

# Disproportional Complex States: Scotland and England in the United Kingdom and Slovenia and Serbia within Yugoslavia

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## ABSTRACT

This paper provides comparative study in the field of nationalism, political representation and identity politics. It provides comparative analysis of two cases; one in the United Kingdom during early 21<sup>st</sup> century and the other in Yugoslavia during late 1980s and early 1990s. The paper looks into issues of Scottish nationalism and the Scottish National Party in relation to an English Tory government in London and the Tory concept of "One Nation". The other case study is concerned with the situation in the former Yugoslavia where Slovenian separatism and their reformed communists took stand against tendencies coming from Serbia to dominate other members of the federation. The role of state is studied in relation to federal system and devolved unitary state. There is also insight into communist political system and liberal democracy. The paper seeks answers to questions whether a proper federal model might be a framework that could keep the United Kingdom together and whether constituent peoples, i.e., English and Scottish would actually be willing to accept this model? What does it mean for the processes of devolution and how further devolved Britain might look like in future? At the same time, the question is whether a status quo is an option? The answers are not directly offered but provided in the form of an analysis of historical precedent - relations of Slovenia and Serbia in 1980s and early 1990s.

**Keywords:** nationalism, majority, majoritarian, minority, disintegration, democracy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is reflecting academic curiosity and research into the field of nationalism, comparative politics, divided societies and European integrations in contemporary Europe. Referendums in Scotland in 2014 and in Catalonia in 2017 show that the idea of nation state is very strong in Europe despite the unprecedented processes of integration that undermined traditional understandings of nation-state, sovereignty and independence. These examples provide case-studies for study of nation, nationalism and liberal democracy. Exercise of popular political will in Scotland invited no violent reactions and proved the case for liberal democracies to solve its issues without violence. However, the Catalan case reinforced Weber's definition of state as entity with "the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence" but even this case reinforces the view that state while proving its legitimate right authorities actually hesitated to employ brutal force against nationalists.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to argue that while western European developments in 1990s offered possibly false belief of the end of traditional nation-state. During the same period states in Central and Eastern Europe offered examples of the strength of nation-state. The fall of communism brought down three communist federations and revived questions about the nation-state. Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia ceased to exist in early 1990s as citizens were offered for the first time, or at least

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<sup>1</sup> Weber, Max, "Politics of Vocation" available at: <http://polisci2.ucsd.edu/foundation/documents/03Weber1918.pdf> (accessed on 1 May 2018)

after half a century, opportunity to express their political will. This process resulted in nation-states.

Political elites in European developed liberal democracies, federations or devolved unitary states, managed to find *modus vivendi* for a continued existence of multi-ethnic states. While referendums during early 1990s in member republics of federal Yugoslavia returned overwhelming support for independence, results in Scotland show almost equally divided society. In Slovenia, for example, 94.8 percent of those participating cast their votes in favour of independence which was 88.5 percent of all eligible to vote. Only 6.5 percent of Slovenes eligible to vote did not cast their ballots.<sup>2</sup> The results in Croatia were only slightly less in favour of independence. Scottish referendum, however, brought defeat to the idea of independence with both camps attracting around half of electorate, 55.25 percent of voters rejecting independence and 44.65 percent supporting the idea. The turnout was 84.6 Percent with only 0.1 votes rejected for procedural reasons.<sup>3</sup>

This situation attracts several questions. Why voters produced so radically different results in Slovenia and Scotland? Was it the case of "illiberal referendums" as Dejan Jovic named all referendums leading to Yugoslav dissolution.<sup>4</sup> This paper is going to prove the importance of a lack of liberal atmosphere for the results of referendums. In addition, lack of democratic tradition and the misinterpretation of democratic procedures and means led to the state of dictatorship of majority. This was the direct result of democratisation of political spaces in Yugoslavia. Serbian nationalists, firstly in the form of communists, tried to impose majoritarian system which would lead to creation of dictatorship of majority masked in democratic forms of plebiscites and referenda under a motto of one member (of Communist League) or one citizen - one vote and impose themselves over other member nations in Yugoslavia.

