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Federalism, Civil Society and Multiethnic Conflicts: Challenges in the Era of Globalisation

1. Prologue

We cannot proceed in our inquiries as if the tragedies of the 11 September and 25 October 2001 did not occur. The boundaries of destruction have been extended; a new spiral of violence has been set in motion by “global terrorism” and “global war against terrorism”. The world is once again moving in a dangerous direction, casting a shadow on all our enquires, increasing the need for critical reflection and rehabilitating the need for alternatives, i.e. increasing the need to enhance local and global conflict prevention and peace-making capacities.

2. Extending the framework of analysis

The post-Cold War era is characterised by intensified globalisation, and a new cycle of ethnic conflicts. The upsurge of demands for territorial autonomy and secessions is violently redefining cartographies in a number of locations. A reassessment of the relevancy and reach of the federalist formula is becoming a pressing need.
Although, in principle, the federalist formula provides the most accommodating framework for multiethnic societies, it is not a pre-packaged panacea. We must take note of the successes and failures of the federal model in diffusing and managing conflicts in multiethnic states, and preserving viable entities. Experiences of success and failure offer abundant edifying insights, but they do not generate coherent messages that can be systematised into a neat blueprint. A principle or policy that eases conflict in one situation may fuel it in another, the very federal arrangement that secures the state entity in one multiethnic setting, may lead to its violent break up in another. The problem is that no one principle, no one set of conditions, no one mode of responses to multiethnic challenges contains universal potency.

Matters are complicated even more by the experiences of failed multiethnic states (e.g. Yugoslavia) that have tried, and applied in their evolution, different political and economic models (both unitarism and federalism, capitalism and socialism), but have not suspended cycles of conflict and disintegration. It almost seems as if patterns of inevitability have been set at the heart of these societies, making failure an inescapable fate. How this historical logic persists is not fully comprehensible, but that it is there is asserted by the inability of a number of states (among others some in the former Soviet Union and the western Balkans) to attain irreversible assumption of development and stability, no matter which institutional setting they construct.

The range of issues is further extended by the new round of challenges evolving after the end of the Cold war, leading to the advancement of the (con)federal dimensions within the European Union (EU) on the one hand,
and the simultaneous dismantling of all three federations in ex-socialist
countries (in Yugoslavia by a devastating war) on the other.

If anything, these observations indicate the complexity of conditions and
factors that determine the reach of federal arrangements and their capacity to
contribute to self-sustained peace\(^3\) in multiethnic entities. Among an array of
factors, we wish to explore in this paper the significance of the character of
civil society, as well as of globalisation. Our hypothesis is that in addition to
such factors as federal arrangements and institutions, the character of civil
society and the effects of globalisation as an overriding process transforming
the nation state, local settings and actors are decisive in determining the
conflict resolution capacities of federalism. Therefore, in our analysis of the
peace-enhancing capacities of federalism in multiethnic states, we propose an
extension of the “framework of meaningful analyses” (Toynbee, 1953) in two
directions encompassing: a) the relationship between federalism and the
character of civil society, and b) the nature of the deep transformations of the
state and civil society taking place as a result of the increasing rhythm of
globalisation, and its influence on the reach of the federalist project.

3. The nature of civil society and federalism

Civil society is a concept with a long history, changing significance, different
meanings, and a strong normative charge (Keane, 1988; Elazar, 1999, 35-43).
It is fundamentally linked to the history of the nation state and the extension of
individual freedom. The dissident movements in Eastern Europe during the
seventies and eighties recovered its emancipatory potential. Its contemporary
conceptualisation reflects an array of interpretations of its normative and real
content. A summary glance at the varied interpretations reveals a number of differences.

The majority of interpretations preserve the classical idea according to which civil society derives its meaning in relation to the state, becoming a restraining agent against the state and its tendency to abuse its powers. Others while recognising the distinction between the political and social realm and the need to limit the coercive powers of the state resist the rigidity of this distinction as an over-simplification that overlooks the mutual intertwining of the state and civil society.

Although the self-determining individual, voluntary human associations (Walzer), and social movements are widely recognised as central actors of civil society, differences appear in relation to the family, economy and political parties. Some authors include them, while others exclude them from the realm of civil society.

