Ignorance and Yugoslavia: A Causal Explanation of Yugoslavia's Disintegration?

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Abstract

Keutner (2004), in investigating the scientific methods in history, formulates the Principle of Ignorance as key for any causal explanation: The causal agent is not aware of the causal force until it impacts, causing the effect. On the other hand, historical explanations often involve narratives of action, intention, desires and beliefs. The culminating question of Keutner's research is whether there is room for causal explanations by using the Principle of Ignorance in history. This paper will show that causality fails to deliver a sufficient explanation for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. This failure itself, however, can be informative allowing the reshaping of the discussion away from normativity toward a more fine-grained approach.

Key words: *Yugoslavia, philosophy of history, causality, ethnicity, Milosevic*

Introduction

Why did Yugoslavia disintegrate? Was it torrid nationalism? Was the country bound to give in to centrifugal forces? Or was it ethnicity? How are the atrocities that occurred in the wars from 1989 to 1999 to be judged from a historian's perspective? These questions and many others are often posed and discussed not only by the popular discourse, but also by the academic community confronted with the falling apart of the state of South Slavs, ultimately all culminating in "Who is to blame?". The process of breaking up a nation together with the human toll, left many open questions, doubts and moral dilemmas. It is understandable that these would manifest themselves – to different degrees – in most realms of an occupation with this matter. The other, and more pressing question is to what extent the normative judgment, as legitimate it may be, is useful in the historic explanation of Yugoslavia's disintegration.

This paper looks at another way of explaining this falling apart, and by doing so makes a methodological claim. Using Thomas Keutner's (2004) Principle of Ignorance, this paper tries to account for the breakdown of the former Titoist state in terms of causal chains, i.e. without attributing intentions as primary drivers in the process. In other words, this paper tries to expose the dissolution of Yugoslavia as a series of causal events to which human teleological agency is submitted (i.e. humans are taken to primarily react to events they are confronted with). Therefore, this paper deals more with the methodological issue of accounting for what happened than with the actual explanation of events. In the course of this methodological experiment, this paper aims at finding out whether (and how) the Principle of Ignorance works, which new lessons it can produce, and what shortcomings it shows. This shall be accomplished in three parts.

In a first section, the methodological ground has to be set. The problem of causal versus teleological explanation in history will be described briefly, the Principle of Ignorance as well as a model of agency and causal explanation will be introduced, and the desiderata of using the aforementioned principle will be derived. After an overview on current theories for Yugoslavia's disintegration, the Principle of Ignorance will be used to describe this process in the second section. In a third and last

section, findings of the second section are going to be evaluated in terms of what new findings were made and which issues in using the principle are problematic. These will be the conclusions of this paper.

I. Agency and Ignorance

At a very intuitive level, an action is constituted by a person performingone or several movements and calling it "action". For example, if a given person drinks water (="action"), the fetching of a glass and the opening of the tap and filling the glass with water as well as subsequently drinking the fluid might constitute what everyday language calls the action of drinking water. Many philosophers would point out that the action in fact consists of a chain that can be interrupted, for example by something occurring between the fetching of a glass and the filling of the glass. Would this still count as an action? When a person is pouring water into the glass, it might seem an inappropriate answer to the question "What are you doing?" if she answers "I am drinking water", for in fact, the answer "I am pouring water into a glass in order to drink it" seems not only more complete, but also more comfortable (i.e. better).

There are many accounts for action and agency; in the end, however, they return to the one or other type, namely the teleological or the causal explanation. Causal explanations themselves come in two kinds. A first type of causal explanation would refer to some sort of mental causation of the action, for example the thirst or the wish for comfort to be the primary motivator for the person drinking water. The second type refers to a general law, or the law-likeliness that encompasses all subsumed factors into an action. The teleological explanation would explain the action in the light of its goal, intention, and the calculations a person makes in order to reach this goal. For the purposes of this paper, only an outline of these two extremes is needed (according to Stout, 2005).[1]

[1] For a better, in-depth discussion of philosophy of action aiming at history as an academic discipline, see Danto (1973) or, more generally, Stout (2005).