<sup>2</sup> Alenka Starman and Jernej Križaj (authors of the exhibition), RAZSTAVA Arhiva Republike Slovenije ob 20. obletnici plebiscita za samostojno in neodvisno Republiko Slovenijo (Ljubljana, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> Official website of the Scottish referendum available at: <http://scotlandreferendum.info/> (accessed on 1st February 2017)

<sup>4</sup> Jovic, Dejan, Politicka misao (Political Thought) Zagreb, available at: <http://politickamisao.com/samo-u-mitovima-svaki-narod-zeli-drzavu-u-stvarnosti-ne/> (accessed 1 September 2015)

Developments in the United Kingdom since referendum on the European Union in 2016 or even since the elections in 2015 provide grounds to argue that the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom is attempting policies with certain similarities to this example. The referendum on 23 June was clearly decided by English majority. The question is could the complex state, federation or union, or even devolved state survive such policies? Is a developed stage of liberal democracy providing grounds strong enough to prevent violent stage dissolution? Two parties in Britain, Scottish National Party and Conservative Party argue for developing direct democracy will into state policies. Scottish nationalists lost their referendum but are claiming that changed circumstances are forcing them to hold another one. Referendums are being used in contemporary states, as Tierney argues, "to found new states; to create or radically change constitutions; to establish complex new models of sub-state autonomy; and to transfer sovereign powers from the state to international institutions."<sup>5</sup>

## 2. "ONE NATION" AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The idea of "One Nation" promoted in British public became expressed in stronger terms following the results of the 2015 elections with an obvious division in the society and within a "one nation". Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown felt the need to step in with a warning that "If the United Kingdom collapses, it will not be because a majority of Scots are hell-bent on leaving but because the UK government is giving up on saving it."<sup>6</sup>

Another issue that requires addressing is violence. Post-Yugoslav states were given birth in violent atmosphere. Post-Soviet states experienced reduced violence although some of them managed to avoid this experience. The creation of every single new state, however, cannot be studied without the consideration of an overall break-up of the federation. It was only Czechoslovakia that proved to be an exception to the rule of creating a state through violence. As Charles Till famously stated "Wars create

<sup>5</sup> Tierney, S. "Constitutional Referendums: A Theoretical Enquiry" in: *The Modern Law Review*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (May, 2009), p.360

<sup>6</sup> Gordon Brown, *The Guardian*, 12 June 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jun/12/gordon-brown-uk-on-life-support-as-conservatives-play-the-english-card>, accessed on 1 September 2015

states and states create wars".<sup>7</sup> People of Czechoslovakia were not offered a referendum and therefore the case study for this research paper has to be found in the state that exercised the power of checking popular will and consequently experienced violence in the process of creating new state. Therefore Slovenia is the perfect case study.

It is also necessary to consider roles of elites in popular politics. Democracies could be described as such because political processes provide citizens with the final say. However, dissolved communist federations provide observes with diverse outcomes of citizens involvement in crucial decisions for the survival of state. Political elites in Yugoslav republics called upon people to justify elitist political behaviour advocating independence. The people dully provided them with legitimacy for next steps. Czechoslovak elites never asked their citizens to legitimize the idea of two separate nation-states and this was acceptable to the people. Citizens of the Soviet Union participated in the referendum in 1991 on survival of a form of the union. Six republics did not participate in this exercise of popular will; Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, but 80 percent of the voters in the rest of the Soviet Union voted in the referendum where 77.8 percent were in favour of preservation of the union.<sup>8</sup> However, the elites in crucial Soviet republics changed their minds and the union was dissolved at the end of the year.

Thus it is clear that political elites could behave in very diverse ways with regards to their interpretation and understanding of democracy and popular will. The voters can be consulted and listened to, they can be asked for the opinion and consequently ignored or they can be ignored in the whole process of state dissolution. The most poignant conclusion is that whatever the procedure there is no guarantee of the outcome of political behaviour of the elites. There is no clear pattern established for creation of new states in Europe and every case might be considered as unique. Tierney offers argument that "constitutional referendums implicate what is perhaps the central relationship within constitutional democracy - that

between constituent power and constitutional form."<sup>9</sup> It is worth considering, though, empirical evidence in recent history to develop the understanding.

Serbs were dominant nation in federal Yugoslavia and towards its end they managed to impose their domination over several federal institutions. The federal army was crucially one of them and was ordered to quash Slovene expression of a will for independence which was attempted by violent means. The Scottish referendum produced result that was not in favour of the break-up and no violence followed this process. The dominant nation in the United Kingdom are English and one could see beginnings of political conflict in the UK. The elections of May 2015 returned 53 Scottish National Party members to Westminster Parliament out of the total of 56 coming from Scotland. The dominant party in the UK and primarily only in England is Conservative Party. The ideologies of the two parties are radically different. Therefore a comparative study of the popular behaviour in four nations – Scotland and England, and Slovenia and Serbia – should lead to some answers in the study of political party behaviour and popular attitudes in liberal democracies, i.e., United Kingdom, and firstly communist federation, i.e. Yugoslavia, and later state with authoritarian tendencies. It is a problem to clearly define Yugoslavia after 1989 until its dissolution. Hence the vague approach.