In terms of values, individual autonomy, rights (individual and collective), pluralism, and tolerance (Sanders) are uncontested, while solidarity, common responsibility, unity and cohesion are subject to disagreement: “Civil society is the sphere of radical individualism and not of solidarity” (Elazar). Some perceive civil society as encompassing ethnicity while others perceive it as inherently being trans-ethnic. Some perceive it as unconditionally progressive and anti-totalitarian, others indicate its ambivalent nature (Walker).

In spite of the differences and the nuances of interpretation, it is possible to distil those dimensions that are relevant for a normative project of civil society, congruent with federalism’s potential for conflict prevention and preservation.
of multiethnic states. The character of civil society in a multiethnic state is crucial in determining whether integrative or disintegrative tendencies will prevail.

Having the challenge in mind, civil society should be posited as a sphere of common values, where the balance of self-interest, common responsibility and inter-communality is advocated and demonstrated, together with multiple and changing identities (Parekh) within an inclusive “WE” (Fleiner). Civil society is the realm where the memory of the great task – bettering the existing society – is preserved.

It should be a space of dense and overlapping networks preventing radical polarisation, and working against the intolerant universalisation of religions and exclusivity of ethnicity (Walzer). Participatory responsibility should be the foundation of its democratic character and consensual capacity. Moderate, non-violent actors should be the bearers of the will for “historical compromises”. As such it would provide the natural societal basis for a democratic federalism, creating the framework for decentralisation, territorial autonomy and democratic integration, consolidating and sustaining the common state.

However, in reality, such features of civil society and its integrative function are not abundant. Their principal locations are modern, developed, prosperous societies. In multiethnic countries of the periphery, civil society has more often than not been a weak means of conflict prevention. Instead, in a number of cases, the civil society itself has become ethnicified, fragmented
along ethnic lines (torn, fragmented civil society), actively participating in the process of disintegration.

4. Federalism, multiethnic conflicts, and torn civil societies

Contrary to the initial euphoric conclusions that with the end of Cold War an “end to all dramatic conflicts has come about” (Fukuyama, 1992), the fire of ethnic conflicts, as already noted, has not been quenched. On the contrary, it seems as if with the end of Cold War a “lid” was lifted, releasing a number of ethnic conflicts, both violent and less violent. This rather unexpected outcome demonstrated the complex fragility of multiethnic entities, in particular of ethnic federalism, confirming that “in fact, ethnic federations are among the most difficult of all to sustain and are least likely to survive ... They run the risk of secession” (Elazar).

Second, contrary to the simplified stereotyped explanations of the cause of conflicts in multiethnic societies – ancestral hatred, lack of democracy, economic poverty – these societies are characterised by plural sources of conflict, that intersect, accumulate, and inevitably become violent. The roots of ethnic conflicts are multifaceted and deeply embedded in the social structures. Although “ancestral tribal hatreds” may be present, insisting exclusively on this dimension ignores the concrete circumstances and issues of conflict, insists on intractability, and invites external patronage and solutions.

"Those who speak or write glibly about "ancestral tribal hatreds" as a presumptive explanation of a conflict usually betray more of their own ignorance than knowledge about the situation they report on. Ethnic conflicts
evolve out of specific historical situations, they are moulded by particular and unique circumstances, and they are constructed to serve certain interest by ... political leaders and “ethnic power-brokers” of various kinds” (Stavenhagen, 1996, 229).

One should note in this context, that the weight of power elites on the social scale of semi-peripheral and distinctively multinational society is greater than in their developed Western counterparts. Under the influence of elites and their spiritual bombardment, an extraordinary scale of mass intoxication can be achieved by the opium of nationalism – a change of the public mood from a rather low degree of hibernated nationalistic feelings to the chauvinism embittered by mutual hate and “remembrance” of past grievances.

Lack of democracy, discrimination against minorities, and economic stagnation are all part of the picture, but they are not the whole picture, or the whole explanation for this resurgence. In some cases, economic poverty and deprivation are triggers of ethnic rebellions or secessionist movements. However, secessionist movements often have their cradle in the richest parts of the country (Canada, Spain, Congo). The same goes for the lack of democracy. If it were the explanation for the upsurge of ethnic conflicts, then problems with multi-ethnicity would not appear in democratic, economically developed states. However this is not the case. In addition, if the lack of democracy were the basis for secession, the newly formed states would be devoted to the development of democracy, and particularly sensitive to their own minorities, which by and large is also not the case. Even in the best examples, such as the democratic and economically prosperous Czech Republic, the position of the Roma minority has remained an acute problem.
Cultural segregation of minorities, and their language and education is a powerful cause of ethnic conflict, but encouragement in accommodating collective rights and identity, may be the very impetus for future secessionist movements. Federal arrangements themselves can create an appetite for the successive creation of new states within states, which becomes a barrier to the formation of a stronger civil society. Centralised structures based on the consensus of ethnic elites (Malaysia) or a strong supra-national elite (former-Yugoslavia) can, at least for a time, limit the scale of ethnic conflict. Repressive regimes may be an incentive for ethnic conflict, but the dismantling of a repressive political system can bring about an explosion of ethnic conflict as well (Ethiopia).

