

# Identity, Insecurity and Insatiability:

## Demand for Small Arms and Light Weapons in Bosnia

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## Introduction

The most recent conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s have generated an alarming profusion of weapons in the region, accompanied by an international scramble to remove them before bloodshed can recommence. The gravity of the consequences of small arms necessitates an informed policy to prevent their proliferation. Current policy largely focuses on controlling the supply of weapons to the region, and meets with varying successes and failures; yet it neglects to analyze the causes of demand for small arms. However, an informed policy must also account for the underlying impulse of proliferation, namely the demand for arms. This paper investigates three reasons for demand within the context of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina to explain Bosnians' decision to use small arms.

This paper explores three reasons for the demand for small arms: insecurity, identity, and insatiability. The first, insecurity, may be understood through the human security paradigm. This paradigm explains demand for small arms as a result of the presence of human insecurities, or “economic, food, health, personal and political threats”<sup>1</sup> that menace individuals and societies. The concept of insecurity suggests that threats can incite, perpetuate, and result from violence, in this case through small arms. The second reason, identity, relates closely to the first in that identity is linked to human insecurity. This paper singles out identity from the other insecurities because of its particular role in the ethnic overtones of the Bosnian war, as the division around which violence took place. Postmodernist theory, as discussed by Taylor Owen and Johann Galtung, maintains that identity derives from the perception of difference; perception in

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor Owen, “Human Security – Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition,” *Security Dialogue*, vol. 35, no. 3 (September 2004): 383.

effect creates a reality in which there exists an ‘Other.’ Identity scholars, including David Campbell, Carole Gallaher and David Baldwin, articulate this fear of the other as a force that divides societies and in extreme cases contributes to conflict, from which stems demand for small arms. The third reason, insatiability, is a product of the ‘greed argument’ developed by Paul Collier. Collier, who focuses primarily on organized crime, argues that greed, rather than legitimate grievance, is often the perpetuating factor during conflicts. Due to the crucial relationship between organized crime and political leaders in the arms distribution process during the Bosnian war, I find this greed argument critical to the demand for small arms throughout the conflict.

The research and conclusions in this paper contribute to a body of knowledge that has overlooked some aspects of the field. Thus far, research on the 1994-1995 war in Bosnia has emphasized the violent ramifications and clandestine nature of the arms trade (the supply side), rather than exploring the motivations of demand. While attention to the supply component of the small arms trade remains essential to controlling it, the demand component is no less crucial and will hopefully yield useful insights as well. The demand for arms is fully one half of the supply-demand relationship, and an effective policy requires that both sides be addressed. Current literature, such as Small Arms Survey reports on small arms or Misha Glenny and Laura Silber & Alan Little’s histories on Bosnia, have neglected to combine all three of these theories to explain the presence of and demand for weapons. Although the human security paradigm best explains the demand for small arms, as resulting from the presence of economic, political and personal insecurities; identity theory and the greed argument contribute to the human security explanation in ways that have not yet been explored. Additionally, while

scholars have applied the human security paradigm and identity theory to Bosnia, Collier has never applied the greed argument to the Balkans region. And while scholars have certainly used human security and identity theory to describe the war in Bosnia, the concurrent arms trade has not been analyzed in these same terms. Devastating as the conflict was, Bosnia has served as a classic model of ethnic violence and the arms trade in a conflict setting. Research on the demand for arms in Bosnia will therefore apply in other similar situations.

This paper begins with a brief description of the current status and impact of small arms in Bosnia. Next, I outline the methodology of the study. The third section presents a socioeconomic portrait of Bosnia explaining the cultural, economic, and political contexts of the build-up to the conflict. The subsequent sections explicate the role of insecurity, identity and greed in Bosnia's demand for small arms. Finally, the conclusion summarizes these findings and includes general policy options intended to diminish the demand for small arms and thereby decrease the likelihood of future conflict.

Conflict never has simple causes. Similarly, the means of conducting conflict have multitudinous complexities and an infinite chain of causation; each motive precedes another, so that it is perhaps impossible to understand fully what caused the impulse to purchase weapons. The demand for small arms is more than the simple desire to purchase a good. It indicates fear, insecurity, deciding who is the enemy and who is not, and trying to survive the obstacles of one's environment. While these facts do not excuse the conflict itself, some of the reasons for demand may seem more pitiable and easier to resolve than actual combat. This paper seeks to establish and analyze comprehensively

the underlying reasons for demand in the hope of reducing demand and averting future conflict.

### **Methodology**

This study examines three reasons for demand of small arms using the Bosnian war (1992-1995) as a case study, approaching each reason from the theories and paradigms in which it is based. However, the study is rooted in a constructivist and postmodernist epistemological tradition. The case study of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, within the context of the fall of Yugoslavia, regards the demand for small arms as a result of these three reasons.

The case study, defined as “the investigation of a well-defined aspect of a historical happening that the investigator selects for analysis,”<sup>2</sup> investigates the demand for small arms as a dependant variable. I identify three independent variables as the reasons for this demand: insecurity, identity and insatiability. The presence of these three variables, or reasons, results in a demand for small arms within a population. Each variable is measured through the theories and paradigms from which it is derived. I seek to demonstrate the presence and/or degree of each variable within the precepts of the associated theory and the historical and socioeconomic context of Bosnia. While the single-case study inherently has limitations, such as potential indeterminacy and insufficient representativeness,<sup>3</sup> that could prohibit theoretical application to other cases, I believe the independent variables in this case study encompass the explanations of the dependant variable. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the presence of these independent variables may (and will likely) affect additional dependent variables.

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Bennet, “Case Study Methods” in *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*, ed. Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2004): 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 41-42.

The first reason, insecurity, stems from the human security paradigm and draws from the work of several authors. I draw from the work of Taylor Owen and Johan Galtung for definitions and evaluation of the human security paradigm. I also employ Paul Roe's analysis of the security dilemma to explain the insecurities faced in Bosnia. The second reason, identity, uses postmodernism to explain identity theory as it applies to Bosnia. David Campbell, Carole Gallaher, and David Baldwin inform my discussion on identity theory, while Roe's societal security, itself based on identity theory, further explains the Bosnian conflict. The third reason, insatiability, derives from Paul Collier's 'greed argument' and Roe's 'loose' security dilemma. Collier's scholarly works stem from a quantitative analysis of transnational organized crime, while Roe's tripartite conceptualization of the security dilemma incorporates power-seeking motives.

These three complementary reasons for demand rely on the historical and socioeconomic context of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Evidence draws from historical events, census-based ethnographic data, and economic statistics. Conclusions based on this data correspond to the theoretical principles listed above. The socioeconomic and historical information conglomerates various scholarly works on the Balkans and the Bosnian war. Conclusions derived from this case study may be applied to other cases as well. I predict that the presence of the three independent variables (identity, insecurity and insatiability), as determined and measured by the standards of their respective theoretical constructs, will result in a demand for small arms.

# Bosnia and Herzegovina



## Small Arms in Bosnia

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)<sup>4</sup> pose an increasing threat to international stability and security, particularly in the Balkans, a region that manufactures, traffics and to its great detriment uses these products. SALW appeal to rebel groups worldwide because they are mass-produced (and therefore cheap and easy to obtain), durable (and therefore a one-time purchase), easy to use (and therefore less training-intensive), and fire many shots at a time (and therefore kill more people). The salience of SALW in conflicts allows for mass participation, including child soldiers or women. AK-47s and landmines, weapons of choice in many civil wars, can last for decades; even after conflict ends, many militants bury their weapons and wait until the next outbreak of violence. SALW have all the low costs and high benefits enumerated, and therefore are in high demand throughout conflict regions.

Proliferation in the Balkans, and particularly Bosnia, surged during and just prior to the major conflicts in the 1990s, and has since declined to varying degrees, depending on the region. Within the former Yugoslavia, a 1989 source estimated that between public (military) and private ownership, possession of rifles, pistols and machine guns numbered around 6.1 million.<sup>5</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina seceded from Yugoslavia two years later, and conflict began. An influx of weapons into the country occurred during the

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<sup>4</sup> For a definition of small arms and light weapons (SALW), refer to an article by Suzette Grillot. Grillot provided the following as her definition: "A United Nations 16-member Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms identifies small arms and light weapons as the following: assault rifles, pistols, sub-machine guns, light machine guns, mortars, portable anti-aircraft guns, grenade launchers, anti-tank missile and rocket systems, hand grenades and anti-personnel land mines. In other words, small and light arms are those weapon systems that can be carried and operated by a single individual or a small group of people working as a team. See United Nations Document A/52/2987, 27 August 1997, paragraph 26." Suzette Grillot with Dessi Apostolova, "Light Weapons, Long Reach: Bulgaria's Role in the Global Spread and Control of Small Arms," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, vol. 5, no. 3, December 2003: 279-297.