The communist federation was faced with prolonged economic and political crisis. While significantly more liberal than the rest of central and eastern European countries, the regime still prescribed a single party state and a communist ideology. Global changes, however, influenced social movements within the country which in turn affected the behaviour of the only legitimate political force – the League of Communists. The federal system provided for member republics to have their own leagues that collectively formed Yugoslav party – League of Communists of Yugoslavia that was disunited on many issues both economic and political.

Slovenia was gradually becoming more open society providing more freedom to social movements. Youth and alternative movements challenged traditional communist values and received significant popular support. The strongest animosity to this new initiatives, multi-party

<sup>7</sup> Charles Tilly, War Making and State Making as Organized Crime, in: Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol, (eds.), *Bringing the State Back in*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1985) pp.169-191

<sup>8</sup> Nohlen, D. & Stöver, P., *Elections in Europe: A data handbook*, (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2010)) p.1647

<sup>9</sup> Tierney, S. "Constitutional Referendums: A Theoretical Enquiry" in: *The Modern Law Review*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (May, 2009), p. 363

system and pro-Europe stand, came from Serbia. Ruling communists in Slovenia proceeded with liberalisation of media and social and political space and, faced with strong opposition, promised free multi-party elections. The changes that were taking place in Slovenia were not dissimilar to changes in the rest of communist world. Two slogans of Slovene political elites might be used as descriptive determinants of their political ambitions and national aspirations: "Socialism with a Human Face" (Socijalizam s ljudskim likom) and "Europe Now" (Europa zdaj).<sup>10</sup>

Slovene still communist political leadership was with a very strong and threatening opposition in the federation – Serbian communists. While officially being part of the same party – League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the two organizations were very different. Slovenian communists set all conditions for political competition, opened up possibilities for debates about all the issues and actively sought greater European integrations, opening up the borders and joining in European Community.

Serbian communists, meanwhile, homogenized their whole society and stood united behind one leader. Any attempt of political competition was dismissed by their political elite, media was firmly controlled and alternative movements were suppressed. Changes in the rest of the communist world went on largely unnoticed. Ideas of European integration were dismissed.

Both parties were part of the one unified League of Communists of Yugoslavia and were supposed to govern the federation. While the opposing ideologies would most likely prevent them forming a ruling coalition in conditions of liberal democracy, in the communist federation they both contributed to processes of undermining the state. Both Slovene and Serbian political elites could not avoid political confrontation.

Differences with regards to political structures, systems and European integrations are the main concern of this work while there are many works produced on the basis of into the field of nationalism primarily. Nationalist concept contributed to the causes of political confrontation of the two but this study is attempting to seek possibilities for preventing the conflict by structures of a state and

political model that would provide elites with different legitimacy. While Serbian popular support for violence was met at the same time with resistance to be mobilized into the army, Slovenes felt endangered and mobilized for the cause of the defence of their own land. This is in the core of nationalistic mobilization as Eric Hobsbawm argued that "there is no more effective way of bonding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders."<sup>11</sup> Thus there was asymmetrical participation and determination in the violent aspects of this conflict.

The main differences of the two camps were in the field of political systems and order of the state. The federal state was in prolonged crisis and Serbian leadership proposed firmer federal order in Yugoslavia with centralised Serbia within. Political manoeuvring of the republics would be given less space. Serbian increasingly autocratic society did not seek political pluralism.

Slovenia has undergone important changes at the same time. The Communist League has reformed itself into Social-Democrats, Socialist Youth of Slovenia transformed themselves into Liberal Democrats and many new parties were formed using the basis in social movements and former alternative movements. Some old dissidents also formed political parties and provided for rich political plurality and competition of ideas. Thus one member republic of the common federation transformed itself almost into a fully functioning liberal democracy while the other member republic also transformed itself but in the opposite direction. Serbia was becoming more controlled society with the system that had one leader, one party and was supported by one nation only. As the rest of Europe was already either democratic or was going through the processes of transition, Serbia showed very little desire for any kind of association agreement with other European countries.

While Serbian leadership is described as non-tolerant and utterly non-democratic they actually attempted to apply democratic principles for their own goals. Serbs, as an ethnic group were the most numerous in Yugoslavia and within the membership of the League of Communists with their percentages even proportionally higher than in a Yugoslav population. Thus they sought to apply principle

<sup>10</sup> Milan Balazic, *Evropa zdaj*, in: *Teorija in praksa*, let. 39, 4/2002 str. 559-578 (Theory and Practice, Ljubljana, year 39, 4/2002, pp.559-578)

<sup>11</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780 Program, Myth, Reality*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1992), p.91

of one member one vote instead of negotiating between the republics. The result of the implementation of this principle is the break-up of the Yugoslav League of Communists in January 1990.<sup>12</sup> Slovenes felt obliged to leave the congress as not a single proposal made by them was accepted by the majority at the congress.