The case of Yugoslavia is very telling example of some of the mixed messages and challenges facing the federalist project.

First, Yugoslavia was one of the three socialist federations that disappeared in a most violent manner. In spite of the political limitations of its federalism during socialism, it went a long way towards accommodating the ethnic plurality of its society. Yet it was unable to undergo a peaceful transition after the Cold War, and embark on a path of political pluralisation without producing radical ethnic divisions from the outset of its transition. Wavering between unitarism and federalism in the past, the last chapter of its evolution bore the imprint of federalism, resulting in a high degree of autonomy for its federal entities and a weak federal state. Therefore, the outcome after the end of the Cold War suggests that federalism can be a favourable political framework for the incubation and accumulation of forces leading to the disintegration of the state.
Second, the break-up of Yugoslavia speaks of the ambivalent relation of the international community to the right of self-determination. The unilateral secession of some of the Republics was internationally recognised, while the quest for self-determination of others was opposed by sanctions.

Third, new entities evolving after the break-up, instead of applying federal principles in order to accommodate their own minorities, applied ethnic cleansing, creating homogenous states. Creating ethnically clean states and resolving the minority problem by ethnic cleansing is currently the most dangerous tendency hindering the affirmation of federal principles.

Fourth, in the current phase of the drama of the former Yugoslavia, we are witnessing growing external pressures to centralise Bosnia and dissolve its (con)federal aspects, which runs contrary external pressures on Macedonia to federalise in order to ease ethnic tensions. However, the constitutional changes have not suspended the danger of breaking up. In federal Yugoslavia, Montenegro is seeking independence, while Serbia (one autonomous region) is seeking further federalisation of the present Yugoslavia and the constitution of new federal units, and Kosovo (the other autonomous region) has attained a de facto independence under foreign protectorate. In other words, the process of disintegration has not yet come to an end in this region, irrespective of whether the federal formula is applied or not. If anything, the contradictory experience of former Yugoslavia confirms that the deepest roots of its past and potential collapse lie in the character of the society, and not in the federalist arrangements as such.
This brings us to a short examination of the consequences of a fragmented civil society.

Torn civil societies are a reflection of the intensity of the conflict axis within an entity. Therefore one of their foremost characteristics is the high potential for explosive violence (potential “explosive multiculturality”). However, a fundamental feature of torn, fragmented civil society is also the coexistence of several embryonic civil societies within one entity. These embryonic civil societies may coexist as enclaves of ethnic exclusivity with little interconnection, or they may become the basis for future independent states. The embryonic civil societies are in fact carrying out “social secession” prior to the secession of federal units, placing themselves at the service of the state in statu nascendi. Media, education and cultural associations all become architects of a reinvigorated exclusive ethnic identity. The paradox of federalism in a torn, fragmented civil society is that the development of autonomy and collective rights are unavoidable, while at the same time greater collective rights do not stabilise the community, since collective rights are perceived only as steps toward the final aim – the independent state – thus leading to secession.

Success in resolving ethnic conflicts requires a double operation. Firstly, there should be intervention into the social infrastructure and civil society, and its transition from a fragmented to a normal, trans-ethnic civil society. This Herculean task presupposes a number of operations from economic development through, as Burton termed, “conflict provention” (provention as distinct from prevention, meaning the satisfaction of basic human needs, including the need for identity and security), to more ethnically (socially)
balanced distribution of wealth. All this could strengthen the “ethnically cooperative” dimensions of civil society, those strands that have preserved the need for multiple identities.