In the causal explanation, a given reason for acting (for example, being thirsty) is the cause of the action. The human mind acts on this reason and sets a vast array of further movements and/or figures after the reason has caused it to be active. Many of these movements and/or figures are automated responses, since people learn or have predispositions, i.e. established causal chains that can be set in motion without further delay. Note that the acting subject is at least partially unaware of the cause until it materializes. In other words, the reason as cause is there before the action and is at least not fully recognized by the agent until it "strikes". Alternatively, in the nomological causality, every time certain pre-conditions are fulfilled, an action of a given type occurs (=law-likeliness). In the teleological explanation, the agent has a goal, an intention, and goes through several means-ends calculations, belief-desire pairs (a person has a desire for drinking water and believes that filling a glass with water is a means for satisfying the desire, etc.). Some of these means-ends relationships are equally automated, even as predispositions. At the end of calculating all sets of belief-desire, the agent performs the action that allows her to fulfill the intention best.

The two types of explanation do not need to be contradictory. While causes are causes no matter what, intentions are only valid intentions under a description. Causality-oriented thinkers would accept intentionality under some rationalization (this term being used neutrally), but would contend that the physical substrate still has to work as a causal chain. Intentionality-oriented thinkers may even accept some type of causality, but would not attach any importance to it.

Reviewing historical accounts of events, it seems that teleological explanations are abundant. Historians ask questions like "What did Milošević want to accomplish? or "Did Slovenia want its independence or just more autonomy?". Many philosophers of science, for example Dray (1964), see in this teleological structure the sui generis approach of historical science trying to understand (verstehen) historical events.

On the other hand, some philosophers point out that history also tries to explain (erklären) certain chains of events, and that an explanation, in order to be scientific, needs some sort of recurrence to a general law (Churchland 1981). This approach is also compatible with the

usual outcomes of history, for example when questions like the following are answered: "Why (for what reasons) did Milošević refer to nationalism and populism?", "Why (for what reasons) did the Parliament declare independency?" At least in one meaning of these questions, they inquire as to a general law that explains under which circumstances these actions are to be expected.

Thomas Keutner (2004) analyzes both types of historical accounts and their relevancy for history as a science as well as their mutual relationship. One of his main findings is that in order for the causal approach to work, there is a need for a general law. It is difficult to imagine this law to be a law of the world of physics or even of biology (the paper will return to this point later), but the law can be one of the logical realm. In this sense, he introduces the notion of the causal chain in history and the Principle of Ignorance (p. 18).

The logical law-likeliness encompasses facts that cause people, institutions or historical entities to act on them as reasons for following actions. The agents, persons, institutions or entities are not aware of these facts as causes and as reasons until these factual precedents unfold upon them, this being called the Principle of Ignorance. In short: The agent is not aware of the cause of the action until the cause "strikes". Keutner does not state that there is no room for intentional action in history, however, he contends that causal actions can be more powerful than intentional actions. An example for this could be the following: For the sake of this argument, let it be assumed that Milošević intended the continuation of Yugoslavia as a federal state (intentional account), however, the surge of nationalist feelings and the victory of nationalist parties/factions in the elections made him change his policy and pursue Serbian nationalism at the cost of endangering and disintegrating what was left of Yugoslavia (causal account). In this example, both accounts co-exist, however, the causal overpowers the intentional.

It is to be noted how the logical law-likeliness of the causal chain as well as the Principle of Ignorance work in this example. A causal-vector impacts on an agent without his prior knowledge, and the agent has no other option than to act on this cause, which is the reason for his action. Both are not, however, deterministic. Paralleling Davidson's

"anomalous monism" (1970) in his philosophy of mind – the same anomaly contained in his philosophy of action – the agent is still free to act on different predispositions. It is an external fact the agent is reacting to, however, and the logical structure of the narrative given is a causal one. The agent, Milošević, acted on a cause that impacted on him without his prior knowledge. Of course, he knew that there were some nationalist voices, but he did not know that these nationalists would make his government impossible after having gained a majority. Milošević was thus reacting to the new state of affairs, and this reaction is the causal factor. The intentional factor is his choice in how to react. He could have continued his federalist ambitions, or he could have turned to nationalist populism; these options are means-ends calculations in the sense of the intentional account. What made him take the one plan of action and discard the other? Possibly the changing state-of-affairs made him choose. At least, it could be taken that "every time the general state of affairs changes, agents will reconsider their choices". This, again, is a causal account (Churchland-lawlikeliness, in which the overall law is not a complete nomological one, but just a draft of a more complete one).

The model being tested in this paper is, if historical events and especially the dissolution of Yugoslavia can be explained in terms of events unfolding upon each other, causing people, institutions and entities to react to them despite their own intentions. Can such a causal model be fruitful in accounting for the disintegration of Yugoslavia? What can be gained from applying it, and which are its shortcomings? From the point of view of historical science, some other desiderata have to be fulfilled. The most important one is that the causal approach should enable the field to learn something new about either the explanation or the disintegration of Yugoslavia or, ideally, both.