British Conservative Party with overwhelming membership and representation coming from England and hardly significant presence in Scotland seek the legitimacy exactly on this principle of one citizen one vote. This study investigates whether such political conditions, English decision to leave the European Union and Scottish opposition to such a step might change the will and support for independence in Scotland. Majority behaviour, i.e., that of Serbs in Yugoslavia, has provoked minority's action, i.e, Slovenes in a non-democratic Yugoslavia. Therefore a question is could democracy provide instruments to protect minority from being majorised and still keep complex state, i.e., the union, intact?

Both majority and minority nationalisms attempted to present themselves in the positive light and were searching for democratic arguments. Serbian interpretation was simple count of majority votes from which they would benefit because of a numerical superiority. Slovene interpretation was introduction of greater autonomies for constituent members. Such a proposal had to go from federal state towards con-federal in the circumstances of a prolonged economic and political crisis. The lack of compromise at the federal level would be less turbulently felt in even further decentralised state, i.e. a confederation. However, Ciril Ribicic, leader of the Slovene reformed communists at the time, admitted twenty years later that the Slovenes "were not completely honest with the proposal for Yugoslav confederation. If Serbs had accepted this proposal we probably would not go for it."<sup>13</sup> The referendum in December 1990 showed almost universal popular support for independence in Slovenia.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, January 1990.

<sup>13</sup> Ciril Ribicic, Talk at the Conference "20 Years Since the End of Yugoslavia", University of Graz, November 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Alenka Starman and Jernej Križaj (authors of the exhibition), RAZSTAVA Arhiva Republike Slovenije ob 20. obletnici plebiscita za samostojno in neodvisno Republiko Slovenijo (Ljubljana, 2010)

Mass support for Milosevic did not come only on a wave of resurrected nationalism but also on popular desire for changes that communists did not offer ever since autocratic leader Tito died in 1980. The term 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' was successfully offered as description of pro-Milosevic mass movement. The leaders who did not follow him fell one after another. This was also the period of democratic revolutions in Communist Europe, where organised masses managed to change the system. Therefore, mass-demonstrations carried on waves of Serbian nationalism could have been, albeit incorrectly, seen as a movement for democracy. Michael Ignatieff's argument is important where he states that "historically, nationalism and democracy have gone hand in hand. Nationalism, after all, is the doctrine that a people have a right to rule themselves, and that sovereignty reposes in them alone."<sup>15</sup>

The debate on democratic and legitimate representation in the United Kingdom has gradually gained momentum. The Conservative Party have promised to introduce provisions for English matters to be decided solely by English people and not allow Scottish representatives to influence decisions that are going to affect English. This reflects asymmetric devolution and a lack of English polity in the United Kingdom which led to dissatisfaction of English voters and arguably to dissent expressed in vote for Brexit. There is also an issue of non-proportional electoral system and consequently such representation. Some similarities are to be found in complex states with non-proportional representation regardless whether they are liberal democracies or not. The difference comes in the provision to solution of the problem.

As there is diversity of electoral systems, whether they are proportional or majority systems with all of their sub-systems, it is impossible to put forward a claim that any of them clearly reflects popular will and is not open to various kinds of manipulation, usually by parties in power. Even in countries with long tradition of liberal democracy changes to electoral units' borders are often seen as being done at the expense of opposition. Thus leader of British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, is going to lose his constituency altogether with the proposed changes to boundaries of British constituencies.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ignatieff, M., 'Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism', (Vintage, London, 1994), p.17

<sup>16</sup> New Statesmen, 12 September 2016, available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/elections/2016/09>

Equality of citizens could be provided by equality of entities in federal, con-federal or devolved unitary state models. The question even here remains whether the principle of one entity equals one vote is just solution or whether there should be differentiation according to a size of population in each state unit. Serbs and Slovenes disagreed on this particular principle. The Conservative Party that dominates in England did not take into account separate wishes expressed by Scottish citizens and their political representatives. As English are numerically superior their choice is being imposed upon the minority population. Majoritarian policy could have been prevented if the condition was that every single territorial unit of the devolved state voted for Brexit. Numerically inferior nations seek safeguards against such possibilities. Slovenia decided that the only safeguard against this possibility was secession. Is it going to be possibility in Scotland if the British Conservative government imposes hard Brexit upon the whole of the United Kingdom?

