

**TRACES OF NORBERT ELIAS IN THE SOCIALIST
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA: A FIGURATIVE
ANALYSIS OF THE COLLAPSE OF YUGOSLAV IDENTITY**

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the process from the foundation of Yugoslavia to its collapse was examined by considering Norbert Elias's figurations. Yugoslavia serves as evidence of how accurate Elias's figurations are in the context of states. It also signifies the delicate balances inherent in these figurations. Yugoslavia stands as proof of how the disruption of balance in figurations can lead to undesirable outcomes. In this context, Elias' definition of four figurations was applied to the case of Yugoslavia, and a figurative answer was sought for the reason for the collapse of Yugoslav identity. The way different nations came together and the factors influencing this union were examined within the framework of Elias's "survival unit". Yugoslavia's disintegration was exemplified by the figuration of the survival unit. As known, in Yugoslavia, an effort was made to establish a "we" among different nations coming together, but since every nation couldn't abandon the "I" mentality, this endeavour proved unsuccessful. The cooperation of different nations for survival, how this cooperation process functioned, and the fact that nations continued to compete despite all cooperation were evaluated within the framework of the "cooperation and competition balance" figuration. The "involvement and detachment figuration", exemplified by a football match in Yugoslavia, serves as a compelling example of this balance.

Keywords: Political Sociology, Yugoslavia, Norbert Elias, Survival Unit, Figurations.

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YUGOSLAVYA SOSYALİST FEDERAL CUMHURİYETİ'NDE NORBERT ELIAS'IN İZLERİ: YUGOSLAV KİMLİĞİNİN ÇÖKÜŞÜNE İLİŞKİN FİGÜRATİF BİR ANALİZ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, Norbert Elias'ın figürasyonları göz önünde bulundurularak Yugoslavya'nın kuruluşundan çöküşüne kadar olan süreç incelenmiştir. Yugoslavya, devletler örneğinde Elias figürasyonlarının ne kadar doğru olduğunun, aynı zamanda bu figürasyonların ne kadar hassas dengelemeler içerdiğinin bir göstergesidir. Yugoslavya, figürasyonlardaki dengenin bozulması halinde, istenmeyen sonuçlara nasıl yol açabileceğinin bir kanıtıdır. Bu bağlamda Elias'ın dört figürasyon tanımı, Yugoslavya örneğinde uygulanmış ve Yugoslav kimliğinin çöküşüne dair figüratif bir cevap aranmıştır. Farklı milletlerin nasıl bir araya geldiği ve bu bir araya gelmede etkili olan faktörler, Elias'ın "hayatta kalma birimi" çerçevesinde incelenmiş, Yugoslavya'nın parçalanması, hayatta kalma biriminin figürasyonu ile örneklendirilmiştir. Bilindiği gibi, farklı milletlerin bir araya gelmesiyle kurulan Yugoslavya'da bir "biz" olma çabası gösterilmiş; ancak her millet "ben" fikrinden vazgeçemediği için bu çaba başarılı olamamıştır. Farklı milletlerin hayatta kalmak için işbirliği yapması, bu işbirliği sürecinin nasıl işlediği ve tüm işbirliğine rağmen milletlerin rekabet etmeye devam etmesi, "işbirliği ve rekabet dengesi" figürasyonu çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. "Dahili ve harici olma figürasyonu", Yugoslavya'da bir futbol maçı örneği ile bu dengelemeyi iyi bir şekilde açıklayan örneklerden biridir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyaset Sosyolojisi, Yugoslavya, Norbert Elias, Hayatta Kalma Birimi, Figürasyonlar.

Introduction

Yugoslavia, as one of the most significant Cold War figures, is unique in its foundation, geography, and system. Many scholarly studies have been conducted on the "survival" dynamics of Yugoslavia. These dynamics will be attempted to be explained in this research using the approaches of Norbert Elias, one of the twentieth century's most influential sociologists.