II. The disintegration of Yugoslavia: a causal chain?

This section intends to explore how a causal explanation can be applied to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. This will be done in a two-step approach. In a first step, current theories for the falling apart of Yugoslavia will be exemplarily assessed in terms of whether they explain

causality or intentionality. In a second step, a causal narrative of the disintegration of the South Slav state will be given in order to test how it could be done.

II.1 Causal and intentional explanations

Before applying causality and the Principle of Ignorance to Yugoslavian historical narratives, it may be useful to survey current theories regarding its dissolution and to analyze whether they have intentional or causal cores. Jasna Dragovic Soso (2007) discerns five groups of theories. All in all, these are:

First, explanations focused on the longue durée emphasize "ancient hatreds", the "clash of civilizations" and the legacy of imperial rule in the Balkans. Typical for this group is the reduction of the cause (!) of Yugoslav disintegration to postulated historical constants, be they ancient hatreds between ethnic groups, the clash of Eastern and Western civilizations or the degrading influence of the Ottoman Empire on its subjects. The main idea is that conflict is the norm and can only be avoided if a strong centrality maintains the calm. In terms of causality, this group of explanations seems to rely on a general law. It does not yield, however, to the Principle of Ignorance, since the agents seem to know the general law and its impact, because it is of "longue durée", meaning: Every time there is no centrality maintaining calmness, hatred and clash break out.

Second, there are theories that take the legacy of the South Slav nationalism from the end of the 19th century on as an explanation for the falling apart of Yugoslavia. These theories say that the state-building in Serbia and Croatia fundamentally contradicts the idea of living together in a single state, since this would compromise national feelings. This type of explanation seems to share intentional moments. It is assumed that the intention of having one's own state expands to the whole population of the respective state. It would be a remarkable case of collective intentionality that endures historical periods and even outside agencies, since this collective intentionality outlives the – in the sense of this theory

– external factors that cause history to pursue other courses, for example forming Yugoslavia.

Third, some theories focus of the failure of the legitimization of Yugoslavia, its economic problems and its troublesome federalism. This may be the case of the combination of intentional and causal accounts. First, there is the intention of creating a common state. Probably, there were competing intentions, but due to outside circumstances (causal), the intention of forming Yugoslavia led to action. As Yugoslavia itself could not fulfill all or even the main goals of the action of its creation, new intentions – its disintegration – were formed. Here, the Principle of Ignorance applies: As Yugoslavia was formed, it was not possible to know whether and how it would work. As it did not fulfill expectations, this lack of fulfillment is the series of causal events that "struck" Yugoslavia. The entity only realized to which causal forces it was exposed after the causal forces had manifested themselves. This failure caused different actors to re-calculate their means-ends relationships.

The fourth group of theories focuses on the role of political and intellectual agents in the breakdown of Yugoslavia. Here again, intentionality and group intentionality seem to be the dominant modes of explanation. Elites had goals, and in order to achieve them, performed actions, which led to other actions, without the elites being able to steer events.

The fifth and last group, according to Dragovic-Soso (2007), focuses on the impact of external factors. Normally, the involvement of other countries is portrayed as reaction to Yugoslavia's falling apart, but it can be treated as a contribution to it. Here, the causal explanation and the Principle of Ignorance apply: External countries are unforeseen causal vectors impacting on Yugoslav actors, which, in turn, have to react by reassessing their situation and opportunities. As external players continually impact on Yugoslavia, actors have to continually readdress their positions.

There are two important facets to be noted here: First, Dargovic-Soso (2007) does not opt for a given group over the others. Although she does not seem to see much value in the first group of explanations, she

states (p.20) that all explanations enrich each other, and the discourse on the disintegration of Yugoslavia is an interactive one. It was, secondly, the aim of the last paragraphs to briefly expose theories and to search for the core of their explanation. This does not mean, however, that all the above-mentioned theories are either intentional and/or causal, or that actors under a given theory always act causally or intentionally. The idea is to give a brief overview of the explanatory mechanisms of different groups of theories.