### 3. CONSENSUS IN COMPLEX STATES

Successful governing in complex states requires consensus on major values. Yugoslav case shows that lack of consensus and agreement on common values of the state have prevented republics' elites from reaching compromise. The only debate, therefore, was which model should be applied from democratic societies; one that favours majority population, i.e., Serbia or one that favours minority population, i.e., Slovenia. However, the lack of consensus on common values led to attempts of discrimination and imposition of will of one unit over the other. British scenario seems to be different because there is consensus on basic values of the state and in the state. This provides opportunity and possibility to reach for compromise in disagreements.

The Conservative Party's promises to English voters offer possibility of a recognition of seniority of English voters within the Union which inevitably pushed voters in Scotland further towards Scottish National Party as group that offered protection of values that are of highest importance to Scottish citizens. These values in no particular order are further devolution and increased autonomy of Scotland, nuclear disarmament, further control over its own judiciary, education and economy and keeping Scotland in the European Union or at least in the single market. The result was demise of British

[/jeremy-corbys-seat-abolished-boundary-changes](#) (accessed on 5 February 2017)

political parties and even traditional Labour Party strongholds in Scotland and they have been handed over to Scottish nationalists. Conservatives with their English interests struggled in Scotland for several electoral cycles.

David Cameron, whilst British Prime minister, expressed an idea of blocking "Scottish MPs from voting on English-only matters at Westminster – the so-called English votes for English laws."<sup>17</sup> Gordon Brown, former Labour Party leader and himself Scottish saw in this policy "a tit – for-tat retaliation to the SNP [Scottish National Party] playing the Scottish card, the Conservatives are playing the English card."<sup>18</sup> Former Labour Party leader, Ed Miliband saw this proposal as "an act of constitutional vandalism."<sup>19</sup> This clear alienation of Scottish representatives in Westminster is another step that might be compared to and might show some similarities of deteriorating relationships in the Yugoslav federation in late 1980s. Spectre of Scottish and English effective vetoes on number of issues has entered political debate in the United Kingdom. A "quad lock" by Scottish National Party is proposed with the meaning that Britain could only leave the European Union if the referendum was positively answered by majority of voters in the UK altogether but also by a majority of voters in each of the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. If such a clause had been adopted, Scottish pro-European attitude would clearly be an unbridgeable obstacle to Brexit. Under such circumstances the only option to provide fulfilment of electoral wills to both English and Scottish voters would be dissolution of the Union. The cause would therefore shift from SNP to the Conservative majoritarian policy.

Gordon Brown argued that "it reveals a bigger truth: that while Scotland has not yet written off Britain, the Conservatives are starting to write off Scotland."<sup>20</sup> The

<sup>17</sup> Gordon Brown, *The Guardian* 12 June 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jun/12/gordon-brown-uk-on-life-support-as-conservatives-play-the-english-card>, accessed on 1 September 2015

<sup>18</sup> Gordon Brown, *The Telegraph*, 12 June 2015, available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/ben-riley-smith/11669994/Gordon-Brown-The-United-Kingdom-is-on-life-support.html> (accessed on 5 February 2017)

<sup>19</sup> *The Guardian*, 7 July 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jul/07/evel-commons-quasi-english-parliament-mps-english-votes-laws>, accessed on 1 September 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Gordon Brown, *The Telegraph*, 12 June 2015, available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/ben-riley->

other side of the same argument is that if the clause was adopted a minor partner in the Union, Scotland, would impose its will upon majority of the population, England. Each of these options reflects democratic deficit regardless of political, state and electoral system. David Cameron's office sought "to balance the principle of English consent for English measures with MPs from all parts of the country continuing to deliberate and vote together."<sup>21</sup>

The issue of Europe is firmly in the core of differences between the two nations following the referendum on European Union on 23 June 2016. The decision to leave the European Union was taken by majority of English and Welsh voters while majorities in Northern Ireland and especially Scotland voted to remain in the EU. Overall majority of 52 percent took the decision for the whole country to leave the EU.<sup>22</sup> Thus it is exactly the opposite situation from the one Cameron made promises to deal with. It was English voters that have made the decision for Scottish citizens. Majority population in such position might force political change. Minorities, however, usually make steps or threaten to be willing to make steps towards secession.

Divisions within the Conservative Party and the intra-party opposition on issues of Europe has been strong in 1990s when it has been argued that their foreign policy has "emphasized issues of national sovereignty in international relations, especially vis-a-vis European integration."<sup>23</sup> Their prolonged period in power was followed by strongly pro-European Blair's New Labour in power until 2010. Conservative strategy has historically been subtle British nationalism. Even the official historical name was Conservative and Unionist Party. Stronger European integrations made strong case for return of British, or rather English nationalism, into consideration for democratic competition. "Thus the item

[smith/11669994/Gordon-Brown-The-United-Kingdom-is-on-life-support.html](http://smith/11669994/Gordon-Brown-The-United-Kingdom-is-on-life-support.html) (accessed on 5 February 2017)