Numerous studies have been done on why Yugoslavia broke up. The various underlying reasons for Yugoslavia's defeat of ethnic nationalism have been examined in many studies. However, in the bibliometric analysis, it was seen that the Yugoslav identity was not examined separately in the context of the survival unit, the we-I balance, the balance of cooperation and

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competition, and involvement and detachment. There is a connection between Elias' figurations and Yugoslavian practice in the endeavour of many diverse identities to coexist under the same roof of this state. Yugoslavia was a unique case because Elias' theory focussed on the relationship of interdependence rather than privileging individual identity over collective identity and collective identity over individual identity. It has been noted that Elias' figurations assist in comprehending the causes of Yugoslavia's dissolution. We can more easily adopt a comprehensive perspective on Yugoslavia's multinational identity thanks to Elias's argument. To add to the literature, the Yugoslavia example is also used to study Elias' survival unit, the we-I balance, cooperation and competition figurations, and lastly, the practical reflection of involvement and detachment. In order not to deviate from the methodological line drawn by Elias, the study deliberately ignored the reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which remained outside Elias' figurations. It's been viewed from the nation-building window. The main objective of this study is to investigate the failure of Yugoslav identity, which led to an ethnic war.

The survival unit is the first figuration examined in the research. This figuration allows for centralization or localization. In this respect, Yugoslavia was formed as a survival entity after the German occupation of the country during World War II. Yugoslavia established separate survival units both at home and overseas. One of the most important elements of these survival units is the we-I balance.¹

We-I balance emerges as a factor influencing how people interact with one another. People develop "we groups" to help each other survive. However, occasionally "I balance" overcomes these structures, which could lead to issues. Throughout its existence, Yugoslavia had made an effort to strike a balance between "we" and "I". Despite the preservation of "I" values in terms of economics, politics, and society, it is intended to unify under the value of "we" for the survival of the state.

Interdependence is also linked to the metaphorical ideas of cooperation and competitive balance. The ratio of cooperation to competition might alter based on the circumstances in this figuration, which has a close relationship to the survival unit. For example, to reduce income disparities between nations, the 1963 Constitution created a special development fund

¹ Norbert Elias, *Society of Individuals*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1991, p. 5.

for impoverished regions, and loans and investments were transferred from developed to underdeveloped regions. The opposite examples are also accessible. As a result of this fund, which was established to encourage collaboration, the most developed nations of the federation, Slovenia and Croatia, as well as less developed regions and Serbia, had created significant rivalry. In this respect, it is correct to say that the balance of cooperation and competition determines social integration and division.

People gain control over the environment. However, they also have an emotional cap. Elias employs a combination of involvement and detachment in a strategy to manage nature. He proposed a theory about the process of balancing involvement and detachment. To examine the involvement and detachment process, we use a football game example. Being involved keeps a person from understanding knowledge's reality. The high level of danger in the figuration leads to emotional involvement, such as a Croatian athlete kicking a Serbian policeman to save a Croatian fan shows the process of involvement and detachment.

1. Survival Unit and State-Building Attempts by the South Slavs

The survival unit will be the first figuration addressed in the study. The unit of survival is autonomy figurations, unlike other figurations. People constantly interact with various figurations, but they are also part of a larger social system. Interdependence exists between people and society. These two components give each other trust. According to Elias' argument, neither society nor people are higher than the other.² Who has the right and whether there is a figure are considered aspects of the survival unit. This is crucial to the development of civilization.³ The survival unit makes it possible to defeat external enemies and preserve family and individual independence.

Elias distinguished between two various survival units. While one of them is a state; the other is a family. The unit of state survival is explored in this article. The earliest type of surviving unit is the family. However, states, like families, have changed in modern living.⁴ The features of the social habits

² Lars Bo Kaspersen and Norman Gabriel, "The Importance of Survival Units for Norbert Elias's Figurational Perspective", *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3, 2008, p. 371-375.

³ Laura Leonardi, "Changes in the We-I Balance and the Formation of a European Identity in the Light of Norbert Elias's Theories", *Cambio Rivista Sulle Trasformazioni Sociali*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2011, p. 173-174.