The second operation is to establish the decisive balance between individual and collective rights, freedom and self-limitation, i.e. the integrative capacity of the community. Preserving multi-ethnicity per se means developing and cultivating a balance between the two poles, establishing a “degree a cohesion” as the basis for the realisation of both individual and collective rights. The Magna Charta of societal federalism presupposes linking (individual and collective) rights with limitations, i.e. responsibilities. This means pursuing rights together with the preservation of the community, or at least a commitment not to secede violently.

A summary of some of the messages relevant for our discussion would point out the following.

- We are witnessing a strange paradox, at a moment when processes of integration are advancing and political and cultural pluralism is being celebrated at the global level, disintegrative processes are occurring in a number of multiethnic settings, and the need for homogeneous states is being strongly articulated. It seems that at this juncture, the drive to resolve conflicts by secession is stronger than opting for a viable federalist formula.

- There are similarities between Tilly’s description of the pre-Westphalian scramble for states, in which “most contenders lost” and those who survived (e.g. Britain, France and Spain) succeeded in
establishing their states, and the present occurrences. These suggest that following the end of Cold War we are witnessing another similar cycle of state making through violence, with new winners and losers. The need to reaffirm federalist principles in the face of this new cycle of violence should be self-evident.

- An effective preventive mechanism that can be assured by democratic federalism is that secession-prone entities perceive that there is "nothing to gain" by secession (Kymlicka, 2000, 8), i.e. that the independent state cannot override the benefits of remaining part of a larger whole. However, for some ethnic groups, the state per se is perceived as a gain worth all sacrifices. This seems to reflect the potency of a demand that is not entirely rooted in the rational realm.

- Following the unfortunate dramatic experience in former Yugoslavia, the international community may provide an impetus for federalisation (granting territorial autonomy to minorities, for example) by rehabilitating the Helsinki principle of inviolability of borders, and grant states "strong assurances regarding secession" (Kymlicka), guaranteeing the integrity of borders, an integrity that is recognised by the minorities.

However, it seems equally reasonable to provide firm, enforceable rules and procedures for those ethnic groups that persist in seceding. Unilateral, violent secession would not be acceptable for the international community. If undertaken, no international recognition or economic assistance would ensue. Negotiations would be required until
an acceptable solution for all parties is found, possibly envisioning the realisation of secession in phases. Ethnic generosity should be encouraged (instead of ethnic egotism), as well as a sense of responsibility for the larger whole in the very process of leaving it.

The dictum, do not do to others what you do not wish to be done to you, is applicable to this situation. It would mean that the rights of the minorities in the new state would have to be recognised and upheld, including the possible loss of parts of its own newly acquired territory.

- Finally, to reconstitute local civil society as a trans-ethnic sphere, a network of identities, a sphere of tolerance and trust, and the evolution of a stronger global civil society\(^\text{10}\) on the basis of global democracy, are essential.

5. Globalisation, transformation of civil society, federalism

5.1.

The point of departure for our analysis is twofold. Civil society is a crucial determinant of the success or failure of the federal formula. However, a decisive historical novelty is the profound transformation of the nation state and civil society brought about by the wave of globalisation. Globalisation, this central planetary process, consists of two substantial dimensions. One dimension is the objective planetary process: the unprecedented speed of globalisation in terms of compression of time and space, the increasing density of networks of interconnecting societies, and the rise of trans-national and supra-national economic and political forces. This process has reached such proportions that it has turned into an over-determining force, a force
reshaping national economies and polities, together with their options and reach.\textsuperscript{11}

Globalisation tends to be depicted exclusively as an objective, historical, irreversible, self-propelling, incontestable process generating progress.\textsuperscript{12} It is viewed as an expression of an immutable law similar to the one governing the movement of planets.\textsuperscript{13} The inevitability of globalisation is comparable, as T. Friedman notes, to the inevitability of the sun rising every morning on the East (Friedman, 1999). It is not a matter of will or choice but of historical determinism. The question of alternatives is to be dispensed with.\textsuperscript{14} The imperative is adaptation, contesting voices are disqualified as voices of the defeated past.

Although technological advancement and the expansion of world market and communication networks are substantial, globalisation is not only an objective process. It is also a concrete historical project, the result of a worldview and interest, ideals, and illusions of the dominant sector of the global transnational elite of power. The distinction between globalisation as an objective process and its particular historical form is important because, among other things, it recaptures the right to choice. Whether it is leading to the globalisation of poverty or to the gradual extension of welfare to broader social strata, whether it is signifying the annulment of diverse cultures, or their fruitful interaction, whether it is strengthening global democracy or authoritarian forms of global governance – in short whether it is democratic “globalisation with a human face”, or a neo-liberal globalisation based on market fundamentalism,\textsuperscript{15} ethnic conflicts may be mitigated or become increasingly
explosive, the prospects of extending the federal principles may become stronger or bleaker.

