some blind men are requested to describe an elephant by touching it. Each of them then offers a different description of the elephant based only on the description of the part of the animal that he investigates (Puchala, 1972: 267-285).

These questions are listed below for the sake of clarity; they have been framed on the basis of the theoretical approach adopted (as shown in Part II).

The questions are as follows:

Did institutions matter?

1 Did the European Community/Union function as an instrument of state strategies (traditional function)?
   - Did it provide individual member states with an arena in which to exercise influence?
   - Did it represent an instrument for balancing against or for replacing other institutions?

2 Did the European Community/Union function as a constraint on state strategies?
   - Did it make the interests of its member states and their preferences more predictable to the others?
   - Did it facilitate agreement when there were diverging interests (but common prospects of gain)?

3 Did the European Community/Union effect state strategies as a 'source of intrinsic value'?

Did domestic politics and its interaction with international politics matter?

4 How much were decision-makers significantly constrained (including impelled) by the media and public opinion?

5 Did they use domestic politics as an argument to justify their position when bargaining at the European Community/Union level?

6 Did they use the European Community/Union as an argument to justify their position when presenting issues of foreign policy in the domestic arena?

The analytical part (Part III) will allow the drawing of some important conclusions on the prospect of an EU role in crisis and conflict management in the years to come. This aspect is particularly interesting given the fact that the crises

and conflict(s) at the core of Europe are far from having disappeared. The case of Kosovo, of Albania and possibly of Macedonia, are clear examples that events are calling for an enhanced role for the EU in conflict management and prevention.

Therefore, to reiterate, the objectives of this book can be thus summarized:

- to contribute further knowledge to the debate over the European management of the Yugoslav conflict(s) *per se*, by providing a chronological account of the diplomatic reaction to the Yugoslav conflict in terms of a) the choice of arena for crisis management, and b) the type of action taken (diplomatic/coercive, proactive/reactive/preventive, individual/collective);
- to provide a theoretically-grounded interpretation of the position of the European 'powers' in the bargain process; and
- to draw conclusions about;
  - the relative interpretative power of competing, yet complementary, theoretical perspectives,
  - the possibility of combining them into a theoretical synthesis,
  - the strengths and weaknesses of such a synthesis in explaining events such as the conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia,
  - the EU role in crisis and conflict management in the near future.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

The book is organized into three distinct parts. Part I deals with the 'what' and 'how' questions of conflict management, Part II establishes the theoretical lens, while Part III explains the 'why' of such management by examining its characteristics. In more detail:

Part I provides a description of the European response to the conflict from the beginning of armed conflict (June 1991) to the military campaign which precluded the Dayton negotiations (August 1995). The chronological reconstruction of the management of the conflict focuses on the institutional framework, and the characteristics of the main decisions in terms of timing, coercivity and collectivity of action. On the basis of the first criterion (arena of conflict management) three phases of international response to the conflicts are defined, each with its own characteristics in terms of the other three criteria listed above (timing, coercivity of action, collectivity of action). An evaluation of the characteristics of the management of the Yugoslav conflict concludes Part I.

Part II introduces the theoretical framework used herein to explain the characteristics of the conflict management examined in Part I. This theoretical section frames the research programme by placing it within the context of Waltz's neorealism, Keohane's rational institutionalism and Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism. The three approaches are regarded as the primary facets of a neo-neo-synthesis which has taken place within international relations, despite the protests of some, mainly neorealist, scholars. Each chapter analyzes one of the three approaches in relation to the others and focuses on its key elements. The analysis also challenges critics of both the rational research tradition, and its three main components.

Part III gives a detailed account of the main characteristics of the management of the Yugoslav conflict through the theoretical lens provided by the theoretical approaches. First, it clarifies the application of the theoretical framework employed in this work. Second, it reconstructs the international framework that developed at the time when the conflict began, with the aim of introducing the reader to the atmosphere that prevailed during those years, to show how the actual decisions by European states to involve themselves in the Yugoslavian imbroglio were dictated by concerns about the institutional framework, as well as being a function of the post-Cold War enthusiasm that was so prevalent at the time. Finally, the two main debates, the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, and the debate on military intervention, are analyzed through the theoretical lens of the rationalist research tradition. This analytical section represents the broadest and main part of Part III.

The final chapter, then, recapitulates the conclusions drawn at the end of each Part and draws lessons from the overall work.