⁴ Elias, *Society of Individuals*, p. 164-206.

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of the people that comprise the states serve as the survival units of modern nation-states.⁵ Its origins can be traced back to a period when the kin group was the primary means of survival for an individual. For instance, extended family mafia groups in Sicily have so far maintained a greater survival rate than the Italian government. This position is largely determined by each member's actual or implied, unconditional lifetime commitment to the extended family group.⁶

The survival unit outsourced its responsibilities to supranational nations as well. The purpose of nation-states is "we". It is part of the survival unit.⁷ It is a figure, for instance, that plays a significant role in the European Union survival unit. The European Union has led to the emergence of numerous survival units.⁸ Indeed, one of the main aims of the EU is to create and maintain "peace" in Europe. However, Elias mentions that all survival units contain violence within them. Elias claims that violence is a necessary part of the survival unit. Survival units provide a two-pronged figuration: an offensive and a defensive strategy that leads to centralization and regionalization.

Periodically, survival units shift shape. The only rule of these units is that violence can be controlled.⁹ In this situation, it is possible to say that the we-I balance is essential to the existence of the units. It takes a process for this balance to develop. People share objectives in the "we" balance. Their major objective is to remain within their units.¹⁰ People are linked together by various symbols, such as flags and weapons. The common feature of all figurations is "strict control of the use of physical violence in the relations between its members".¹¹ The we-I balance might shift when a survival unit does. The unit of survival offers a sense of identity and belonging, even when it is difficult to forge a new "we" in the short term. It is an illustration of a crucial survival unit that offers safety and nutritional support for we groups.¹²

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218-221.

⁸ Leonardi, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

⁹ Kaspersen and Gabriel, *op.cit.*, p. 379-381.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 371-375.

¹² İrem Özgören Kınlı, "Norbert Elias ve Figürasyonel Sosyoloji'ye Giriş", *Turkish Studies-Social Sciences*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2020, p. 1389.

In the past Yugoslavia, the first attempt to establish a survival unit took place during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Serbia found itself squarely on the front lines of the conflict. Serbia, which had to join the war as a young country, conducted its first survival unit trial during this period. Serbia's Prime Minister Nikola Pašić said that his goal in the war was to unite the Serbian, Croat, and Slovenian nations, and he defined his goal as follows: "The conditions for peace and stability in the Balkans are clear. A new state must be established. The borders of the new state should be wide, include ethnically compatible elements, and not contain anything that would create problems for living together". In line with this goal, Slovenes and Croats established a committee called the "Yugoslavia Committee" in London in 1915 to draw attention to the problems of the Slavs living within the borders of Austria-Hungary. This committee was essential because the Slovenes and Croats lived under Austro-Hungarian rule. The Slovenes and Croats had not yet established their independent national states, so they entrusted the Committee with the task of revealing their identity. The change that the Committee would bring to the history of the Balkans was gradually becoming apparent.

South Slavic representatives, who signed the Corfu Pact on the island of Corfu in 1918 for the establishment of the union, established the "Yugo-Slavic National Council" in October of the same year. Ultimately, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, comprising Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, was established on December 1, 1918. Although Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were mentioned in its name, in reality, apart from this ethnic group within the borders of the country, there were Germans, Hungarians in Vojvodina, Albanians in Kosovo, and Macedonia, Romanians in Banat, Turks in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, Czechs, Slovaks. There were over two million people in total, with various nationalities accounting for approximately 17% of the population. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which was given its true shape and mapped at the Versailles Peace Conference that started on January 19, 1919, changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.¹³ To control violence, the Slavs of the South established the first survival groups in their lands. While this unit was an outwardly formed survival unit, the inner survival units began to shake the foundations of joint figuration from the very beginning.

¹³ Barbara Jelavich, *Balkan Tarihi 2*, (trans.) Hatice Uğur, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p. 129.