<sup>5</sup> Wolf-Christian Paes, Hans Risser, and Tobias Pietz. "Small Arms and Light Weapons Survey (SAS): Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Bonn International Center for Conversion*. July 2004: 11. Available at <[http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/country/eu\\_pdf/europe-boshrg-2004.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/country/eu_pdf/europe-boshrg-2004.pdf)>.



conflict despite a series of arms embargoes enacted by the United Nations Security Council. Since the end of the conflict and the commencement of the international community's prominent role in Bosnia, the number of SALW has decreased due to various measures. The results of these disarmament measures indicate, with some accuracy, the amount of weapons that were in Bosnia during the conflict.

The policy of demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DD&R)<sup>6</sup> has become the standard for international operations in the Balkans, including Bosnia. Under these auspices, SFOR<sup>7</sup> began collecting weapons from the local population in 1998 through Operation Harvest and the next year incorporated police and armed forces into the process.<sup>8</sup> Authorities offered amnesty in exchange for voluntary forfeit of weapons, allowing owners to leave illegally-obtained weapons at their local police station “with no risk of penalty or records kept of who surrendered it.”<sup>9</sup> Between 1999 and 2001, Operation Harvest collected approximately 15,000 small arms and 55,000 grenades.<sup>10</sup> By 2004, this number climbed to 40,651 small arms and 174,585 grenades.<sup>11</sup>

The reintegration component of DD&R involved sending troops back to their communities. After the horrific atrocities committed by and against all sides of the conflict, however, many soldiers felt (and feel) that the Dayton Accords under which peace was negotiated would be yet another unsuccessful ceasefire. Therefore, “many weapons were retained and hidden as a ‘life-insurance’ just in case the conflict started

<sup>6</sup> Paes, Risser and Pietz, 12.

<sup>7</sup> SFOR, NATO's Stabilization Force in Bosnia, provided provisional control over the state following the Dayton Accords. Under this mandate, SFOR has the authority to supervise the military and carry out such tasks as collecting and destroying small arms. See Elizabeth M. Cousens, “Making Peace in Bosnia Work,” *Cornell International Law Journal*, vol. 30 (1997) : 801.

<sup>8</sup> Denis Hadzovic, et al. *Needs Assessment on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, trans. Sanda Puljic-Cadman. Center for Security Studies BiH (2003): 19. Available at <[http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/country/eu\\_pdf/europe-boshrg-2003.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/country/eu_pdf/europe-boshrg-2003.pdf)>.

<sup>9</sup> Paes, Risser, and Pietz, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 25.

over again.”<sup>12</sup> The civilian population also retained weapons during and after the war for personal protection against a potential resurgence of violence. For obvious reasons, the number of illegal weapons in Bosnia remains impossible to declare with any certainty. However, officials within the Federation’s Ministry of the Interior<sup>13</sup> have “estimated that the number of illegal weapons in the Federation is probably three times the number of legally registered weapons possessed by civilians.”<sup>14</sup> According to this estimate, then, “roughly 432,000 illegal weapons remain outside the control of police.”<sup>15</sup> The Republika Srpska (RS) has no firm estimates of illegal weapons, but as of March 2004 stored 2,096 SALW at Public Security Centers.<sup>16</sup> Other means of estimating this number involve a household survey of 1,000 Bosnian respondents. This survey found that 189 out of 1,000 respondents “admitted to possessing one or more firearms,” while 72 refused to answer the question.<sup>17</sup> Extrapolating from this data, Small Arms Survey estimates with medium confidence that between 147,000 and 352,000 civilians continue to possess small arms.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, while the Bosnian buy-back program has succeeded relative to other countries in the Balkans, the volume of arms smuggled into the country during and before the conflict indicate that SALW continue to be in demand in Bosnia. The percentage of the population that has kept its weapons, often for personal safety, remains large enough to make peacekeepers wary of the possibility of further conflict. The potential for conflict does not stem from the number of SALW in Bosnia, which currently comes

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina is administratively divided between the Croat-Muslim Federation and the Serb Republika Srpska (RS). The Federation and RS are each responsible for their own police forces and Ministries, and therefore this data has been collected separately for each administrative region.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

nowhere near the amount needed to conduct a large-scale conflict, but rather from the continued demand for small arms that this retention number indicates.

### **Historical and Socioeconomic Context of Bosnia**

Bosnia-Herzegovina remains a thicket of ethnicities and religions as a result of its long history in the tug of war between cultural giants and expanding empires. Many of the conflicts, both military and political, in Bosnia's history can trace their roots to the struggle between the Balkans' Slavic roots, the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These cultural forces have resulted in three main ethnic groups within Bosnia-Herzegovina, each of whom enjoyed privileges and advantages at various stages of foreign domination. The development of these separate ethnicities, classes, and rivalries centers around what might seem ancient history. In order to understand the motivations and significance of many aspects of the 1992-1993 war in Bosnia, one must also understand Bosnia's past. While not a comprehensive history, this section seeks broadly to explain some of these cultural forces, including their effects on Bosnia's social and economic structure, and their aftermath in the 1992-1993 conflict.

#### *Ottoman Empire*

Prior to the Ottoman invasion in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the cultural persuasion of modern Bosnia was based on its Illyrian (Croatian) and Slavic past. These roots maintained a strong influence throughout all of Bosnia's subsequent history and ultimately represented a fault line in many of its conflicts. The Slavic Nemanjić dynasty ruled in modern Serbia and parts of Bosnia from 1217-1355 AD. At the founding of this dynasty the Pope granted autocephalous status, founding the Serbian Orthodox Church with St. Sabba, brother of the first Nemanjić ruler, King Stephen, at its head. Church records were the only measure of population, thereby formalizing attendees' inclusion in

a specified group. The Orthodox Church subsequently served as a potent rallying force for the Serbian population and a source of identity.

The end of the Nemanjić dynasty marked a period of turmoil for the Serbs, as factions vied for control over the crumbling region. Simultaneously, the Ottoman Empire invaded. The Battle of Kosovo Polje, or Field of Blackbirds, took place in 1389 between the forces of Prince Lazar, a strong contender for heir to the Nemanjić dynasty, and the Ottoman Sultan Murad.<sup>19</sup> Both leaders were killed and the battle ended in a draw. Serbia ultimately fell to Sultan Mahmut II in 1459 and Bosnia-Herzegovina was subsumed into the Ottoman Empire as an administrative region in 1482. Meanwhile, however, the Hungarian Empire maintained control over Croatia. Only in the 1500s did the Ottoman Empire begin to conquer Croatian territory. The Hungarian and later Austro-Hungarian Empire introduced Catholicism to Croatia. Bosnia's geographic location between Serbia and Croatia placed the region directly between two empires competing for territory and dominance.

During the time of the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire set up a regency government with its headquarters in Bosnia. As in other occupied areas, the Ottoman government favored those subjects who converted to Islam, granting rights as citizens and access to certain economic sectors. For the Ottomans, "religion always took precedence over culture, language and race in defining one's identity."<sup>20</sup> However, the Ottomans conscientiously tolerated those who did not convert, permitting their expansive empire to exist without the trouble of weeding out the host culture and inciting rebellion.<sup>21</sup> Unlike Serbia and Croatia, Bosnia did not have its own Church to serve as a

<sup>19</sup> Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, 1804-1999*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2001): 11.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Hourani, *History of the Arab Peoples*. (Cambridge: Belknap Books, 1991): 247.

focal point for the preservation of Bosnian culture. The Bosnian population soon began to incorporate Ottoman characteristics, particularly when the economic advantages became clear. Many of the Islamic converts and Ottoman émigrés to the Balkans settled in modern Bosnia, where a Muslim population remained long after the fall of the Empire. Thus, by the time of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the plurality of the Bosnian population was Muslim.<sup>22</sup> Bosnia under Ottoman control remained largely rural in nature, bypassed entirely by the economic revolutions taking place in Europe.<sup>23</sup>

By the 1800s, however, the Ottoman Empire was forced to deal with its rebellious and malcontent Serb peasant population. Two peasant uprisings, one in 1804 and a second in 1815, shook the Ottoman Empire's grasp on Serbia.<sup>24</sup> The Serb population under Ottoman rule retained its Slavic roots and resisted Ottoman domination more strongly than other groups. This resistance and the perseverance to the Serbian Orthodox Church distinguished the Serbian population from others in the region. Bosnian Muslims and Croats living under Ottoman rule typically had not violently resisted Ottoman rule. The resulting distinction between these groups developed into an indicator of ethnicity in the Balkans. The First Serb Uprising pitted the Serb peasants, led by Karadjordje, against the Ottoman Porte authority.<sup>25</sup> After quelling this first uprising, the Ottoman Empire faced a new challenge from a rival of Karadjordje, Milos Obrenović, who eventually struck a deal with the Porte and gained a great deal of autonomy, including the ability to maintain a healthy relationship with Russia and the Orthodox Church.<sup>26</sup>

### *Austro-Hungarian Empire*

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<sup>22</sup> Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997): 209.