II.2 A causal account of Yugoslavia's disintegration

Let the dismembering of Yugoslavia now be shown in terms of chronology and interpreted in a causal explanation, as the Principle of Ignorance suggests. Of course, this is only a token ofa causal account and not an in-depth account of the events. The main aim of the following paragraphs is to show how the Principle of Ignorance can be applied to create a narrative of historic occurrences. While the factual data is taken from Calic (2010), this is a narrative that relies purely on causality as its guiding principle:

In May 1980, Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito dies (causal impact factor), and in 1981, the economic crisis in Yugoslavia begins. This leads the Albanian leaders to seize the opportunity and to organize nationalist demonstrations in Kosovo, demanding the status of a republic and more rights. As a reaction to this, demonstrations are suppressed and condemned by all Yugoslav communists, including Albanian communists from Kosovo, as contra-revolutionary. Arrests follow. Here, three separate events come together and trigger reactions: The death of Tito, the economic crisis and protests in Kosovo cause the Yugoslav state to be more attentive to inner security, to police more, to condemn protests and to arrest protesting people. According to the Principle of Ignorance, Yugoslav communist leaders did not know in, say, 1979, that they would have to act on protests in 1981. The events of 1980 and 1991 acted upon them and causally made them respond: Because of protests, arrest orders had to be issued.

This pattern of narrative can be continued as follows: In 1983, a group of Bosnian Muslim nationalists –AlijaIzetbegović among them – are convicted under Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia SFRY law that prohibited the spreading of international hatred. Again, it was the publication and dissemination of the Islamic declaration that caused the prohibition.

Between 1986 and 1989, many events interlink: The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts releases a memorandum criticizing the position of Serbia in Yugoslavia. Parallel to this, MomčiloĐujić, a leading figure among the Četnik, makes Vojislav Šešelj his successoron Vidovdan, 28 June 1989, ordering him to expel all Croats, Albanians and other foreign elements from holy Serb ground, which in conversion with the perceived prosecution of Serbs by Kosovo Albanians fuels growing Serbian nationalist sentiment. This, on its turn, causes the Serbian state in Yugoslavia to send additional police forces to Kosovo to calm things down. These events put pressure on Slobodan Milošević, a high government official at the time, who responds by adapting to Serbian nationalism. He gives a speech to a small group of Kosovo Serbs, in which he promises that no one will beat them and which is aired in the main television news program. Milošević instantly becomes very popular and rises to power in Serbia. Anti-bureaucratic revolution demonstrations bring pro-Milošević governments to Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro. In response to this and due to the economic crisis that affects their wellbeing, Kosovo-Albanian miners strike in the StariTrg mine.The Slovenian government, preoccupied with the rise of Milošević in Serbia, supports the Kosovo-Albanians. As a reaction to this, relations between Slovenia and Serbia deteriorate, for example in the form of an unofficial embargo on Slovenian products introduced in Serbian stores. Slovenia, in response, is increasingly talking about independence.

In 1990, the Communist Party dissolves on republic (and partially on national) lines at the 14th Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party with Slovenian and Croatian communists, leaving the Congress to protestMilošević's actions. Protests in Kosovo and the end of the commitment towards the federal Yugoslav Constitution prompt Serbia to revoke some of the powers granted to Kosovo and Vojvodina by the constitution of 1974, including the power to cast a vote in the federal

council completely independently from Serbia, which in fact stripped Kosovo of its near-to-republic status. This effectively gave Serbia 3 out of 8 votes in the federal council (4 with support from Montenegro). Also as an answer to Croatia, Serb nationalist meetings are held in some Serb-populated areas of Croatia, under the use of iconography considered provocative by many Croats. The Croat and Slovene governments openly defy the integrity of Yugoslavia, which makes the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) subject the formerly republic territorial defense system to a central command, effectively disarming Croatia and Slovenia. As a consequence to the withdrawal from the Communist party system, the first democratic elections in 45 years are held in Yugoslavia (in an attempt to bring the Yugoslav socialist model into the new, post-Cold War world). Nationalist options gain the majority in almost all republics. The Croatian winning party offers a vice-presidential position to the Serb Radical Party, which refuses. Croatian Serbs start a rebellion against the newly elected government, an event frequently referred to as the "Balkan revolution" (tree-log revolution), prompting a constitutional change in Croatia that denies the status of a constituent nation to Serbs in Croatia, equalizing them with all other minorities. Parallel to these events and due to the political development in Serbia, Slovenia holds a referendum on independence from Yugoslavia which passes with 88.5 per cent of the electorate in favor of independence.