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The expectations of the South Slavs from the “Union of South Slavs” were quite different. While Serbian nationalist Prince Alexander Kara Yorgi, the architect of Yugoslavia, used the union as a step towards a “great Serbia,” Slovenes and Croats had no intention of giving up the idea of a federation of peoples accustomed to Austro-Hungarian domination. The Prince, known for his opposition to the Bolsheviks, declared the Communist Party illegal on August 3, 1921, following an assault on him and the assassination of the Minister of the Interior by a communist Bosniak. The Communist Party remained illegal until the Second World War.¹⁴ The Second World War and the resurgence of the Communist Party caused radical changes in Yugoslavia.

Croats and Serbs were at odds even before the monarchy was established. While the Croats demanded sovereignty, the Serbs refused. This war resulted in the division of the kingdom in 1928. In January 1929, King Alexander I abolished the parliament, ushering in the “Kingdom Dictatorship”. The difference between this dictatorship and others was that it was temporary and the king was not a member of any organization. For the sake of peace, the people became the king’s followers. However, the desired calm was not obtained, and the King was assassinated on October 9, 1934, by a Croatian terrorist from the Ustaše organization in France, where he was on an official visit.¹⁵ The seriousness of the economic and political problems put Yugoslavia at an impasse. The situation reached the point where it would not improve without radical collapses and new beginnings. With the Second World War coming to a close, the control of violence became more and more difficult, and the ties of the union began to crack.

The Serbian king escaped after Hitler began bombarding Belgrade on April 6, 1941, occupied Zagreb on April 10, Belgrade on April 11, and Ljubljana on April 12.¹⁶ Germany created the “Independent Croatian State” on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The state was controlled by the fascist Ustaše movement.¹⁷ Hitler and Mussolini shared

¹⁴ Mehmet Erol and Abdurrahim Aydın, “İki Savaş Arası Dönemde Balkanlar (1919-1939)”, *Balkanlar El Kitabı*, 1. Cilt, (eds.) Bilgehan A. Gökdağ and Osman Karatay, Akçağ Yayınları, Ankara 2013, p. 628.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 629.

¹⁶ Şecaettin Koka, “Sosyalist Yugoslavya Dönemi”, *Balkanlar El Kitabı*, 2. Cilt, (eds.) Bilgehan A. Gökdağ and Osman Karatay, Akçağ Yayınları, Ankara 2013, p. 639.

¹⁷ Ülger, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

control of Yugoslavia. Internal conflicts arose for Yugoslavs, Albanians, and Greeks, fighting for life against Hitler and Mussolini.

In this struggle, someone who would be very important for the future of Yugoslavia had risen to power in politics. Josip Broz Tito fought in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I and was captured by the Russians, and then he fought in favor of the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. At the end of the war, in 1937, he went to Yugoslavia to resurrect the Yugoslav Communist Party. Here, he organized resistance against the German occupation with his armed forces. Partisans (Titoists) and Chetniks (nationalist Serbs pro-Draha Mihailovic) formed the core of the resistance in Yugoslavia. They fought each other more than they did with the Germans. While the Yugoslav Communist Party envisioned the Soviet model by adding a red star to the Yugoslav flag as its flag, the Chetniks were pro-monarchy, Croats, and anti-Communist nationalists who dreamed of a “Greater Serbia”. Even if the regions survived the German occupation, they witnessed the bloodier power struggles between Partisans and Chetniks.¹⁸

At that time, the Ustaše organization, which was responsible for the assassination of Alexander I, began to conduct ethnic cleansing of non-Croat elements in the Independent Croatian State. Serbs were the most vulnerable to racial cleansing. It was intended to expel one-third of the Serbs and convert the surviving one-third to Catholicism. Various estimates exist regarding the number of Serbs who perished or were deported between 1941 and 1945. According to some accounts, around 300,000 Serbs were killed or exiled, while others claim 1 million were killed or exiled.¹⁹

The landscape did not change in Yugoslavia either. The Chetniks voiced the rhetoric “to destroy everyone and everything that is not Serb in Bosnia” and they also took action. Bulgarians committed the same atrocities against civilians in Western Thrace and outlawed the Greek language.²⁰ In Kosovo, the situation was not different. Between Albanians and Yugoslav resistance fighters, a bloody conflict raged for years.²¹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45-48.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.45-48.