<sup>23</sup> Glenny, 73.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>25</sup> The Ottoman rulers governed from the palace of the Sublime Porte in Istanbul, and their regime came to be known as the Porte authority. Ibid, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 20.

Bosnia in the 1800s became the barrier between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottomans, and Ottoman leaders felt that their security necessitated absolute control over the area.<sup>27</sup> The local Orthodox Church did not represent the best interests of the Christian Bosnian peasants, although the Catholic Church met with more success. The local Muslim elites spoke Serbo-Croatian but could not identify with those outside their class, largely Christians. Feeling threatened by change in the Ottoman regime, these local Muslim elites in Bosnia rebelled against the Porte Authority in 1850, leading to two years of bloody conflict and an economically ruined Bosnia.<sup>28</sup> The conflict reified a Bosnian Muslim identity, but also produced some compatriotism among Christian populations surrounding the misery of their existence. As economic stagnation proceeded, Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim peasant populations also began to rebel and by 1875 had gained enormous autonomy from the crumbling Ottoman Empire.<sup>29</sup>

The Austro-Hungarian Empire meanwhile sustained a strong presence in the region prior to, during and after the Ottoman era, largely via its territorial hold on Croatia. Croatia's Catholic heritage and relationship with the Austro-Hungarian Empire further separated the Croat population from other groups in the Balkans. While most other nations suffered under Ottoman rule, the Croats suffered under the Hungarians. The Croat resistance in the 1840s ultimately imitated Serb groups and rebelled against Hungarian control. The Serb and Croat groups joined briefly to combat foreign domination, but later abandoned this alliance.<sup>30</sup> By 1848, the Croats believed Bosnia should become part of their new Triune Kingdom; Serbs "assumed that Bosnia belonged to them;" and Muslim landowners maintained that Bosnia was their own. The extant

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 51.

peasant population was divided mostly between Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs. Already, the cultural divisions, based primarily on religion and imperial influence, had become entrenched: The routes taken by the Serb, Croat and Bosnian Muslim populations toward autonomy led each to develop distinct identities.

### *World Wars*

In 1908, the increasingly powerful Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia, leaving the nation no autonomy after the long series of previous Balkans uprisings.<sup>31</sup> A period of turbulent rule over the region culminated in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. An organization called the Young Bosnians, a group of disgruntled, unprofessional and youthful Bosnian assassins with the goal of uniting greater Serbia, committed the murder that is blamed for precipitating World War I.<sup>32</sup> Bosnia and Serbia soon faced the retribution of the Austrian Empire, and Russia chose to intervene on behalf of its Slavic brethren. The Balkans, including Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia, became a secondary staging grounds for the World Wars. During World War II, the various Balkan countries began to ally themselves with opposing camps. Hitler and Mussolini both deemed the Balkans crucial to their cause for strategic purposes, but also to obtain resources. A Croat faction calling itself the Ustaše came to power with Italian support, and “governance was replaced by state terror” as “the Ustaše turned their territory into one great slaughterhouse.”<sup>33</sup> The Ustaše murdered Serb and Muslim civilians and combatants indiscriminately, committing ethnic cleansing that was overshadowed only by the conflict decades later. Germany occupied Serbia, precipitating Serb rebellion against the Nazis. Two Serb groups, the Partisans and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 219.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 300-304.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 486.

the Chetniks, formed to resist the Ustaše in Bosnia and the Nazis in Serbia. Josip Tito, the future autocrat of Yugoslavia, became a national hero to those suffering under Axis occupation for his leadership of the communist Partisans.<sup>34</sup> While the Chetniks had the support of the peasant population, the “Partisans were proving much more effective as a fighting machine.”<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, the Partisans and Chetniks struggled amongst themselves for legitimacy from the Allied powers and began an internecine Serb conflict. The Partisans proved victorious, but not before the strongly Serb-nationalist Chetniks killed thousands of Muslim in Bosnia, failing to distinguish between their retaliation against Croats and Bosnian Muslim civilians.<sup>36</sup> Both the Serbs and the Croats committed atrocities during World War II that had been neither forgiven nor entirely forgotten by the 1990s. The terms Ustaše and Chetnik became inflammatory ethnic slurs during the collapse of Yugoslavia. World Wars I and II therefore furthered not only the distinctive identities of each group, but created bitter animus between them.

#### *The Communist Era*

After WWII, much of the Balkans came under Communist rule. One of these Communist states, the Republic of Yugoslavia, encompassed modern-day Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, among others. The charismatic former Partisan, Josip Broz Tito, quickly rose to the position of authoritarian leader of Yugoslavia, governing from 1945 until his death in 1980. Communist Yugoslavia consisted of a strong central government, with six republics and two autonomous regions.<sup>37</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of these republics, encompassed Serb and Croat territory as well, though this fact was of minor importance until the dissolution of the federal government, since it was regarded

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 488.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 495.

<sup>37</sup> Silber and Little, 26.



merely as an administrative distinction. In the spirit of communism, and typical of his dictatorial tendencies, Tito's government imposed equality among all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or nationality. Tito intended to bring harmony, and thereby order, to the ethnic conglomeration of Yugoslavia, though not to eliminate these distinctions. The devastation of World War II debilitated Yugoslavia not only economically but also socially. Factions like the Ustaše and the Chetniks sowed distrust between ethnic groups that perhaps only an imposed equality could overcome. However, Tito's means of dealing with the aftermath of World War II did not resolve the underlying tensions, as became apparent after his death. Rather than addressing underlying factors, the "responsibility for resolving ethnic disputes rested with a small group of Communists, for whom national feelings appeared secondary to considerations of power and control."<sup>38</sup>

However, Tito strove to overcome the residual economic obstacles of World War II. Communism lent itself to "an opportunity for economic and social advancement, as well as national equality," especially for the Muslim population.<sup>39</sup> Bosnia, a geographically isolated area of the Balkans, remained the poorest of the republics despite these efforts. Its GNP, even as late as 1981, remained 35% lower than the average of the other Yugoslav republics.<sup>40</sup> Tito deemed mountainous Bosnia to be the safest place for Yugoslavia's defense industry, but the rest of the republic remained agrarian and with little of the region's minimal prosperity.<sup>41</sup> Economic progress in industry increased the rate of urbanization, leaving the countryside even poorer than before.

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<sup>38</sup> Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999): 43.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 43.

Despite the attempts at equality, however, differences among ethnic groups persisted. Citizens typically identified themselves along national and ethnic lines, rather than aligning in political or economic groups. For many years, Muslim was not a recognized nationality according to the census, but Serbs and Croats strongly identified with their national roots.<sup>42</sup> In practical terms, though, perhaps the greatest difference was the geographic dispersion of ethnicities, the product of centuries of foreign domination. Bosnian Muslims largely inhabited industrialized urban centers, while Bosnian Croats and Serbs lived in poorer rural areas. Although Serbs generally dominated the federal government, in Bosnia “by the 1970s, a Muslim political elite had risen [...] which rivaled perhaps exceeded the power of the Bosnian Serbs.”<sup>43</sup> This physical and class separation contributed to the ease with which certain parties could imagine an ethnically cleansed Bosnia. Enforcing with violence what already approached a de facto separation was not a great leap of imagination. Croatia and Slovenia, on the other hand, surged ahead of the rest of Yugoslavia and prospered from industry and European tourism. Serbia’s economic welfare remained around the average for Yugoslavia.

After Tito’s death in 1980, Yugoslavia’s political landscape lurched: rather than name a successor, Tito had decreed that the Presidency would fall to an eight-member committee, with representatives from each of the six republics and two autonomous regions. Its members would rotate as head of the federal government.<sup>44</sup> After a decade, this unstable equilibrium tipped in favor of the president of the Serbian republic, Slobodan Milošević. Milošević manipulated the system and maneuvered until he could essentially appoint allies to the federal presidency, giving Serbia (and Milošević himself)

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Silber and Little, 29.

unanticipated control over Yugoslavia. Though a leader in the Communist Party, he gained power initially by aligning himself with the surging cause of Serbian nationalism, shouting out to a mob of Kosovar Serbs he had been sent to bring back to the fold, “No one should dare to beat you!”<sup>45</sup> Through a series of tactical maneuvers, Milošević positioned himself as leader of the Yugoslav federal government, allowing Serbia to dominate the whole of Yugoslavia. He also consolidated control over the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), subtly forcing out the Croat, Slovene and Muslim members of the military and making the JNA more responsive to Serb ambitions. Milošević spent several years garnering support and advancing politically. As a culmination of his success, he delivered a fiery speech in 1989 at Kosovo Polje on the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the famous battle.