<sup>21</sup> Gordon Brown, *The Guardian* 12 June 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jun/12/gordon-brown-uk-on-life-support-as-conservatives-play-the-english-card>, accessed on 1 September 2015

<sup>22</sup> The National Archives, available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160815143715/https://www.eureferendum.gov.uk/> (accessed on 5 February 2017)

<sup>23</sup> Heath, A., Taylor, B., Brook, L., Park, A., *British National Sentiment in : British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), p. 157

on which the nationalist dimension has both the largest relative and largest absolute impact is the constitutional one involving the possible loss of national sovereignty in Europe."<sup>24</sup>

'If you had a circumstance where Scotland voted to stay in but was dragged out on the votes of people in England,' warned former Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond, 'that would be a material change in circumstance.'<sup>25</sup> David Cameron, however, firmly rejected the idea of the second referendum on Scottish independence: "I think it is important that a referendum is legal and properly constituted and that is what we had, and it was decisive, so I do not see the need for another one."<sup>26</sup> Salmond reconfirmed determination of some Scottish nationalists to seek remedies in independence by saying that "only timing of independence vote is in question."<sup>27</sup>

This cannot be seen any longer as an issue over which two political elites are debating. The reason is massive popular support for each of the elites in the corresponding entities. Nine years prior to Brexit referendum, governing elite in Scotland has been described by academic authority on the issues as "increasingly distant from Westminster".<sup>28</sup> This distance only increased with the Conservative Party coming into power in Westminster in 2010.

Even though Cameron resigned his position following the Brexit vote public statements from the office of Theresa May, British Prime minister since Summer 2016, leave no doubt to her intentions to lead the country not only out of the EU but also from the single market and customs union. She leaves no space for compromise with Scottish Prime minister Nicola Sturgeon who repeatedly threatened with another referendum on Scottish independence unless

<sup>24</sup> Heath, A., Taylor, B., Brook, L., Park, A., *British National Sentiment in : British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), p. 163

<sup>25</sup> Alex Salmond, BBC 24 June 2016, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-36599102>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>26</sup> David Cameron, *The Telegraph*, 27 July 2015, available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/11765829/David-Cameron-rejects-Scottish-referendum-before-2020.html>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Alex Salmond, *The Guardian* 26 July 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jul/26/second-scottish-referendum-inevitable-alex-salmond>, accessed on 1 September 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Walker, G., *Scottish Nationalism on the March*, in: *Fortnight*, No. 455 (Nov., 2007), p. 4

the British government takes into account wishes of Scottish people.<sup>29</sup>

Yet again, similarities with Yugoslavia in early 1990s are obvious. When it became clear there was no will to compromise because the consensus on basic values has not been reached, it came to dissolution of the country. European integrations are the basic value that English and Scottish political elites strongly disagree on. The question is whether this is reason strong enough to take them to dissolving the kingdom.

"No union can survive without unionists and, after an election in which, to head of Ukip, the Conservative and Unionist Party presented itself as the English Nationalist party, it is clear that the union is on life support," stated Brown. "It is London's equivocation over Scotland that is becoming the greater risk to the UK."<sup>30</sup> Therefore if the strongest political party in the country abandons, in reality if not in rhetoric, unionism (or federalism in the Yugoslav case) the crisis of the common state becomes inevitable. Serbian communists were the largest party with the majority support in Serbia. In order to fight off nationalist challenge in their own republic they challenged other constituent entities of the federation which resulted in a violent demise of the federation.

The challenge that Conservative Party feels from the nationalist English political front moved them further away from the idea of unionism. Crisis on political left has created political space for Scottish nationalists to prosper and take over almost completely political representation of Scottish electorate. Two fronts irreconcilable to wash other have been created and a need for democratic support alienates them further. In order to preserve democratic legitimacy both elites, English and Scottish, have to firmly present themselves as protectors of their national interests. Scottish identity does not accept any longer the idea of "One Nation", the same way as Slovenes did not accept doctrine of Yugoslavism in 1980s. Fear of domination by the majority nation added to identity issues. The Communist system and the immediate

<sup>29</sup> Nicola Sturgeon, Independent, 24 June 2016, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-news-results-latest-nicola-sturgeon-second-scottish-independence-referendum-eu-referendum-a7100466.html>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon Brown, The Guardian 12 June 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jun/12/gordon-brown-uk-on-life-support-as-conservatives-play-the-english-card>, accessed on 1 September 2015

post-communist settings during the first steps of transition towards liberal democracy did not provide opportunities for a peaceful solution to the crisis of the federal state. It seems that fully developed liberal democracy might provide settings for peaceful dissolution of the union if not for the preservation of the United Kingdom. Institutions in liberal democracy are stronger than individual policies and personalities. This is what preserves a state regardless of its model.