²⁰ Mark Mazower, *Bizans'ın Çöküşünden Günümüze Balkanlar*, (trans.) Ayşe Ozil, Alfa Basım Yayınları, İstanbul 2014, p. 167.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

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With the end of World War II in reach, Italy and Germany were certain to be defeated. When the Ustaše forces of the Independent Croatian State, which had been established under German auspices, recognized that Germany would be defeated, they joined the Partisans, led by Croatian Tito.²² Kosovo Albanians were the only nation that avoided giving serious support to Partisans, including Serbs.²³

During the civil war in 1942, Tito also established the “Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ)”, which included representatives of all nations and minorities alongside the Yugoslav Communist Party.²⁴ At the meeting of the Council in 1943, the framework for the new state to be established was drawn. In this direction, the “Democratic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” was established on November 29, 1945.²⁵ The Partisans and Communist Party declared victory, and communist Yugoslavia was born. The first survival unit trial failed as it did not provide the control of violence that Elias required for the survival unit. Immediately after the first survival unit was destroyed, efforts to establish a second survival unit began.

As expected, Tito and his party won the first elections in the second process for the survival unit of the South Slavic peoples. In Yugoslavia, a federal constitution of six states, inspired by the Soviet model, was announced. The six states in this constitution were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Slovenia. They had the right to secede. They could use their mother tongue and ensure their cultural development.²⁶ Unlike the experience of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro were granted the status of autonomous states, while Kosovo and Vojvodina were not counted among the constituent states of the federation. An attempt was made to learn from the mistakes made in the previous experiment. However, achieving the delicate balance between the figurations that Elias envisioned forced Yugoslavia from time to time. Yugoslavia is a prominent example of the fact that the figurations put forward by Elias should be considered as a whole. Although the second survival unit was built on a more solid foundation than the first

²² Ülger, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

²³ Nesrin Kenar, *Bir Dönemin Perde Arkası Yugoslavya*, Palme Yayınları, Ankara 2005, p. 65.

²⁴ Ülger, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

²⁵ Kenar, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

and the control of violence was relatively ensured, the imbalance in other figurations also determined the lifespan of the survival unit.

2. We-I Balance: Does Self-Management Provide Balance?

It can be claimed that the survival unit and the framework of the we-I balance are strongly related.²⁷ People are seen to progress toward the “we” balance in the “we-I” balance and come together in times of conflict, especially when modern societies are taken into account. However, the “I” balance is seen to predominate outside in times of danger.²⁸ In this sense, Yugoslavia served as a Second World War survival unit. After the occupation by the Germans during the Second World War, Yugoslavia was born. The balance of I and “we” that Yugoslavia formed inside determined the longevity of the survival unit that it had established outside.

According to Elias, individuals are gradually integrated into communities. Moreover, the habitus of the person in relation to the community evolves over time. In modern society, more than one “we” concept develops as a result of individual habits. And this situation complicates the individual's we-I balance.

We-I balance emerges as a factor influencing social interactions.²⁹ People develop “we groups” to help each other survive. We-I balance benefits communities as a whole, especially when they are dealing with several issues.³⁰ However, occasionally “I balance” overcomes these structures, which could lead to issues.³¹ While we-identity is a fundamental component of people’s social habits, I-identity is a continuous result of recollection, knowledge, and experiences.³²

According to Elias, we-I balance is not produced mechanically; rather, it is produced and shaped mainly through language and symbols. Elias claims that “we-I” balance is the root of social relationships. This balance is not the cause of any mechanical effect. The ability to grasp “I” can become

²⁷ Leonardi, *op.cit.*, p. 170.

²⁸ Kaspersen and Gabriel, *op.cit.*, p. 377.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

³⁰ Özgören Kınılı, “Norbert Elias ve Figürasyonel Sosyoloji’ye Giriş”, p. 1389.