Kosovo Polje holds particular significance for the Serbian people because of the legend surrounding the battle between the Ottoman sultan and the Serbian prince. The battle took place shortly after the demise of the Nemanjić dynasty in 1389, in the midst of a struggle for power among Serb factions. According to legend, the Serbs fought valiantly against the invading Muslim forces in the name of the Orthodox religion, but suffered a crippling defeat due to an internal power struggle. Although the actual battle ended in a draw, the Serb legend celebrates the lesson learned from the defeat: that divided, Serbs will lose and suffer the consequences. The nationalist overtones of this message frightened non-Serbs, particularly Albanian Kosovars. By evoking Kosovo Polje in a speech as a federal Communist leader, Milošević demonstrated with chilling finality that Serbian interests would serve as the “greater good.”

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 37.

*Dissolution of Yugoslavia*

Slovenia and Croatia, increasingly threatened by the rise of Serb nationalism, voted to separate from the People's Republic of Yugoslavia. Two of the wealthiest republics, Slovenia and Croatia felt confident in their ability to secede. After a relatively brief conflict in each, they were successful. Around this same time, Bosnian elections also put the question of secession to a vote. The majority of the Bosnian population, encompassing all three of the major ethnic groups, leaned toward remaining in Yugoslavia. However, external events, namely war in Croatia, swayed the population and political parties to choose secession. The Muslim population, which arguably had the most to lose by seceding, remained the most strongly committed to federal Yugoslavia; unfortunately, "this political loyalty did not translate into political influence in the federation, where the determination of federal policies remained concentrated in the hands of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes."<sup>46</sup>

With Bosnian Muslims feeling alienated from the federal political process, the government chose to hold a referendum on independence on February 29-March 1, 1992. According to the official results, "62.68 percent of the total number of voters in Bosnia-Herzegovina voted in favor of independence,"<sup>47</sup> while a mere three years earlier 69% had expressed a desire to remain a part of Yugoslavia.<sup>48</sup> The Bosnian Serb population, which wished to join Greater Serbia, had already held its own plebiscite on independence and boycotted the referendum.<sup>49</sup> Burg and Shoup note that those who voted in favor of independence represented "almost precisely the outcome one would expect if all the Muslims and Croats supported the referendum," as well as allegations that "Serbs who

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<sup>46</sup> Burg and Shoup, 43.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>49</sup> Silber and Little, 205.

might have wished to vote in favor of the referendum were kept away from the polls by intimidation.”<sup>50</sup> Earlier, in January, the Bosnian Serb leadership had declared itself the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or the Republika Srpska, allying with the Yugoslavia federation.<sup>51</sup> With all of this tension, the referendum led to a chain reaction that ultimately resulted in one of the most horrific examples of ethnic violence in modern times.

Serb leaders in Bosnia almost immediately set up barricades in Sarajevo and the JNA entered the city ostensibly to keep the peace. In April, a month after the referendum, the Bosnian war broke out in Zvornik. Serb paramilitaries, with the JNA, “began shelling from the other side of the river – from inside Serbia proper” against the majority Muslim population of the city.<sup>52</sup> As the war carried on from this point, ethnic cleansing became “the defining characteristic of the conflict;”<sup>53</sup> Serb forces targeted Muslims, and Muslim men in particular, throughout the war. Torture, forced migration, mass killings, and destruction became common practice. One of the most horrific examples of ethnic cleansing is the massacre at Srebrenica, a Muslim-populated UN safe zone that was relinquished to Serb forces under General Ratko Mladić in July 1995 by the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR).<sup>54</sup> Some 15,000 Muslim men unsuccessfully tried to flee the massacre.

Meanwhile, on June 17, 1992, Bosnian Croats forced Serb JNA forces out of southern Croat territory and declared their own state, the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna, under the leadership of Mate Boban.<sup>55</sup> Although initially it seemed that Bosnian

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<sup>50</sup> Burg and Shoup, 117.

<sup>51</sup> Silber and Little, 218.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 222.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 345.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 293.

Croats and Muslims would join to push back their mutual foe, the Serb forces, the (Croatian) HVO and (Muslim) Bosnian Army instead began to fight each other in April 1993.<sup>56</sup> At this stage of the conflict, then, each of the three sides of the conflict fought both the other two, with Croatia aiding the Bosnian Croats and Serbia supporting the Bosnian Serbs.

On September 26, 1992, the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo against all of former Yugoslavia, hoping to end the Bosnian conflict quickly by cutting off the means of conflict.<sup>57</sup> However, the embargo instead locked in the military advantage of Croatia and especially Serbia over Bosnia, which had not prepared militarily for the war before it broke out and, unlike Serbia and Croatia, did not have easy access to black market arms. The United States favored lifting the embargo to reduce this disadvantage for the Bosnian Muslims. The international community, particularly European nations and NATO, militarily intervened later in the conflict. UNPROFOR maintained a presence on the ground, but not a particularly effective one in light of the Srebrenica massacre. NATO and the United States played a key role in the peace process and reconstruction. However, for the purposes of understanding the course of the war, it is essential to understand that Bosnia was awash in small arms from before the outbreak of the conflict, though small arms distribution was by no measure equitable.

### **Human Insecurities**

#### *Theoretical Constructs*

The Human Security approach to the war in Bosnia explains the demand for small arms as resulting from insecurities. Human security scholars concur on broad themes of what constitutes an insecurity. Taylor Owen forges a definition of human security from

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 296.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 198.

two compatible descriptions, concluding that “human security is the protection of the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive, economic, food, health, personal and political threats.”<sup>58</sup> The “personal” threat includes violence against one’s person. If secure access to protection from all these threats cannot be provided, the population’s vital interests remain at risk. In addition to these threats, or perhaps encompassed by some of them, is the threat to identity, which I will discuss later in greater detail. Each of these threats affects mortality<sup>59</sup>, livelihood<sup>60</sup> and, to put it in broad terms, peace of mind.<sup>61</sup>

Human security, unlike other security paradigms, focuses on human beings, either in groups or as individuals, as the unit of analysis. Although it represents a small change in phrasing, this focus differs dramatically from the dominant, national security paradigm. The national security paradigm regards nation-states as the unit of analysis, concentrating on the actions and relationships between states. However, as should be evident in the example the former Yugoslavia, states do not consistently act as a single unit. Many groups, and in particular ethnic groups, may comprise a state; Bosnia is an instance of this point. Precisely because of the emphasis on individuals and groups as actors, the human security paradigm, rather than national security, best explains the suffering in Bosnia and the resulting demand for small arms.

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<sup>58</sup> Owen, 383.

<sup>59</sup> Mortality here refers to the death rate amongst a population, in particular the population exposed to human insecurities.

<sup>60</sup> By livelihood, I refer to the means by which a person manages to survive. These means might be a profession, help from a family member or guardian, remittances from abroad, etc. A loss of these means to survive, while perhaps not directly injuring or killing a person, is certainly a proximate cause of harm, and therefore constitutes an insecurity.

<sup>61</sup> I choose to include this broad term, peace of mind, because there is an unquantifiable element to many threats. People often feel threatened by abstract concepts, such as identity, that may have concrete ramifications for them, and which certainly can elicit concrete responses. By using the term “peace of mind,” I hope to avoid dismissing threats that weigh heavily on certain people and populations but that may not be considered a direct threat to life or livelihood.

While human security has not garnered the same attention as national security, the insecurities it describes have nonetheless caused an abhorrent amount of suffering. Each year, thousands of adults and especially children die of preventable causes, including malaria, diarrhea, and malnutrition, or succumb to diseases resulting from weakness related to these conditions. Unsuccessful education systems perpetuate poverty throughout the developing world, often leaving women and girls at an even greater disadvantage than their male counterparts. Inadequate sanitation, particularly clean water, poses health risks. Poor economic policies produce unemployment rather than development and prosperity. Natural resources such as land, access to water, oil, or minerals often lead to conflict and civil war. Whereas civil wars may last years, complex emergencies involving chronic health, food, water, and economic crises often last decades and incrementally debilitate or kill exponentially more victims.

Individuals as well as entire nations experience fear as a result of any threat, be it physical or psychological, and too often these threats accompany violence. Johann Galtung distinguishes between structural violence and direct violence, though both can result from human insecurities. Galtung's concept of structural violence, the "unintended harms done to human beings, as a process, working slowly as the way misery in general, and hunger in particular, erode and finally kill human beings,"<sup>62</sup> describes a systematic means of violence entrenched in a social structure. Structural violence encompasses the harm done as a result of health, food, economic, education and resource insecurities, like those described above that affect millions worldwide. Structural violence, which unlike direct violence is not "an easy focus of attention,"<sup>63</sup> is the more insidious of the two.

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<sup>62</sup> Johann Galtung, "Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1985): 145.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 146.