5.2.

The current neo-liberal form of globalisation is highly ambivalent, and the ambiguity of its effects permeates all spheres of society, in particular civil society.

As far as global economy is concerned, hand in hand, with the new global mobility of trans-national capital, the growth of fabulous wealth marches with oceans of poverty and deprivation. More and more people are redundant, “everyone is potentially replaceable”, and collective defences of workers rights (trade unions) are less and less effective. Solidarity has been one of the main victims of the neo-liberal project, humane consideration is dismissed as hindering economic efficiency. Poverty is interpreted as an individual and not a structural problem. Indifference to human distress and misery are growing. Undermining solidarities, the current version of globalisation undermines the powers of civil society and its capacity to recognise common causes, common good.16

The connecting of the world by information and communication technology is creating assumptions for a cosmopolitan culture, while at the same time coercive homogeneity is being pursued, suspending local cultures and producing fundamentalist responses.

In the sphere of political life the same ambivalent logic persists. The distinctive feature of political globalisation is the spreading of democracy and human rights to all corners of the world. Since the overthrow of the dictatorship in
Portugal 1974, the number of democracies in the world has grown at a meteoric speed, jumping from 39 to 117 (1995). In addition, a planetary network of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) has emerged, promoting democracy and human rights. However, while universalising democracy, celebrating freedom and human rights, the neo-liberal version of globalisation is producing “low intensity democracies”, i.e. expansion of formal not substantive democracy at the level of nation state (in the old and new peripheries), and a number of symptoms of authoritarian governance at the global level. These include: new planetary military interventions (often in the guise of “humanitarian intervention”), the re-enforcement of the principle “might makes right” instead of the rule of law, the marginalization of the United Nations (UN), and the instrumentalisation of international institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank etc.) for geo-strategic interests, resolving conflicts by establishing new modes of protectoratship).

Globalisation is also redefining the historical setting in relation to the civil society. However we define civil society, the relationship toward the state, as we noted, remains a marking relevancy. This relationship has never been a simple duality, but one of complex intertwining, as Gramsci pointed out. Due to the character and magnitude of globalisation, this relationship has become additionally complex. The complexity relates to the transformation (or, according to hyper-globalists, death) of the nation state, and the weakness of global civil society.

The transformation of the state is uneven, resulting in the simultaneous existence of different types of sovereignties. These can be classed as “pre-modern” (weak states with only the formal aspects of sovereignty), modern
(strong states possessing classical positive sovereignty – indisputable rule of their territory – and preserving a number of key functions in the realm of welfare, human rights and security), and post-modern (a new kind of sovereignty of interdependent states; the power of decision making lost at the nation level is compensated by the participation in the decision making at a higher regional and global level). Summarising the character of the unevenness, we can say that globalisation is producing a proliferation of weak states, loosing monopoly over internal sovereignty, hand in hand with the evolvement of one all-powerful superstate (the United States). This differentiation certainly has implications for the strength and agenda of civil societies and their different capacities to deal with local and global challenges.

In the classical interpretation the raison d’etre of civil society is to limit the power of the state, and contest its reification, in other words to oppose the world of power in the name of individual freedom and collective solidarity. If the structures of power are now extra-territorial, i.e. at locations beyond and above the nation state, then the challenge facing civil societies has also changed. Contestation now extends to the new trans-national locations of power; the defence of autonomy entails a visible response to trans-national political and economic imperatives and pressures that may run counter to local or national interests and needs. Instead of extending its struggle for autonomy and freedom of individuals “to influence the conditions of their own life, to formulate the common good, examining, renegotiating the range of choices” (Bauman, 1999, 107), local civil society may be incorporated and appropriated by the global project. In other words, civil societies can become in the new constellations simultaneously a force for de-legitimising an
authoritarian regime, but also for weakening the nation state in relation to the
demand of trans-national forces and structures of power, tying the social order
to trans-national interests (Robinson). In situations when authoritarian regimes
are being dismantled, and the society is embarking on a path of
democratisation and transition, global forces have undertaken political
interventions in a number of locations (Robinson) in order to establish control
over the civil society, “shaping the contours of antiauthoritarian movements
and establishing the terms and conditions under which social and political
struggles would unfold”. Modes of political intervention have included political
aid, elaborate machinery for electoral assistance (“get out to vote” drives,
ballet box watching, poll taking, parallel vote counts), civic training,
establishing parallel women and youth organisations, unions, education of the
educators, i.e. creating opinion leaders and networks of influence. Due to this
type of intervention, broad antiauthoritarian convergence can in fact mask
different and competing political projects and different functions of the civil
society. Depending on the scale of appropriation of the civil society,
antiauthoritarian struggles may end with a state that is more responsive to the
needs of the local population or global interests.