Because of the Slovenian referendum and because of the constitutional changes in Croatia, in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declare independence. The JNA reacts by intervening in Slovenia, by deploying troops to take border areas. Following the Ten-day war, The JNA is defeated. The ethnic homogeneity of Slovenia allows the country to avoid much fighting. The Yugoslav army agrees to leave Slovenia, but supports rebel Serb forces in Croatia. In September of 1991, JNA forces openly attack Croat areas (primarily Dalmatia and Slavonia), starting the Croatian War of Independence. Because of the former declarations of independence, in January 1992, Macedonia declares its independence, as well. Slovenia and Croatia are internationally recognized byEuropean Community countries, several EFTA and Central European countries. This causes Bosnia to declare its independence in April, thusprovokinga warlike response from the JNA. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is

proclaimed, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro, the only two remaining republics.

In January 1993, the Vance-Owen peace plan is offered. The pressure from Slobodan Milošević (who himself is under international pressure) persuades the leader of Bosnian-Serbs, Karadzic, to sign the plan, but after a vote in the assembly of Bosnian Serbs, he withdraws his signature.

How can such an account be assessed? Again, it is important to note that this is not a complete history of events, but just an example of how to construct the account by using causal chains and the Principle of Ignorance. One might say that even if causal chains have been used in describing the above, the Principle of Ignorance cannot be applied generally, because in many cases, politicians could have foreseen future events. For example, as Bosnia declared its independency, its leaders could have projected an armed intervention by the Jugoslav army, since this had happened in the recent past. On the other hand, just before its declaration of independence, Macedonia seceded from Yugoslavia without armed conflict. Therefore, based on this evidence, Bosnian leaders could have foreseen both or none. From the capability of discerning possible outcomes, it does not follow that the passive links in the causal chain in the sense of this explanation, i.e. the agents, can know when and how these future events will strike and influence them. This means, they know about the existence of possible outcomes, but they do not know the cause of outcomes, how these outcomes impact on the agents and how the agents react to these impacts. Therefore, the Principle of Ignorance as necessary for the causal explanation is not primarily at risk.

A second problem arises with the softening of the argument above: Let the exact impact of the causality not be foreseeable, but the agents themselves, if they are aware of a possibility of impact before the impact, can plan on how to react to it. This means, the agents can develop back-up plans on how to deal with different outcomes of previous actions that might affect their further decisions. The theoretical challenge for the Principle of Ignorance is therefore given, even if the agents are aware that prior events can lead them to act otherwise. Keutner (2004) is very well

aware of this problem. For the historian working on the disintegration of Yugoslavia, this means that she must show that the development of events came as a surprise to the agents. In order to continue the introductory example, the historian has to show that Milošević operated on the thought that the Serbian people would be loyal to Yugoslavia, and that the turn towards nationalism came unexpectedly to him. It is safe to claim that this task is a difficult one.

Then, there is yet another problem, namely one voiced in the last sentence of the last paragraph. The so-called passive links (agents) in the chain were not passive at all; they had their own intentions, for example Bosnia, which had the intention of declaring its independence, or Yugoslaviahad the intention to promote a post-socialist democracy with the elections. It is interesting to study these two events as tokens for two ways of applyingthe Principle of Ignorance. First, the election in Yugoslavia and the dissolution of the Communist party can be a showcase for how causal events unfold, even if agents think otherwise. It was the intention of Yugoslav leaders to continue Yugoslavia in a non-communist manner, however and unexpectedly, the will of the people steered them in a different direction, towards nationalism. The important point here is that even if some actions were performed in the light of an intention, the outcome and thus the reported event better fit a causal framework that contradicts the intention formed (assuming, for the sake of the argument, that the intention was to continue the Federation). This point can be stated with a certain degree of irony: even if the post-communist leaders wanted to play the nationalist card, i.e., even if they had the "secret intention" of becoming nationalist leaders, they opted for masking these intentions with a commitment towards Yugoslavia. It was the causal effect of the popular vote that allowed them to pursue their "true" intentions, or: Causality allowed intentionality.

Therefore, even intentions can be explained in the causal manner. Taking the Bosnian intention of becoming independent, one must ask, how such a goal is set. At the level of actions, the widely accepted answer is that goals are set by forming desire-belief pairs. There is a desire to be outside Yugoslavia or autonomous, and there is a belief that by declaring independency, this desire can become reality. However, how are desires formed? They can be accounted as reactions to different factors, for

example as a reaction to an oppressing warlord-state that is decaying. On other accounts, the belief-desire pair may have been caused by the general will of having full autonomy. As such, there are different accounts on how reasons cause actions, i.e. reasons cause the formation of belief-desires pairs that lead to given actions. Here, at the very micro-view of the term intention, causal laws may work and certainly can be used to explain actions. By defining decision finding in this way, the nomological (law-likeliness) character of causality is abandoned. Causality becomes a narrative category which allows numerous accounts (Davidson 1977).