Direct violence, according to Galtung, “is intended, usually quick and for that reason easily discovered since the person who was very much alive a second ago is now dead,”<sup>64</sup> whereas structural violence tends not to provoke such a forceful reaction. Structural violence accompanies socioeconomic and political inequities. It entails a lack of representation in a governing body, or insufficient access to food, health care, education and other services that might threaten lives or livelihoods. And while mortality may not necessarily or directly result from structural violence, it does correspond to instability and human insecurities as defined above.

The extensive attention paid to direct violence gives it perhaps an inflated importance in international relations. As Galtung argues, “violence is violence [...], regardless of how it is exercised; quickly or slowly, intended or not.”<sup>65</sup> Paul Roe remarks that discussions on the security dilemma, the typical means of analyzing conflict, “have thus far largely failed to take into account non-military concerns”<sup>66</sup> such as those entailed in structural violence. Long neglect and failure to recognize the importance of human insecurities causes them to linger and worsen, resulting in broader, more entrenched structural violence. Sadly, and perhaps resulting from chronic inattention to these insecurities, structural violence often gives way to direct violence.

Roe, however, attempts to reconcile the traditional security dilemma with the pressing need to address human insecurities. Roe adapts the security dilemma to civil conflict, identifying three types: the ‘tight’ security dilemma, the ‘regular’ security dilemma, and the ‘loose’ security dilemma. In a ‘tight’ security dilemma, “two (or more) actors with *compatible security requirements* misperceive the nature of their relationship

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Paul Roe, *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma*. (New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2005): 41.

and thus employ countermeasures based on an illusory compatibility.”<sup>67</sup> Because in this dilemma, conflict results from a misperception and therefore is easily rectified, long-term conflict does not often ensue. Roe distinguishes between a ‘regular’ security dilemma and a ‘loose’ security dilemma on the basis of the primary goal of the behavior. Actors within the security dilemma “can neatly be split into two types: ‘security-seekers’ and ‘power-seekers.’”<sup>68</sup> A ‘regular’ security dilemma consists of two or more actors attempting to protect their interests, as ‘security-seekers’. Human security theory incorporates potential economic, health, food, and personal securities, the assurance of which entails resources and spatial territory. Because of this need for natural resources and a physical space to exist, “the [‘regular’] security dilemma has the potential to occur precisely because incentives exist for security-seekers to expand” territorially.<sup>69</sup> Roe admits that “the way to security may very well be through war itself (expansionist policies).”<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, a ‘loose’ security dilemma motivates power-seeking behavior. While the distinction between security-seeking and power-seeking behavior can, in practice, be difficult to verify because of its reliance on intention, power-seeking behavior accounts for otherwise inexplicable defensive or offensive actions in civil conflict. The choice between offense and defense, and the balance between the two, can indicate power-seeking behavior. Offensive territorial expansion, which may seem unprovoked, may result from threats to human security that go unnoticed. However, in the absence of threats to human security, offensive territorial expansion may indicate power-seeking, rather than security-seeking behavior. While “some scholars [feel] a

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 17. .

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 21.

loose security dilemma is not a security dilemma at all” because it incorporates intended consequences rather than unintended ones, Roe points out that the “threefold typology enables the observer to account for both power-seeking and security-seeking behaviour,”<sup>71</sup> an advantage that becomes particularly important when accounting for the economic benefits of war.

### *Insecurity in Bosnia*

Human security theory explains the demand for small arms in Bosnia as the product of insecurities in the environment. Roe and others emphasize identity as the primary form of insecurity, and I agree that it is generally the focal point around which tensions escalated. However, other forms of insecurity existed well before small arms come into the picture. As discussed previously, Bosnia entered the war in a politically unstable and economically disadvantaged period. Bosnia-Herzegovina remained one of the poorest of the Yugoslav republics throughout the communist era. In 1981, its GNP was 35% below Yugoslavia’s average.<sup>72</sup> In 1989, Bosnia’s GDP per capita was \$11, 424, whereas Croatia’s GDP per capita was nearly double that number and Slovenia’s GDP per capita was triple Bosnia’s.<sup>73</sup> The bulk of Bosnia’s economy relied on iron ore, coal and lignite, and Bosnia provided 40% of Yugoslavia’s industrial production as of 1990.<sup>74</sup> The economy also relied on the location of the Yugoslav defense industry within its borders as a source of economic growth.<sup>75</sup> As Slack and Doron point out, “the Bosnian economy would therefore appear to have tended toward low wage and primary activity,

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>72</sup> Burg and Shoup, 45.

<sup>73</sup> J. Andrew Slack and Roy R. Doron, “Population Dynamics and Susceptibility for Ethnic Conflict: the Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina ” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 2 (March 2001): 147. Author cited the source of this data as: *Statistical Yearbook of Yugoslavia 1991*: 442, 475.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>75</sup> Burg and Shoup, 43.

rendering it a ‘peripheral’ economy to Yugoslavia’s ‘core’.”<sup>76</sup> This existence as a ‘peripheral’ economy left Bosnians vulnerable to economic insecurities, with relatively low-paying jobs compared to their neighbors and little prospect of improvement.

Unlike Slovenia and Croatia, two of the richest Yugoslav republics, Bosnia had little viability as a state as a result of its lack of economic resources. Bosnians’ economic insecurities, enforced dependence on the rest of Yugoslavia for support. It was therefore against Bosnia’s best interest to secede from Yugoslavia; Bosnia lacked the economic resources or potential to prosper as its own state, and therefore many Bosnians expressed a desire to remain part of Yugoslavia. However, with Serbia increasingly asserting dominance and control, the (largely Muslim) Bosnian government felt pressured into secession despite the economic dangers, simply because Serbia and its nationalist factions intimidated them. The government feared that it could no longer peacefully co-exist with Serbia and most of the remaining republics. Thus, in spite of economic insecurities, Bosnia chose to secede.

The fall of Yugoslavia, already long in motion by the time the Bosnian conflict broke out in 1992, created a tense atmosphere for political negotiations between parties. The process leading up to the dissolution of the Communist state, with Milošević’s maneuverings within the political realm already causing anxiety among all but those Serbs with nationalist ambitions, convinced Slovenia and Croatia to secede. Slovenia, the best prepared of the republics to break away, engaged in armed conflict with the remainder of Yugoslavia for a mere ten days before achieving its goal.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Slack and Doron, 147.

<sup>77</sup> Silber and Little, 155.

Croatia, however, faced a more difficult dilemma. Part of Milošević's nationalist strategy to create a state for greater-Serbia involved Serb control over the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA)<sup>78</sup>, which he surreptitiously achieved during his ascent to power. Serb dominance of the JNA put Croatia at a military disadvantage at the beginning of the war, since Yugoslav forces remained almost entirely in tact after Croats left, while Croatia itself needed to organize its own forces. Croatia was forced to obtain weapons and gain expertise quickly, or perish as an independent state. Additionally, although Croatia had long planned to secede concurrently with Slovenia, the new Croatian government had not adequately prepared for secession logistically or politically, and therefore faced greater difficulty in combating the JNA. The Croatian war therefore lasted significantly longer than that with Slovenia, setting a precedent (or an ominous portent) for the violence to come. These two conflicts, though territorially external to Bosnia, posed a threat to the human security of its population. The violence was spatially near, causing anxiety among Bosnians, particularly near the borders. The proximity of violence constituted a personal threat to Bosnians' physical well-being.

The roots of the conflict stemmed from the same doubts Bosnia itself faced. The violence was a political threat to Bosnia because the wars were, in such a large part, political and waged within the same political system in which Bosnia existed. At a time when Bosnia weighed the merits of remaining a part of Yugoslavia or seceding as Slovenia and Croatia had done, the insecurity they already faced had extreme and tangible consequences for their neighbors. Bosnia's ability to take political decisions without the influence of intimidation was compromised by the looming threat of the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 65.

repercussions of one decision over another. The JNA, as well as the Serbian political factions controlling it, constituted a political threat to Bosnia.

However, an internal political threat also existed. Serbs in Croatia during secession felt that “if Croatia were to declare its independence, then Serbs of Croatia should enjoy the right to secede from Croatia and choose their own political destiny. The recourse to arms, therefore, seemed to many Serbs of Croatia to be a logical necessity and an act of defense.”<sup>79</sup> The reaction of Serbs in Bosnia was, if anything, stronger. Bosnian Serbs became increasingly and vocally anxious about the prospect of Bosnian independence, stirred by the nationalism of their neighbors. Bosnian Serbs felt threatened by a Bosnian state in which they would exist as an ethnic and political minority and, following the example of Serbia and Serbs in Croatia, objected to any hint of secession. The Bosnian Muslim leader, Alija Izetbegović, found his party in a difficult situation: while the prospect of remaining in a Yugoslav federation where Serb populations made up the majority frightened Muslim Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs refused to accept a position as a minority in an independent Bosnia. They formed the Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka Bosne i Hercegovine*, SDS) to counter the influence of the Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka Demoratske Akcije*, SDA), led by Izetbegović. Parties briefly discussed the idea of a largely autonomous Bosnia within a Serbia-Montenegro federation, but Izetbegović soon abandoned the idea as “a betrayal of and surrender of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Greater Serbia.”<sup>80</sup> Silber and Little emphasize that even if the initiative had garnered support, the proposed solution would have failed without addressing the root problems in Bosnia.<sup>81</sup> Bosnian Croats, feeling that they too

<sup>79</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006): 390-391.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 426.