³¹ Kaspersen and Gabriel, *op.cit.*, p. 375.

³² Leonardi, *op.cit.*, p. 172.

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more crucial during times when maintaining the “we” is challenging.³³ Elias asserts that family ties are responsible for the shift in this balance. While constructing their homes, people preserve their social networks. It might be argued that the idea of “we” goes through numerous stages.³⁴

According to Hegel, we can only perceive a situation as “we” when we are aware of other social interactions. Because those who share a figuration are more likely to be friendly to one another. Such an attitude toward people who are not in the same figuration is not a tendency. When another person balances “we” with “I,” we may see how important the concept of “I” is.³⁵

As in every social group, people living in Yugoslavia were also in an “I” group of which they were members with historical, cultural, and social ties. Unlike nation-states, “I” groups and “we” groups can be formed in more than one layer in federative states. Tito wished to create the most complete “we” group for Yugoslavia by uniting the people of Yugoslavia under the umbrella of the Yugoslav identity. With experience from the state’s previous failed attempt at a survival unit, he thought that creating a common “we” in Yugoslavia was a matter of creating a just “me” group. As a result, while Yugoslavia had always stressed the “Yugoslav” identity through various policies throughout its history, it had taken care not to oppress the “I” groups in the process. However, striking this economic and social balance had not been simple.

Although Yugoslavia has gone far beyond where it started economically in the process, the economic gap between Yugoslavia’s six federated republics and two autonomous provinces has been a serious problem. Slovenia was the most developed republic in Yugoslavia, while Montenegro was the least developed in terms of national income per capita, fixed capital per employee, working population ratio, length of roads and railways, non-agricultural population ratio, and agricultural income per capita. Kosovo, on the other hand, came after Montenegro as the most underdeveloped region. The development level of the other republics between

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

³⁴ Özgören Kınlı, “Figurational Analysis of Michael Haneke’s *Time of the Wolf*”, *Norbert Elias and Violence*, (eds.) T. S. Landini and F. Dépelteau, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2017, p. 37-38.

³⁵ George Hegel, *The Phenomology of Spirit*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana 1807, p. 222.

these two extremes was Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia, respectively. While the First Five-Year Plan, of 1947 declared the whole of Yugoslavia as underdeveloped, the Second Five-Year Plan covering the years 1957-1961, divided Yugoslavia into developed and underdeveloped regions.³⁶

While the economic gap shook the foundation of the balance between “I” and “we,” the socialist self-government which was developed step by step since 1950, carried the past problems into the future. After the 1965 reforms, which were prepared to increase self-government, and limit the powers of the state over the republics, the “I” balance began to strengthen against the “we” balance. In the early 1970s, the underdeveloped regions accounted for 40% of the country’s surface area and 35% of the population, while they realized only 21% of the total material production. The total national income of Slovenia was ten times greater than that of Kosovo, the most backward region. For this reason, developed regions have contributed much more to the common federal budget with the taxation system. However, new industrial facilities established after the revolution for the development of underdeveloped regions were first established in underdeveloped regions. “Federation Fund for the Rapid Development of Economically Underdeveloped Regions” was established in the 1963 Constitution to close the inequality between the republics, and to move the scales in favor of “we” in the balance of “I” and “I,” and to ensure development as a whole country. Some of the issues regulated by this fund included the granting of low-interest compulsory loans to underdeveloped regions, direct support for these regions from the federal budget, and the possibility for underdeveloped regions to obtain loans from the World Bank, which was prohibited for developed regions. However, this transfer of resources from the developed to the underdeveloped regions had led to conflicts between the two regions and between the underdeveloped regions over the distribution of resources. Developed regions had also begun to complain about income inequality among themselves.³⁷ While this situation pushed them to take their own measures and policies within their republics, the “we-I balance” continued to be hit.

³⁶ Caner Sancaktar, *Yugoslavya’da Sosyalizmden Kapitalizme Geçiş*, Doruk Yayınları, İstanbul 2021, p. 22-23.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31-36.