Summing up, how far can one get by using the Principle of Ignorance and, more generally, causal explanations? For one, causal explanations allow the creation of a continuum, a series of links between events. Instead of narrating which aims agents have and how these aims may or may not lead to the desired outcomes, the causal explanation takes the desired outcomes as a given and asks how they influenced, interfered or impacted on agents and caused these to act and ultimately cause new events. The Principle of Ignorance allows for the creation of a chain in which agents act on reasons (and not solely in function of their aims). This means, the Principle of Ignorance gives weight to environmental factors and contextual settings, which are often underweighted by intentional explanations. There are, of course, problems. First, the Principle of Ignorance expects agents to be completely unaware of the factors that might impact on them; this may be very difficult to prove. Second, causality seems to imply a law-likeliness in actions, which – at least in history – does not seem usual. Both of these problems may be dealt with, but at the cost of turning the causal account into just a narrative category on how to state the events. How this might (or might not) help the historian will be discussed in the next section.

Beforehand, however, and in order to close this section, there is still a question to respond to: How do this causal narrative and the mentioned groups of explanations (Dragovic-Soso 2007) relate to each other? The causal narrative of Yugoslavia's falling apart is not as such an explanation for it. Therefore, it is difficult to subsume it to one of the five groups of explanations described above. The causal account is the consequence of a decision on how to describe historical facts. It is not

purely chronological, since pure chronology would not try to establish links between the events. It would even abstain from using verbs, since the decisions on which verbs to use is pre-disposed by the explanatatory framework that the narrator wants to use. Here, the construction of a causal chain has two implicit (value) judgments. Whereas the first applies equally to all historical narratives, the second is special for causal accounts. On the one hand, it must be decided which facts to include in the narrative. Which events are considered to be links in the causal chain? On the other hand, the beginning of this chain has to be set; which fact sets the whole causal chain in motion? Here, the death of Tito has been taken as such a fact. The groups of explanations discerned by DragovicSoso (2007) have at core causal and intentional arguments, respectively, but they are not a priori causal or intentional explanations. For example, longue-durée models seem to presuppose causality, but do not make the manifestations of the causal chain, let alone the Principle of Ignorance main themes of the model. In such case, the causal analysis proposed in this section helps to deepen the causal understanding that seems crucial for some explanations but is not entirely spelled out.

In this sense, the construction of the causal account serves two purposes. First, it allows the deepening of the understanding of the logical structure of some explanations for Yugoslavia's falling apart. Second, it is in itself a narrative technique that allows a series of events to be arranged in a given way. The pressing question now is whether the causal explanation yields to the desiderata a historian has, and whether it advances the understanding of a historical process, here the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

III. Gaining by losing - Conclusions

Anderson (1995) explained the dissolution of Yugoslavia to the Australian Parliament in a paper whose final chapter is aptly titled "The Cause of Wars". It goes as follows:

The paper concludes with an attempt to summarize the major factors, both domestic andinternational, which contributed to the conflict in former Yugoslavia. My assumption is that,however divisive the

historical factors, such as the centuries of oppression by differentregimes and the bitter experiences in World War II, the cultural diversity, and the geographicdispersion of nationalities may have been, these things need not have led to war. Certainly Yugoslavia waslacking in many of the cohesive features that characterize more stable societies, but conflict based on ethnic nationalism was only one of a number of possibilities for Yugoslavia.The central factor in the Yugoslav crisis is the relationship between the two biggestethnic groups, the Serbs and the Croats. Croatia was eager to secede from a Yugoslavstate dominated by Serbia, but 11.3 per cent of Croatia's population was Serbs.A key aspect of the above relationship is their differing perceptions of the common state: While Serbs basically opted for the creation of a strong federal stateof Yugoslavia, Croatian leaders tended to see Yugoslavia merely as a necessary step towards a fully independent Croat nationstate.A more immediate cause of the conflict was the assertion of Serbian nationalism, therevival of the Greater Serbia ideal. This was very much nationalism, manipulated and stimulated by President Milošević in his quest for power, particularly as communismbegan to fall apart in Yugoslavia. A prime early example of this occurred during theKosovo issue with his emphasis on the Serbian role over the centuries as victim of avariety of aggressors.Yugoslavia had been most unfortunate in the leadership of the two main republics.Tudjman's obsessive nationalism was seen at its worst both in his harsh treatment of theSerb minority and in his decision to leave Yugoslavia without taking into account theneeds and fears of this minority. Tudjman and Milošević initially provided the dynamicsof the war, an unchecked nationalism.