The issue of violence is avoided in Britain and never seriously discussed. One should bear in mind that this is not the first time analysts are considering future of the Great Britain. Devine, while disagreeing with the argument, reiterates that "several historians and political scientists have argued that imperial decline was likely to destroy one of the key foundations of the Anglo-Scottish Union."<sup>31</sup> His article was concerned with the decline of British Empire and was written long before the "age of referendums" in Britain but provides important point for consideration. Question that remains to be answered is whether exit from the European Union will destroy basic set of bonds between English and Scottish peoples? If one looks even further into history it is possible to find significant differences in English and Scottish politics in 1930s when British Union of Fascists received very little support in Scotland. Cullen argues the main reason was "failure of the BUF [British Union of Fascists] to understand the Scottish dimensions of politics, such as the cross-cutting appeal of Scottish nationalism, and religious tensions."<sup>32</sup> The Conservative Party is of different ideology but they show signs of either lack of understanding or lack of will to understand the paradigms of Scottish politics. This is of huge importance because other historians found that "popular nationalism was always a force to be reckoned with in Scotland."<sup>33</sup>

There was very short period of transition from political conflict to violent conflict in Yugoslavia while this issue

<sup>31</sup> Devine, T. M., *The Break-Up of Britain? Scotland and the End of Empire: The Prothero Lecture in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series, Vol. 16 (2006)*, p. 163

<sup>32</sup> Cullen, S. M., *The Fasces and the Saltire: The Failure of the British Union of Fascists in Scotland, 1932–1940*, in: *The Scottish Historical Review, Vol. 87, No. 224, Part 2 (October 2008)*, p. 306

<sup>33</sup> Miller, D. W., *Review of: Hanham, H.J., Scottish Nationalism*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1969) in: *The American Historical Review, Vol. 75, No. 6 (Oct., 1970)*, p. 1723



has not been considered at all by any of the confronted political groups. The reason could be found in functioning of the system and state fulfilling its role in Britain while one state model simply collapsed and has not been replaced in Yugoslavia.

Potential for violence, however, does exist in Britain. One Polish man has been murdered following the referendum and other Polish men have been attacked. The situation was serious enough that area where murder took place was patrolled by Polish police alongside British policemen for a while. British newspaper headlines from the period are telling: "Polish men attacked in 'hate crime' hours after murdered Pole's vigil in Harlow",<sup>34</sup> wrote Independent, while The Guardian offered comment titled "The killing of a Polish man exposes the reality of post-referendum racism".<sup>35</sup> BBC reported "Teens arrested in 'hate crime' murder of Polish man",<sup>36</sup> while The Guardian was more specific stating "Six teenage boys arrested over death of Polish man in Essex."<sup>37</sup> The Sun in tabloid manner headlined "Killed for being Polish," adding that a "Gang of 12 teens beat family man to death after hearing him chatting to pals."<sup>38</sup> The Mirror reported "He was killed for speaking Polish: Brother's claim..."<sup>39</sup> Conservative newspaper Telegraph was more cautious stating "Teenagers held in murder investigation after Polish man dies in suspected 'hate crime'."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Independent, 4 September 2016, available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/polish-hate-crime-harlow-essex-attacked-murdered-vigil-arek-j-wik-brexite-a7225166.html>, accessed on 5 February 2017

<sup>35</sup> The Guardian, 5 September 2016, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/05/death-arkadiusz-jozwik-post-referendum-racism-xenophobes-brexite-vote>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>36</sup> BBC, 31 August, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-37227313>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>37</sup> The Guardian, 30 August 2016, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/aug/30/five-teenage-boys-arrested-after-man-dies-following-attack-in-essex>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>38</sup> The Sun, 30 August, available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/1694901/five-boys-aged-15-and-16-arrested-after-polish-man-was-battered-to-death-in-rationally-motivated-attack/>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>39</sup> The Mirror, 31 August, available at: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/he-killed-speaking-polish-brothers-8738218>, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Telegraph, 31 August 2016, available at: [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/30/teenagers-](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/30/teenagers-held-in-murder-investigation-after-polish-man-dies-in/)

The Home Office Report put the rise in hate crimes in England and Wales at 41 percent following the Brexit vote.<sup>41</sup> British society has obviously changed significantly and there is potential for violence. However it is potential of individuals or small groups and not potential of the society. Critical mass supporting violent solution to the issue does not exist under conditions when the state functions are being exercised diligently and institutions fulfil their role in liberal democracy.