<sup>81</sup> Silber and Little, 236.

would be left out of the political process if they did not assert themselves, began agitating to join the rest of Croatia.<sup>82</sup> Political insecurities affected nearly every group in Bosnia: the Serb population wanted to join the growing movement empowering Serbian nationalism and the concept of Greater Serbia rather than existing as an endangered minority; Croats similarly saw an opportunity to melt into the majority population of the newly independent Croatia, also avoiding minority status; and Bosnian Muslims, who had always existed as a minority and were fearful of losing territory and sovereignty (or even their lives), were willing to risk attacks from their neighbors rather than give up what they saw as their solitary chance for nationhood.

These political threats created a ‘regular’ security dilemma for Bosnia. Roe describes a ‘regular’ security dilemma, quoting Snyder and Jervis, as “a situation in which security is the overriding objective of all the protagonists, yet attempts by one party to increase its security reduce the security of others.”<sup>83</sup> Bosnia certainly appears to fit this profile in 1991. As discussed above, each party (Muslim, Serb and Croat) felt that the necessary actions to protect its own security, both political and personal, were inherently incompatible and mutually exclusive to the security aims of the other two groups. As security-seeking actors, they believed that only violence could protect them from the actions of others. However, the seemingly monolithic nationalism of each group belies the fact that this view of incompatible security aims was not a universally accepted position.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>83</sup> Roe, 3. Quoted from J. Snyder and R. Jervis, “Civil War and the Security Dilemma”, in B. Walter and J. Snyder (eds), *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 15.

Instead, the Bosnian elections in 1990 “were in fact internally politically fragmented” among ethnic groups.<sup>84</sup> Although Serb and Croat nationalist parties attracted the most attention, moderate factions existed within both populations as well. Muslim parties also desired a more moderate solution, and the majority of the Bosnian population overall wished to avoid war. Burg and Shoup describe the emergence of “two other major parties [that] adopted non-nationalist positions and attempted to appeal across ethnic boundaries on the basis of liberal ideals,” which included the preservation of Yugoslavia.<sup>85</sup> And while the population in 1991 self-identified as 43.7% Muslim, 31.4% Serb and 17.3% Croat,<sup>86</sup> preserving Yugoslavia was “a preference supported by over 69 percent of the respondents in a public opinion survey conducted in the republic in June 1990.”<sup>87</sup> Support for a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, in other words, cut across ethnic lines. Ethnic identity did not yet represent the leading factor in decisions, but instead surfaced later as the primary motivation for conflict.

However, after 1990 the national mood swung to support secession. Bosnian Muslims began to support leaving Yugoslavia, while Bosnian Serbs and Croats simultaneously began to support leaving Bosnia. Before the war in Croatia, “all Bosnian parties with the exception of the radical wing of the HDZ [the Croat nationalist party in Croatia] opposed the breakup of Yugoslavia.”<sup>88</sup> The outbreak of war in Croatia, however, catalyzed the security-seeking behavior of all parties and created a schism

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<sup>84</sup> Burg and Shoup, 48.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 27. The sources identified within Burg and Shoup for this data were: Shoup, *The East European and Soviet Data Handbook*, Table C-1, p.156; Bogosavljević, “Bosnia i Hercegovina u ogledalu statistike,” pp. 34 and 37; Atif Purivatra, *Jugoslavenska Muslimanska Organizacija*, p. 515; and Savezni Zavod za Statistiku (SZS), “Nacionalni sastav stanovništva opštinama,” *Statistički Bilten broj 1934* (Belgrad: SZS, 1992), p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 70.



based on ethnic identity. The Bosnian parties therefore can be characterized as facing a 'regular' security dilemma: external developments (namely, war in Croatia) increased the perceived insecurities and catapulted Bosnia toward violence. It is important to bear in mind, though, that the situation in Croatia had not shifted dramatically. Roe maintains that while Tudjman, the Croat political leader, appears to have felt genuinely threatened by Serb political dominance, "the [Serb] regime in Zagreb was arguably revisionist (power-seeking) in its stance towards the maintenance of the Yugoslav Federation."<sup>89</sup> The Serbian government, specifically Milošević, may have faced a 'loose' security dilemma, wherein territorial ambitions resulted from a power-seeking attitude rather than a security-seeking approach. This power-seeking behavior does not necessarily, or even probably, extend beyond Milošević and his regime.

Direct violence, like that which broke out in Bosnia as a result of insecurities faced in the 'regular' security dilemma, requires ammunition, both literally and figuratively. The figurative ammunition, as discussed, is often the structural violence or political and personal insecurities that existed. However, the literal ammunition, and particularly the small arms in which they are used, represent a single, but noteworthy, link in the long chain of causation between the underlying problem and the suffering it creates. The presence of human insecurities provokes instability and fear, prompting a reaction in individuals and ultimately a larger group. The impulse to protect oneself with whatever means necessary is a familiar instinct; the urge to choose small arms to do so only serves as testament to the serious nature of the threat or insecurity.

As a result of the political, personal, and even economic insecurities faced by all parties involved, various factions within Bosnia began to arm themselves, before or

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<sup>89</sup> Roe, 101.

during the war. Part of Milošević's strategic control over the JNA included bolstering fire power outside of the official army: "Serbian documents seized by the Bosnian Army show that the JNA began organizing Bosnian Serb civilians into militias and arming the as early as September or October 1990."<sup>90</sup> By March 1991, "the JNA had already distributed nearly 52,000 firearms to Serb volunteer units and individuals" and "23,298 weapons to members of the SDS [Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka Bosne i Hercegovine*)]."<sup>91</sup> Bosnian Serbs accepted these weapons willingly, and some in fact clamored for them. Their desperation to counteract or ward off the threats to their political and personal security eventually led them to resort to violence. The heightening tensions between ethnic groups, based largely on the acceleration of economic, personal and political insecurities, fostered this growing demand for small arms.

### **Identity and Insecurity**

#### *Theoretical Constructs*

While human insecurities as a whole drove the demand for SALW during the Bosnian war, threats to identity represented the greatest divide and certainly attracted the most attention during the conflict. Due to the notorious ethnic schisms surrounding the ensuing violence, the concept of identity is essential to understanding conflict in the Balkans. Identity theory outlines the conceptualization of the 'Other', particularly relevant in the case of Bosnia. The emergence of the designated Other group accompanies what Campbell terms Foreign Policy,<sup>92</sup> or the relationship between the self and the Other. Identity lies at the root of this relationship.

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<sup>90</sup> Ramet, 414.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Revised ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998): 71

The construction of identity and the development of ‘otherness’ are complementary processes that both prove extremely relevant in the Bosnian context and the demand for SALW. According to postmodernist theory, meaning derives from the perception of difference. Because each actor reacts to stimuli as if his perception is reality, perception in fact creates the reality of the environment. David Campbell argues that there can be “no declaration about the nature of the self that is totally free of suppositions about the other.”<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, because the “logic of identity requires difference, the potential for transformation of difference into otherness always exists.”<sup>94</sup> The conceptual Other is often characterized as what the self is not, and this perception of difference creates a reality in which an actual Other exists. The concept of the Other reflects what one deems important about the self. The self then develops beyond just an individual, but a group with the same prioritized characteristics. Repetition breeds definition, and as the system of interactions between the self and the Other progresses with each exchange, these suppositions (or perceptions) harden and eventually become reality.

The construction of the Other also involves dividing objects amongst the groups, designating possessions and boundaries between what belongs to the self group and the Other. People instinctively protect their own group and defend what the group possesses. Additionally, the poststructuralist concept of identity incorporates a geographic space component particularly pertinent to the Balkans. As Gallaher<sup>95</sup> explains, “the construction of spaces of identity [...] may be reinforced by its material imprint on the

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Gallaher writes on the Kentucky citizen’s militia movements, citing identity as the most relevant political question. Gallaher describes the participants in the militia movement as facing a crucial choice between self-identifying with their socioeconomic group or with their racial group. During the dissolution of Yugoslavia, as I will describe later, Bosnians faced a similar choice.

ground.”<sup>96</sup> Identity becomes associated with territory, and control over that geographic space. Identification of aspects of the self, including what belongs to the self and its group, becomes a definition of otherness. By its very nature, otherness threatens the identity of the self, indicating that “danger is inherent to that relationship” between the self and the other.<sup>97</sup> The relationship between the self and the Other derives from the definition of the self and the reified perception of external threat. Campbell describes the strategy for pursuing this relationship as Foreign Policy.