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Economic differences brought with them social rifts. Income differences between developed and underdeveloped countries have also caused serious imbalances in social indicators. For example, if we accept the number of high school and college graduates as 100 units for Yugoslavia's average in 1975, we see that it is 144 in Slovenia, the most developed republic, and 46 in Kosovo, which is the least developed region. While the rate of illiterate people was 25.4% in the country in 1953, this rate was 19.1% in developed regions and 40.4% in underdeveloped regions. The child mortality rate in Kosovo was four times higher than in Slovenia.³⁸

These social and economic disparities widened Yugoslavia's center-periphery divide. The common goals needed by the "we" are ignored for the "I" to survive. While Tito aimed to control violence through strong decentralization with centralization, the divide widened at times. Although he sought cooperation from the republics and even from various nations within the republics for the value of "we," which is essential for the continuity of the state, he did not ignore the element of competition for the development and progress of the state. Thus, from time to time in Yugoslavia, while "we" is in the foreground, it would not be wrong to say that "I" becomes evident.

3. Cooperation and Competition Equilibrium Figuration: The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Social Segregation in Yugoslavia

Interdependence relationships are also associated with representations of cooperation and competitive balance.³⁹ When interdependence emerges in society and on a global stage, the balance between cooperation and competition improves. The balance of cooperation and competition shifts during this process, though not always uniformly or rapidly.⁴⁰ Elias' theoretical framework, process sociology, emphasizes the importance of the interaction between cooperation and competition. These two words are linked to sociological interconnectedness and global interdependence. Özgören Kınılı asserts that when the importance of the survival unit increases, the cooperative relationship deteriorates and the competitive unit grows. But eventually, individuals still depend on one another and work together to survive.⁴¹

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29-30.

³⁹ Özgören Kınılı, "Norbert Elias ve Figürasyonel Sosyoloji'ye Giriş", p. 1387.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1387.

⁴¹ Özgören Kınılı, "Figurational Analysis of Michael Haneke's Time of the Wolf", p. 36-37.

The ratio of competition to cooperation can be calculated at every degree of societal integration. Figures become more cohesive as a result, and collaboration and rivalry occur.⁴² People use competition and cooperation to create various figurations.⁴³ For instance, the power balance and the balance of cooperation and competition are closely related. Individual rights expanded with the end of colonialism.⁴⁴

Everyone is dependent on one another in both competition and cooperation. Ethnic and national groups drive such cooperation and rivalry.⁴⁵ The link between cooperation and competition is shaky. As an illustration, while people continue to cooperate and support one another, the rivalry between people persists. A good balance of collaboration and competition is advantageous because it promotes people's individual liberty.⁴⁶ The monopolization of physical violence and the employment of taxes in the establishment of states are two examples of how Elias describes the interactions of competition and cooperation, which can be seen at every stage of social relations.⁴⁷

In this figuration, which is closely related to the survival unit, the balance between cooperation and competition can change.⁴⁸ To lessen income disparity between nations, for instance, the 1963 Constitution established a special development fund for impoverished regions, and loans and investments were moved from developed regions to underdeveloped ones.⁴⁹ The opposite examples are also available. The most developed nations in the federation, Slovenia and Croatia, as well as Serbia and the less developed regions, had created major rivalries as a result of this fund, which was supposed to promote cooperation.⁵⁰ In this sense, one could say that the

⁴² Cas Wouters, "Universally Applicable Criteria for Doing Figuration Process Sociology: Seven Balances, One Triad", *Human Figurations: Long-Term Perspectives on the Human Condition*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2014, p. 12.

⁴³ Dolan Paddy, "Figurations", *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, (ed.) Alex C. Michalos, Springer, New York 2014, p. 1382.

⁴⁴ Wouters, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Dolan, *op.cit.*, p. 2274.

⁴⁶ Wouters, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey 2000.

⁴⁸ Özgören Kınılı, "Figuration Analysis of Michael Haneke's Time of the Wolf", p. 36-37.