## CONCLUSION

The rise in violence and hate related crimes actually started just before the referendum by a death of prominent Member of Parliament who was murdered because of her multicultural views.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore it is safe to conclude that any society has a potential for development and spread of violence. However small the violent minority might be and however their personal hatred towards others might be rare, they have a potential to destabilise society and consequently bring changes to a state. It is exactly the existence of state, its functioning institutions and consensus on common values that prevents such developments and further rise in similar crime. Instead institutions and a state are returning the society to a status of relative stability in liberal democracies. This is what British state institutions have been doing with regards to increase in violence.

In Yugoslavia state institutions ceased to function and this power vacuum provided possibility for violent incidents to escalate. The state has actually got involved in violence. The federal army came under control of Serbia and was directly involved in confrontations with others starting with Slovenia. The authorities in Slovenia, while arguing democratization, European values and a rule of law behaved, on occasions, less than democratic by excluding some members of their own society. Slovenia has erased from Register of permanent residence 18,305 persons following its declaration of independence. Thus it was the state that actively encouraged exclusion of

held-in-murder-investigation-after-polish-man-dies-in/, accessed on 5 February 2017.

<sup>41</sup> The official Home Office Report, 13 October 2016, available at: <http://report-it.org.uk/files/hate-crime-1516-hosb1116.pdf>, downloaded on 5 February 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Jo Cox was murdered on 16 June 2016.

"others" in society.<sup>43</sup> While all post-Yugoslav states excluded some of their citizens "the most drastic case of administrative exclusion happened in Slovenia."<sup>44</sup>

Serbia's centralizing tendencies and use of military and Slovenia's secessionism partially based on pro-Europe attitude contributed to the destruction of state. Violence is not necessary consequence of the end of communist rule in complex state as examples of other post-communist federations prove. It is a failure of the state, its institutions and models that leads to violent conclusion to problems in society. When there is lack of basic agreement, consensus on core values of the state the compromise becomes impossible. Complex states cannot survive without the politics of compromise.

British case with Scotland being compared to Slovenia and England to Serbia shows many similarities in relations within a complexity of multinational state. Major differences, however, could also be observed during the processes of abandoning unionism in practice. "The implicit assumption is", authors of a study from 1990s claim, "that Britain, or at any rate England, can be characterized by a consensus on national identity and that nationalism has played little part in electoral politics."<sup>45</sup> Two decades, however, are long period in modern day politics and therefore one can observe significant changes in the behaviour of British political electorate and elites. The same authors argue that "most recently, of course, national identity has resurfaced on the English political agenda over integration with Europe."<sup>46</sup> This is exactly the issue that was going to divide British political entity and threaten the union of Scotland and England after the Brexit referendum. Scottish politics remains dedicated to the Union but are strengthening their demands for respect of minority demands in the field of foreign, economic and defence policies. While Slovenia was ignored in their demands for influence and change of these policies, Scotland has been listened to. However, the government

led by Theresa May since July of 2016 has shown little will to do more than listening to demands.

The question whether the union can survive if central government ignores issues of such importance for numerically inferior units of the state remains open. It is noticeable that leading circles in Scotland restarted calls for second referendum while leading British Conservative politicians deny any chance of having it. This is exactly the case that proves the importance of liberal democracy and developed democratic institutions. Even if the behaviour of some of political actors can be compared to that in non-democratic regimes, respect for democratic institutions by all actors in liberal democracy prevents not only violent end to the union but even discussion of such a possibility is absent. To conclude, it is liberal democratic values and functioning democratic institutions that are preventing violence in the state including its violent end. However, the survival of complex state is not guaranteed with lack of consensus on basic principles and common values of the state. While union proved to be of greater importance for majority of Scottish citizens in 2014 than expression of their particularism and identity, it is the radical change that they object to. Brexit is such a change that is undermining the consensus and removing elements for compromise. However, democratic institutions are in place for peaceful solution proving importance of state tradition and its functioning. It is power vacuum that brings in violence. Yet, Kenneth Clarke, the only Conservative member of the Parliament that voted against triggering clause to start Brexit negotiations said: "I've never seen anything as mad or chaotic as this."<sup>47</sup> It is because "democratic authority finds its legitimacy in the consent of the people"<sup>48</sup> and provides conditions for dictatorship of majority.

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<sup>44</sup> Shaw, Jo and Štiks, Igor, (eds.), Citizenship After Yugoslavia, (Routledge, New York, 2013) p.26

<sup>45</sup> Heath, A., Taylor, B., Brook, L., Park, A., British National Sentiment in : British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), p. 155

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<sup>47</sup> The Guardian, 5 February 2017, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/05/kenneth-clarke-on-brexit-ive-never-seen-anything-as-mad-or-chaotic-as-this> (accessed on 11 February 2017)

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