The influence of global forces may thus produce a schism in dependent civil
societies, a division between those that are victimised by the incorporation of
the state into the global economy (by the effects of shock therapy for
instance), and those that are becoming the local beneficiaries of global
processes. One side will include organisations, associations and NGOs that
directly transmit the imperatives of the global forces and act as tentacles of
global powers and their interest, with a lifestyle far above the prevailing local
standard. On the other side, we will find the victimised, particularly the work
force (unions), unemployed, church and youth organisations, with some of
these embracing various strands of nationalism.

The victimised will probably perceive the nascent global civil society as a
natural (but distant and weak) ally; others will suspend it as an irrelevant, old
leftist (anarchistic) adagio. However, if we bear in mind that the distinction
between the state and civil society was crucial for the extension of freedom
and autonomy at the nation-state level, then the development of a strong
global civil society is important for establishing a similar distinction at the
global level. This would also be a crucial assumption for the reconstitution of
local civil societies as realms of freedom and solidarity in this era of
globalisation.

5.3.

The previous discussion has shown that globalisation is a movement of
hegemonic and emancipatory paradoxes. These ambivalences are relevant
for assessing the prospects of existing federations and for the further reach of
its principles. They have extended the space for the federal option, but they
have also increased the complexity of its challenges. The integrative
processes are supportive of the expansion of federalist arrangement, although
Elazar has predicted that the confederal mode will be better suited in a
situation of transformed nation states. The disintegrative tendencies of
globalisation, the increasing gap between the prosperous few and
impoverished many will, however, fuel conflicts and increase the number of
failed states in the old and new peripheries.
Neo-liberalism has a vested interest in increasing the number of weak states since they are less likely to resist the globalisation of financial capital. Thus, “the separatists of all colours enter an unholy alliance with the forces of ruthless globalisation” (Bauman, 1992, 194). In addition, exclusionary practices will diminish the incentive for members to remain in a federal state if they judge that they have a better chance of becoming part of the privileged world if they act alone.20

However, exclusionary practices will also lead to increasing attempts to “exclude the excluders” (i.e. unpredictable outbursts of violence), and thus to widespread feelings of un-safety (particularly among citizens in the rich countries who will be turning their homes into electronic fortresses). Fear will undermine the autonomy and reflective abilities of individuals and their sense of community.

The globalisation of democracy and the extension of the protection of human rights to the non-state actors are conducive to the extension of federal principles. But the exercise of “consensual hegemony” in civil and political society at the level of individual nations, results in low intensity democracy and rudimentary respect for human rights (social rights are by and large excluded), leading to a new round of conflicts.21 Finally, the nascent cosmopolitan culture heralds the possibility of a “WE” (we the citizens of the one-world/many worlds), while coercive cultural homogenisation generates a resurgence of ethnicity, and religious exclusivity.

In short, the effects of globalisation on the success or failure, revitalisation or degradation of federalism are contradictory. At one pole, as the experience of
EU in vivo demonstrates, federalism is being revitalised at a new level, the level of the supra-national state. At the other pole, in multiethnic countries of the (European) periphery, à la Yugoslavia, federalism is “withering” away. That is, in the first act of the Yugoslav drama, the federation was dismantled in a violent, malignant form by the nationalist elites. This dismantling was co-authored by the global powers. In the current act of the drama, the global powers are imposing the federal solution on the elite of Serbia and Montenegro. In the first round, federalism underwent a violent death, in the second it is reincarnated but in the form of an externally imposed “protectorate federalism”.