Is this a causal or an intentional account? On the one hand, Anderson (1995) uses the causal argument, as he brings Serbian nationalism into question and the Serbian answer to Croatian independentism. The Serbs reacting to Croatian claims may be seen not only as a causal account, but also as an impact of the Principle of Ignorance. The most important realm of the principle, however, is the attribution of a goal due to ethnicity. In this sense, "being Serbian" is a nomological category: When the Serbs are seen as unitarian or nationalists, because they are Serbs, and the Croatians as independents due to the fact of their being Croatian, causality is not only present, but nomonologically active. If a given person is assigned to be a unitarian

just because she is of Serbian ethnicity, then the deeper meaning entails that she does not have a choice, but is acting on a foreign power that causally determines her political stance. The person is not only unaware of this cause, but has no other option to act than to continue the causal link and assume the unitarian position.

This type of causality is problematic in at least two different ways. First, it is deterministic, meaning that individuals have no other option than to act in the stipulated way. The nomology spells out a general law of the kind "being an ethnic Serbs means taking such-and-such political stands". This law-likeliness is at peril as soon as a historian shows that an ethnic Serb has taken another political standing. It is even endangered if the "Serbs" collectively change their mind and turn from the one political stand to another. In such a causal-deterministic explanation, it is difficult to account for the development of the Serbian position from pro-Yugoslavism to "raw nationalism".

Second, this type of macro-causality conflicts with the micro-causality deemed useful in the previous section. Ingrao and Emmert (2009) explain "ethicized controversies" with a simple formula:By being Serbian, you automatically belong to the "Serbs". Sundhausen (1994) exemplifies what this macro-causality means: Each person belonging to an ethnicity has not an individual belief-desire pair, but always adheres to the collective pair. Being a Serb means sharing the same belief-desire pairs with all other Serbs. Each individual loses the capacity of free choice, i.e. the capacity of forming one's own intentions. More importantly – within the causal explanation – the individual actor loses the possibility of reacting individually to causal impacts. Or, causal impacts always affect the collective. Indeed, individual actions pose an explanatory problem to the collective causality and – at a more political level – also pose a critique or doubt as to the entire ethno-national collective. By the way, this type of macro-causality would also entail that individual action is value-neutral, i.e. that no person can be judged by his

or her own actions, since these actions occur within collective frames and not individually.[2]

In other words, if macro-causal explanations, especially those referring to a general law, fail to assess a situation, they show in failing that at least one group of explanations for the falling apart of Yugoslavia is wrong, at least conceptually. Longue durée, "ancient hatreds" and ethnicity do not explain anything, in fact. They might use the Principle of Ignorance, but their colliding with the micro-level causality, the decisions by single agents, pose a too meaningful challenge to overcome.

Another group of explanations is mentioned by Dragovic Soso (2007); the impact caused by external factors. Anderson, above, seems to disregard these factors, since he only mentions the Serb-Croatian relations as the cause of the falling apart. External involvement seems apt to transform the causal chain as well as apply the Principle of Ignorance. Yugoslav politicians of all colors might have calculated the scenarios of internal factors impacting on them, but it is less likely that they could foresee how external powers would enter the conflict. Anderson's not mentioning the two strongmen thinking about other countries seems to corroborate the view that external interventions were not assessed by Yugoslav leaders and came as a surprise to them. On the other hand, it is known by the causal narrative that external powers meddled in Yugoslav affairs from the beginning. In order to assess whether the Principle of Ignorance explains Yugoslav policies, the historian would have to show that Yugoslav politicians could not at any time have foreseen how external powers would act. This, too, might prove too ambitious. On the other hand, this failure might again help in understanding a different dynamic. If the nomological idea of causality is discarded, there still is the idea of causal chains. Accepting this leads to allowing for foreign powers (but also internal processes) to impact on plans and make the political actors change their plans. Some of the actions of the external agents were certainly not foreseeable – either in their content or in their timing – and these actions certainly impacted on Yugoslav politics, causing them to adapt. Of course, the explanation cannot be given in the

[2] This, by itself, is an interesting discussion, albeit outside the scope of this paper. This type of explanation entails that individual responsibility, for example for war crimes, is not possible.

form of a certainty, but it can be made plausible that courses of action were caused to change due to external influence.