According to Campbell, “Foreign Policy is concerned with the reproduction of an unstable identity at the level of the state, and the containment of knowledge that challenges that identity,” potentially leading to coercive containment.<sup>98</sup> Baldwin more delicately posits that “individuals and nation-states are sometimes insecure about their identities, and they sometimes adopt policies to cope with this insecurity.”<sup>99</sup> Campbell’s definition of Foreign Policy certainly collaborates this statement. Similar to other human insecurities, identity threats produce fear and elicit efforts to protect against the Other. Campbell adds that “the practices that impose boundaries and establish meaning through a reading of ambiguity [...] usually locate the dangers to ‘man’ in terms of threats emerging from other domestic societies.” The perceived insecurities and dangers inherent in the Other create an environment where self-preservation dominates the relationship. Groups seek to secure resources and territory for this purpose. The conclusion that “space is crucial for oppressed groups who find ‘common places’ necessary for personal

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<sup>96</sup> Carolyn Gallaher, *On the Fault Line: Race, Class, and the American Patriot Movement* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005): 33.

<sup>97</sup> Campbell, 81.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>99</sup> David A. Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1 (1997): 23.

safety”<sup>100</sup> indicates that preserving identity, or protecting one’s group against perceived threats, may precipitate violence if the threat seems imminent.

Campbell speaks of “the location of threats in the external realm,” but recognizes that “the sovereign domain [...] is as much a site of ambiguity and indeterminacy as the anarchic realm it is distinguished from.”<sup>101</sup> Even within a group, there exists a desire to enforce homogeneity, to protect from those who may deviate from the defining attributes of the group. This attempt to maintain homogeneity often manifests itself in medical terms, and it is “the degree of tightness, the measure of strictness, and the extent of the desire for purity that constitute danger as dirt or disease.”<sup>102</sup> Psychologically, describing the Other in terms that render them unnatural or a threat to health makes the act of committing violence against the Other more palatable. When described in terms of health, the Other (which has been derived from the sense of self) becomes a threat to one’s own human security. One pertinent example of representing the Other, or the enemy, as unnatural or diseased is the term ‘ethnic cleansing’. The term implies that the presence of another ethnicity taints and defiles the purity of one’s own existence.

Roe applies the tight, regular and loose typology to the societal security dilemma, which “occurs when the actions that groups take to secure their identity cause reactions in others, which, in the end, leave all parties less secure.”<sup>103</sup> In a societal security dilemma, “the majority dominates, while minority groups struggle to maintain or improve their position, and thus their level of security, within the state.”<sup>104</sup> Despite the primarily

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<sup>100</sup> Gallaher, 33.

<sup>101</sup> Campbell, 63.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>103</sup> Roe, 73.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 72.

political context of this dilemma, however, “societal identity can be defended using military means,” particularly when “identity is linked to territory.”<sup>105</sup>

### *Identity in Bosnia*

Ethnic identity in Bosnia is the product of centuries of foreign domination favoring one group over another, sectarian religious separations, varying political activism, and socioeconomic divisions. Language, interestingly, was common to all groups. The perception of difference fomenting the designation of self and Other led to a long-standing Foreign Policy between groups. The war in Bosnia follows almost exactly the process Roe describes in a societal security dilemma. While ethnic identities existed long before the fall of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of war, the primary identity depended on socioeconomic status: from the peasant-feudal lord dichotomy during the years of foreign domination, to the Communist emphasis on universal equality, people identified best with their socioeconomic class. Ethnic identity persisted, but based on the human security threats enumerated above, ethnic schisms were not the logical choice for factional divisions in violent conflict.

As should be evident from the prominent reference to ethnic identity throughout the Bosnian war, however, identity insecurities turned out to be the pivotal threat around which armed factions formed. The population legitimately felt threatened by the majority (in this case, Serb) group’s attempts at “preservation of the privileged (political) status and the maintenance of ‘national unity’,”<sup>106</sup> but the political establishment exploited and magnified these threats. As in Roe’s loose societal security dilemma, identity threats were heightened by rhetoric rather than security-seeking behavior by any group. As the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 72.

concept of Greater Serbia took hold, Milošević and his regime manipulated nationalist fears to the point that societal insecurity provoked a military response.

The ethnic cleansing campaigns began almost immediately during the war. The term invoked the desire to purify territory and identity, but also implied that territory and identity had been contaminated. This perception had not generally existed prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. While conflict had taken place during World War II and the Ustaše, inspired by the Nazis, had sought to purify the Croat race, past violence had been against oppressive foreign regimes or, as in World War II, between rival factions like the Partisans and the Chetniks. Even at the height of nationalist sentiment before World War I, when ethnic identities obviously existed, violence committed by Serbs, Croats or Muslims was rarely directed against any of the other ethnic groups. Therefore, another factor led to the ethnic orientation of violence after the fall of Yugoslavia. This factor was the manipulation of nationalist rhetoric by various political leaders.

### **The Greed Argument**

The final component of demand for small arms derives largely from Paul Collier's 'greed argument',<sup>107</sup> which state that conflict stems primarily from an economic agenda. The greed argument remains contingent upon a core group of individuals acting in their economic interest, regardless of the detriment to others. Although I am loathe to attribute conflict in general and the Bosnian ethnic cleansing campaign in particular to such base motives as profit or power, Collier makes several key observations that further explain not only the conflict but the demand for small arms as well. The economic incentives of the small arms trade fit within Collier's construct of greed in conflict, as well as the

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<sup>107</sup> Although the inclusion of the word 'greed' in Collier's theory makes conflict seem more sinister than tragic, and more a contrivance than a last resort, out of respect for the work he dedicated to his study I have chosen to refer to his theory by the name he gave it.

hierarchical structure in which conflict took place. Therefore, while Collier's argument does not perfectly explain all aspects of the Bosnian war, some of its components do enhance understanding of the arms trade and the reasons for demand of small arms.

Collier's argument rests on the premise that those benefiting from violence "create narratives of grievance [that] play much better than narratives of greed," and use these narratives of grievance to convince others to perpetuate conflict.<sup>108</sup> As a result, in conflict regions "there is likely to be an increase in criminality,"<sup>109</sup> at which time "opportunistic businessmen, criminals, traders, and the rebel organizations themselves" are able to "do well out of war."<sup>110</sup> While many portions of the population suffer legitimate grievances, in the form of the human insecurities previously enumerated, Collier argues that the incidence of rebellion or civil war corresponds more closely to economic agendas than these grievances. Instead, political and economic leaders capitalized on these grievances, or insecurities, to encourage the population to rebel.

Collier begins his analysis of civil conflict with the identification of three proxies, with which he attempts to "capture the notion of an economic agenda."<sup>111</sup> The first proxy he lists, primary export commodities, represents the availability of resources that can be plundered during a conflict. Such unprocessed resources prove difficult to trace back to a point of origin and therefore more attractive to smugglers who speak with the assurance that they will not be caught. The second proxy, the proportion of young men in a society, gains importance in a conflict because these young men compose the armies that commit violence. Young men face an opportunity cost when choosing to join a

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<sup>108</sup> Paul Collier, "Doing Well out of War" in *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War*, ed. Mats Berdal and David M. Malone. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2000): 92.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 103-4.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 93.



rebellion or not: they can retain their ordinary livelihoods or become soldiers. Collier argues that they choose the more profitable and sustainable option. However, if young men are prevalent in a society, they likely face higher unemployment rates and the choice becomes much simpler for them. Collier observes that “the greater the proportion of young men, the easier it would be to recruit rebels.”<sup>112</sup> The third and final proxy, education in a society, relates to employment opportunities as well. Higher education opens a wider range of employment options, while a lack of education decreases the opportunity costs of joining a rebellion.

Collier contrasts these indicators of an economic agenda with the proxies of grievance narratives, which he lists as ethnic or religious hatred, economic inequality, lack of political rights, and government economic incompetence. His analysis of global conflict used both economic proxies and grievance proxies to predict the occurrence of civil war. To his surprise, “the results overwhelmingly point to the importance of economic agendas as opposed to grievance.”<sup>113</sup> While legitimate grievances, including those Collier lists, do exist, his results demonstrate that they do not accurately predict violence. He postulates that the free-rider problem often prevents rebellions based on legitimate grievance from taking place: most, if not all, citizens would benefit from justice, prosperity, and tolerance; but the costs of rebellion (including harm or death to self and family) remain a significant obstacle to participation. In an economic- or greed-based conflict, however, rebels can restrict benefits to participants, thereby foregoing the free rider problem and attracting more active participants.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 100-101.