To conclude, in the era of dominant influence of trans-national forces on the nation states and local civil societies, the global order and its actors are becoming a decisive factor for the success or failure of the federal formula, for the sustainability of democratic multicultural states, and for determining the reach and agenda of civil society. The ambivalences of the current process have created both a need for federalism and obstacles to its implementation, the need for strong civil societies and their appropriation by the global power structures.

6. Federal principles of conflict prevention and resolution

6.1.

The conflict prevention potential of federalism is determined by its ability to recognise the “impurities” of dichotomies, and to resist translating complex linkages and complementarities into opposing poles and/or choices. The federalist project promotes instead delicate (dialectical) balances,
simultaneously aiming to accommodate diversities\textsuperscript{22} and develop a sense of community, i.e. promote collective rights and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{23} This implies that individual rights should include the right to a community and that communal responsibility is an expression and fulfilment of self-interest.\textsuperscript{24}

Therefore, one can say that the central concept of the federalist project is balance, a balance that enables a community to function, develop, and resolve its conflicts in a non-violent manner. “Balance” is not a rhetorical, empty category, but an existential imperative in traumatised, impoverished, multiethnic societies. In such a setting, balance has a mobilising and healing potential. “Balance” implies transcending conflicting dualities in a consensual, compromising manner, a win-win logic that is a fundamental precondition for developing the social capacity for the non-violent resolution of conflicts.

6.2.

The conflict prevention capacity of federalism depends on its institutional and political arrangements, and practical implementation of the dialectics of balance, but also on the “will to federate” (Elazar) being rooted, upheld and promoted in civil societies, as well as on strong external (global) incentives to stay together. In other words, today the preconditions for enhancing the conflict prevention and resolution capacity of federalism in multiethnic societies have become local and global. Moreover, external factors may be of decisive importance.

It should be added that the conflict prevention potential of civil society in multiethnic entities, depends not only on its will to federate, but on its capacity to establish and articulate the connections between issues, and in this way
prevent fragmentation along one axis, that is to say extend the social basis for coalitions. Deprivations exist in a number of different locations and there is no one natural frame (culture, ethnicity etc.) for summing them up (Bauman) for the purpose of their collective rectification. Connections between different locations of deprivations should be made in order to secure both justice and peace. This is where the trans-ethnic potential of civil society resides.

Federalism has a peace-building capacity in a conflict situation where a stalemate has evolved, i.e. where neither side can win and where civil societies are fragmented. In such cases, federal arrangements can accommodate a negotiated compromise between the secessionist demands of a minority and the demand of the government to re-establish complete control. This can be achieved providing that the compromise itself (and not one of the conflicting parties) is supported by global actors. Furthermore, it is important that civil society initiates efforts for a collective understanding of the roots and nature of conflict, and various forms of reconciliation.

6.3.

Pointing out the relevancy of the local-global linkage in assessing the conflict resolution potential of federalism means that extending democracy to the global level, establishing the rule of law in place of “might makes right”, addressing the plight of the poor, developing an authentic cosmopolitan culture, dismantling the war machinery and seeking non-violent solutions to conflict, all have direct bearings on the local processes, options and agencies. Global democracy would be supportive of local autonomy, and rational national interests defined by a broad social consensus. The rule of law at the
global level would diminish the geo-strategic arbitrariness in relating to the local crisis, and reinforce the credibility of the rule of law within states, as well as the emancipatory, integrative potential of civil society. Embarking on a coalition for developing globalisation with a human face, i.e. rehabilitating solidarity, would diffuse an array of local social conflicts between the excluded and included, and the ethnification of social tensions. Developing an un-coercive, authentic cosmopolitan culture would give practical meaning to the concept of multiple identities, and multiple un-conflicting loyalties.

In short, a project of globalisation with a vested interest in creating weak states, dismantling all obstacles to the free flow of capital, securing profits independent of social costs, securing resources and defending privileges by all means, and a project with a vested interest in strengthening the rule of law, extending democracy to the global level, and promoting solidarity with the poor would obviously affect local situations, the strength of civil society and relevancy of the federal principles in two entirely different ways. It will either increase their capacity for conflict prevention and resolution or it will contribute to their historical irrelevancy.