There is also the loss of legitimization as a causal component for the falling apart of the State of South Slavs. This explanation begins with a difficulty for the causal understanding: Even if the loss of legitimization may be referred to in a causal way, causality in the strong sense still needs events that must be localized in time-space. It is causally appropriate to take the death of Tito as the starting-point of a causal chain, as it is equally acceptable to do so with a specific intervention from the outside. In the other sense of causality, a covering law may also work: In a simple practical syllogism, one could state that "If you are Croat, you act so and so; you are Croat, therefore you act so and so." How does it change with the loss of legitimization? Probably like: "Every time a state loses its legitimization, X occurs; Yugoslavia lost its legitimization; therefore Y occurs." Without wanting to discuss the historical adequacy of the general law, it is still questionable how a historian can fixthe moment of the loss of legitimacy. The idea, though, is attractive, since it presupposes that before that point in space-time there was still chance to advert the falling apart (and the war, genocide, and so on). In other words, the historian pursuing this type of causal explanation is searching for the "turning-point", for the moment in which legitimization is definitely lost.

The next question facing this explanation is the one posed by the Principle of Ignorance. Do the affected agents know about the loss of legitimization? The agents influenced by it are the same that cause it to be perceived. Here, cause and effect are intriguingly near, but, on the other hand, it may be just here that the Principle of Ignorance applies best. Every agent is the cause of the loss of legitimization. However, no agent knows beforehand, how this loss will impact him or her. So, even though the agent is the cause, he or she cannot know how, if and when the effect will impact, because he or she does not act as knowing of being the cause. On the contrary: Many perceived themselves as victims of the falling apart of Yugoslavia and as damaged by its loss of legitimization. The sole action of a single agent is neither necessary nor sufficient to explain this loss and does not seem to be a cause to the agent himself. The impact – especially if it comes as a tipping point – is more

appropriate to fulfill the conditions imposed by the causal explanation, especially considering the Principle of Ignorance.

Interestingly, the least causal of the causal explanations is the one that best fits the Principle of Ignorance. This seemingly paradoxical view can be best brought to the point by stating that the explanation that examines agents as active actors as well as passive parts of the causal chain is the one that conforms to the Principle of Ignorance. This can also mean that for the historian trying to establish a causal account, agents should be portrayed in both roles; as active generators of causal chains as well as passive links of the chain upon which causality impacts. In other words: Even in the causal explanations, agents have an important role, one that is very active and explains the directions that causality takes.

This leads to a bridge between this type of non-nomological causal explanation and the intentional accounts, typified in groups two and four according to Dragovic-Soso (2007). Intentional explanations – nationalism or the goals of selected agents – are also candidates for setting the causal chain in action. Not only events in the sense of Tito's death or the bombing of a city can set causality in motion, but also actions by other people. Actions, even wishes, can be those initial effects that cause different other links in the chain to react. Often, those groups portrayed as having intentions and actions are those reacting to newer developments or to a status-quo in which they are the generators of effect. Accepting the proximity of active and passive agent, as suggested above, also leads to accepting the proximity of intention (in the intentional sense) and cause. This also means that a separation of causal and intentional accounts may be wrong, and that a historian would do best to search for explanatory causal as well intentional factors behind the results.

Conclusion

This may also be the overall conclusion of this inquiry as to the role of causal explanations for the falling apart of Yugoslavia. With the Principle of Ignorance, causality has been portrayed as a principle, as a narrative mode, and as an explanatory figure for the breaking-up of the state of South Slavs. This approach to causality proved impossible due to numerous factors. Either the causal chain did not conform to the Principle of Ignorance, or the facts themselves were self-referential. In the end, the only role that causality as such seems to be able to play is to fulfill a narrative role. This, however, is not enough, for causality has an inherent explanatory claim. Therefore, this paper was not successful in establishing the role of causality.

This failure, however, is a success in itself, since it made it possible to show that intentional and causal explanations in history are much nearer than at a first sight. The failure itself shows that different modes of explanations of events are either theoretically flawed (e.g. ancient hatreds) or incomplete (e.g. external factors). The real conclusion of the failure in analyzing the causal mode is that in order to find adequate models, a much finer-grained approach is needed, one that focuses on special issues, not on overall narrative. These issues are, for example, the economy, institutions, elites, international context and so on. The falling apart of Yugoslavia has not just one causal or intentional explanation, but many multi-faceted links and chains that combine intentional and causal moments.

On similar grounds, a further direction of research may prove interesting. This paper has reduced action to generally individual action, or expanded it to group action paralleling individual agency. This means that the same type of explanation for single and multi-agent actions was given. It would not be commensurate with the scope of this paper to add to the complexity of action theory, but an analysis of collective intentionality and collective action could provide more insight into the role of causality in historical explanations (Bratman 2010).

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