These findings regarding profit motive indicate that black markets gain importance during conflict, which has held true in civil wars around the world. Collier suggests that civil wars present profitable opportunities for four main reasons: life becomes less predictable, the risks for criminal behavior decline, markets become disrupted (breaking down competition), and rent-seeking predation increases where there is no meaningful oversight of rebel or government behavior. As a result, a monopolistic, criminal black market in any number of goods arises, and both rebels and government forces participate with impunity. In the same vein, Keen argues “that the ‘end’ is to engage in abuses or crimes that bring immediate rewards, whereas the ‘means’ is war and the perpetuation of war,” particularly in weak states.<sup>115</sup> The concept of a weak state remains key to the rise of black markets, which thrive on a state’s inability to enforce rules.

Small arms present a crucial commercial opportunity for the black market in most civil wars. Since small arms have little use outside of conflict zones and a great deal of use inside them, SALW are imported as quickly and in as great a quantity as possible. The primary export commodities that Collier identified as a proxy for an economic agenda often become the currency to purchase small arms. The demand for small arms therefore results from economic opportunism in conflict, not only because those in power often run the profitable black markets that bring small arms into the country, but because, as Collier suggests, leaders may instigate conflict in order to create these opportunities for profit.

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<sup>115</sup> David Keen, “Incentives and Disincentives of Violence” in *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War*, ed. Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000): 29.

Collier's argument neglects to address several of the reasons for conflict, which in turn contribute to the demand for SALW. Even as it convincingly explains missing components of demand, however, Collier underemphasizes the legitimate grievances of the population and reduces conflict to the insatiability of political leaders. He fails to account for the underlying reasons for conflict (as well as the reasons for demand of small arms) and instead focuses only on the immediate motivations of corrupt leaders. Passing mention of economic, political and personal grievances and questions of identity detracts from the importance of these insecurities: without some legitimate impetus conflict and (at least initial) support from the population, no rebellion or civil conflict would meet with success. Grievance does not excuse violence, but failing to recognize the force of these grievances can only pave the way for future conflict.

When put into the context of a security dilemma, Collier's greed argument fits well with Roe's definition of the security dilemma. The concept of a 'loose' security dilemma incorporates and explains the power-seeking behavior, which Collier ascribes to greed, involved in civil wars and the black market. The designation of power, rather than security, as a motivating factor in conflict better encompasses individual actions in a civil war. Economic incentives, while part of the allure of power, need not be the sole motive for beginning a civil war.

### *Bosnia*

Bosnia-Herzegovina exhibits Collier's three proxy indicators of economic agendas in civil wars, but to varying degrees. Bosnia depended on industry and mining for its wealth long before the fall of Yugoslavia. Its primary export commodities consisted of iron ore, coal and lignite, but the republic was also the site of defense-industry production. No faction performed significant looting of these resources during

the conflict, however, and therefore this proxy does not hold as much significance for the Bosnian conflict. The proportion of young men and the lack of education, on the other hand, did play a role. Young men joined armies in droves, and data from 1981 shows that only 21.7% of the population aged 15 or older had completed secondary education, while only 4.3% had post-secondary education.<sup>116</sup> Importantly, though, the “level of development of the republic varied among its regions and, especially, between urban and rural areas.”<sup>117</sup> The rural areas, inhabited by Bosnian Serbs or Bosnian Croats, remained less developed. Unemployment posed a persistent problem in Bosnia.

The political establishment in Serbia, with Milošević at its head, regularly acted in favor of an expanded Serbia, but not necessarily in the best interests of the ethnic Serb population. Milošević often made decisions without consulting Bosnian Serb leaders and circumvented their demands when negotiating with foreign powers. In fact, most Yugoslav citizens had not considered identity a current, credible threat until Milošević’s speech at Kosovo Polje.<sup>118</sup> During the time of the conflicts, the disintegrating Yugoslavia and the newly-formed Bosnia-Herzegovina certainly constituted weak states, and the abundance of organized crime bolsters Keen’s argument that war is the means of achieving immediate rewards. Smugglers increasingly moved goods (everything from food supplies, clothes, and luxuries, to fuel, rifles, and mines) into even the most violent conflict area, circumventing UN arms embargoes and siege armies. In fact, not even identity concerns, the designated reasons for the conflict, deterred smuggling. For

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<sup>116</sup> Burg and Shoup, 43.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Many Serbs in Kosovo, the province where Kosovo Polje is located, did feel threatened by a growing Albanian presence. Milošević had been sent by the Communist leadership, confident in its ability to control the mob, to assuage these concerns and convince the riotous population that Albanians did not pose a threat. Instead, Milošević adopted the crowd’s nationalist rhetoric and elevated their complaints to the national level.

example, “at certain critical moments during the war in Bosnia, the war effort of the Bosnian Serb Army was heavily dependent on the supply of fuel from Croat forces;” the two armies were engaged in conflict at the time.<sup>119</sup> This practice “not only served to prolong the war but also offered rich earnings for ‘oil barons’ and various middlemen.”<sup>120</sup> The UN and Croatian arms embargoes locked in the military disadvantage for Bosnian Muslim forces, who compensated for this lack of arms by smuggling in new ones, through Hungary and other routes.<sup>121</sup>

Not only smugglers and arms traffickers benefited from the war in Bosnia, however. Political leaders, of whom Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević is the most prominent example, increasingly gained power as the conflict wore on. Milošević employed grievance narratives and nationalist rhetoric to incite violence and expand the territory he governed. He later faced a war crimes indictment by the ICTY for his unjustifiable actions.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, evidence has surfaced implicating Milošević himself in weapons trafficking rings and other forms of organized crime.<sup>123</sup>

Nationalist rhetoric based on fear of the Other and grievance narratives rooted in human insecurities perpetuated the conflict, causing countless deaths from ethnic cleansing but also clear material benefit to certain portions of the population. The demand for SALW again stems from this fear of the Other and persistent human insecurities, as discussed previously. However, a more insidious motive played a role in prompting violence as well. Arms traffickers, smugglers and many politicians gained

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<sup>119</sup> Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, “Introduction” in *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War*, ed. Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000): 5

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>121</sup> Silber and Little, 198.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 58.

<sup>123</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic, *Organized Crime in the Western Balkans*. HUMSEC: 2. Available at <[http://www.etc-graz.at/cms/fileadmin/user\\_upload/humsec/Workin\\_Paper\\_Series/Working\\_Paper\\_Anastasijevic.pdf](http://www.etc-graz.at/cms/fileadmin/user_upload/humsec/Workin_Paper_Series/Working_Paper_Anastasijevic.pdf)>.

enormously from the war in Bosnia. While their role in perpetuating the conflict, by supplying the means of violence and encouraging demand through active incitement, should not be considered the underlying reason for the Bosnian war itself or later insecurities, the greed argument and the loose security dilemma certainly explain part of the demand for small arms.

### **Policy and Conclusions**

These three reasons, insecurities, identity and insatiability, play specific and complementary roles in the demand for small arms. Despite the prominence of identity tensions in the Bosnian war, human insecurities, specifically economic, political and personal threats, served as the main impetus for the demand for small arms and best explain the ensuing violence. International attention has focused on identity threats as the reason for demand because each side obviously committed acts of violence based on the ethnic identity of the opponent. However, the political machinations and power-seeking behavior of elite actors heightened ethnic tensions rather than attempt to resolve them. These actions implicate greed, for economic benefit or power, as the subtler culprit in the demand for small arms. The political elite, in conjunction with opportunistic entrepreneurs, fostered ethnic hatred and the demand for SALW. Nonetheless, the reasons for demand were not artificial, only misplaced: unscrupulous elites redirected the legitimate insecurities and fears of the population toward the designated Other instead of the underlying economic and political threats. Identity, while not an entirely superficial reason for demand in Bosnia, was augmented by greed and power-seeking behavior. Insecurity, without which insatiability would have been deflected, remains the best explanation of the demand for small arms.

Resolving the problem of cyclical conflict in the Balkans requires policies aimed not only toward retrieving and destroying SALW, but also concerns for the causes of demand for these weapons. Identity theory and the human security paradigm are particularly useful considerations in preventing future violence, especially considering the ethnic slant of the violence and the development challenges to the region as a whole. The greed argument, while useful more as a cautionary tale than a policy guideline, also informs debate on SALW. Although no policy can eliminate human desires for more wealth or power, awareness of their effects on conflict legitimate anti-corruption and anti-organized crime legislation that will benefit the country. The Bosnian conflict demonstrates that three broad policy considerations may deter future violence in the Balkans. First, society must deconstruct identity, reformulating the sense of self to include neighbors rather than its current construction based on ethnicity. Second, economic and political policies must strive to improve human security in the region, by bolstering rule of law, political representation, and economic stability. Finally, policies must combat greed, corruption and crime that currently run rampant throughout the Balkans. With these policy improvements and effective implementation, the demand for SALW and their use in violence conflicts will diminish.

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