7. Epilogue

The possibility for extending the range of options, and the chance to recapture the right to an alternative and respond to the call for ingenuity utilising the accumulated insights and experiences, seems drastically suspended by the fury and rage of the desperate, and the violence of the privileged. The global war on terrorism will increase the uncertainties, the irrationalities and the authoritarian tendencies, giving an impetus to further painful fragmentations,
weakening the relevancy of the principles of federal liberty and possibilities of non-violent resolution of conflicts. Failed states will increase in numbers, and fortress states will emerge. The network of civil society energies, both local and global, faces a dramatic challenge.

References


1 See Watts, 1999; Fleiner, 1999, in *Federalism and Civil Societies*.

2 See Berand, 2000, 3. Berand notes the long durée of economic trends in this region.

3 By self-sustained peace we mean organic peace that is upheld by the very nature of the social and state order without violence and external intervention. See Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 1999, 191-194.


5 Althusius’ theory is very inspiring as Hueglin points out. It offers a concept of civil society in which state and society appear organised by one common and universal logic of communicative action. Instead of separating social plurality from political unity, politics itself becomes a pluralised, federalised sphere for the accommodation and coordination of diverse social interests. See Hueglin, 1999, 106.

6 For Huntington, the clash of civilisations is going to be the major new axis of conflict at the global level in the post-Cold War era. If there is any substance to the “clash of civilisations” hypothesis, then it is highly probable that we will witness a further fuelling of ethnic conflicts at the capillary level as well. Just taking one recent example, when the United States began bombing Afghanistan, Muslim groups attacked Christian minorities in Pakistan and Nigeria, an indication perhaps of some of the developments that may await us.

7 “Ethnic conflicts constitute a particular kind of social and political confrontation that is more related to the question of identity and deeply rooted values than to issues of rational interest. Consequently they tend to be protracted, linked to collective historical memories and their reinterpretations, suffused with highly charged emotions and passions, imbued with myths and fears and perceived threats, entwined with deeply held beliefs and aspiration and thus much more difficult to reduce to the ordinary give-and-take of political bargaining.” See Stavanhagen, 1996, 229.

8 See Watts, 1999.

9 See Tilly, 1975, 15: “State-making involved ruthless competition in which most contenders lost”.

10 “This global civil society must be both respectful of and celebratory toward cultural diversity, and mindful of human solidarity and planetary unity in the struggles against cruelty, violence, exploitation and environmental decay.” Cf. Falk, 1995, 3.

11 This unprecedented local/global interdependence is well expressed by the term “glocalization”, devised by R. Robertson (Baumann, 1998, 70)

12 Weisbrot et al. (2001) have examined the major economic and social indicators for all countries for which data are available, and compared the last 20 years of globalisation (1980-2000) with the previous 20 years (1960-1980). They have found that for economic growth and almost all of the other indicators (life expectancy, infant, child and adult mortality, literacy, education) the last 20 years have shown a very clear decline in progress as compared with the previous two decades.

13 As John Gray puts it: “Global market and free trade are not natural phenomena but an end product of social engineering and unyielding political will.” We may add that substantial coercion is required to make it into a natural phenomena (Held et al., 13)
This more so with the death of communism. “It is assumed that the practical discrediting of communism ... disqualifies in advance any doubts about the unchallengeable superiority of the really existing regime of freedom and the consumer market ...” See Bauman, 1992.

Soros, argues that market fundamentalism is a greater threat to open society than any totalitarian ideology. Cf. Soros, 1998, xxii.

See Walzer, 1995, 308.


“The main difference between international politics now and earlier is not found in the increased interdependence of states but in their growing inequality. With the end of bi-polarity, the distribution of capabilities across states has become extremely lopsided. Rather than elevating economic forces and depressing political ones, the inequalities of international politics enhance the political role of one country.” See Waltz, 1999, 700.


That is one reason why more affluent parts of the peripheral countries, but also of some developed countries, have been interested in seceding.


One should note that the tendency to celebrate differences divorced from the issues of equality and solidarity, leads, for instance, to poverty being treated as one expression of diversity, and indifference being disguised as tolerance.

When seeking a viable balance between the individual and collective needs and rights, the Buddhist principle that “the community should provide for everybody’s need but not for somebody’s greed” is instructive as well.

Or in the words of Althusisus, “dialectical balance between individual freedoms and communal belonging” should be established.

As Fraser (1997, 57) points out, group identity cannot supplant class interest, nor can cultural recognition displace socio-economic redistribution as the remedy for injustice. “Justice today requires both redistribution and recognition, cultural politics of difference that can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality”.

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