⁴⁹ Sancaktar, *Yugoslavya'da Sosyalizmden Kapitalizme Geçiş*, p. 31.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

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balance between cooperation and competition determines how socially integrated or segregated society is.⁵¹

The Yugoslav economy, which rose until the 1970s and was shown as an example in the international community, received its first blow in the 1973 oil crisis. Despite this, it was able to pay its foreign debts until the 1982 debt crisis, which affected the entire globe. However, the 1982 crisis brought the Yugoslav economy, like many other countries, to a halt. The International Monetary Fund and neoliberal economists proposed competitive, free market conditions as a means out of the economic crisis. Within the competitive free market conditions, there is the liquidation of social property and the transition to private property, the development of the private sector, the abandonment of planning, and the reduction of decentralization in the economy.⁵² This formula started the painful process of transitioning to capitalism in Yugoslavia, which adopted socialist self-government in its own way and tried to establish a socialist economic order accordingly. The Yugoslavian Federation found itself in the middle of a competitive economic order between the republics, attempting to provide cooperation through mutual dependence while also trying to grow through competition. The concern over protecting their own national markets in republics and/or autonomous regions precluded cooperation. While the republics caused difficulties for the enterprises of other regions in their own territories, they gave support to their own enterprises. For instance, while these supports were sometimes like loans from the Republican budget, they were sometimes in the form of pressure for the strong businesses to support the weak businesses. Trying to combine small businesses in the same region to cope with large businesses in other regions is another competitive method.⁵³ As the competition between the republics increased, the cooperation between the figurations in different layers within the republic increased. The lack of trust in the “we” umbrella under the “Yugoslav” identity pushed the republics to form a survival unit among themselves, weakening cooperation while increasing competition. This weak level of cooperation stood as a significant obstacle to the development of Yugoslavia as a whole.

The egalitarian understanding of socialist thought brought societal progress to the social level of Yugoslavia’s cooperation figuration. According

⁵¹ Wouters, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

⁵² Sancaktar, *Yugoslavya’da Sosyalizmden Kapitalizme Geçiş*, p. 201.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

to Marxist-inspired Yugoslav communists, socialism could only flourish in industrialized towns populated by the advanced working class. For this reason, Yugoslavia had tried to transfer its population from rural to urban, from an agricultural society to an industrial society, since the day it was founded. It was aimed at synchronizing economic and social development. In the Yugoslav socialist system, access to free public health and education rights was a constitutional right and was seen as an integral part of the right to general self-government. The Yugoslav administration believed that only to the extent that people were educated could they properly exercise their right to participate in self-government. For this reason, the financial burden of the right to free education was borne by the combined revenues of all the republics. Apart from this, another guarantee that socialist self-government offered its citizens was job security. Employees could be dismissed under very limited conditions. Women's participation in business life increased rapidly after the socialist revolution. The participation of women in business life, which was 18% in 1940, increased to 34.7% in 1978 and 35.8% in 1981. In the field of science, the rate of women working increased by 40%. Women's participation in political life had also increased steadily since 1945.⁵⁴ At the beginning of all these, the socialist self-government system accepted all nations in the country as equal, and with the 1974 Constitution, this equality was constitutionally guaranteed.

While the economic system was operating, social cooperation increased, and it became easier to unite in the “we” figuration. However, the new economic system established in Yugoslavia following the crisis boosted competition among the republics, laying the groundwork for social and political fragmentation. The transition to a capitalist economic order deepened economic inequalities and increased poverty in Yugoslav society. New policies have made social services profit-oriented, causing welfare funds from the federal state budget to be cut for low-income groups while allowing the wealthy to get wealthier.⁵⁵

All of this growing economic rift and impoverishment has awoken the sleeping giant and reawakened nationalist ideals. Todorova summarized the Balkans' expansionist nationalist inclinations in a single line in her book: “It was very difficult for these people, who had accomplished a lot until

⁵⁴ Sancaktar, *Yugoslavya'da Sosyalist Özyönetim Deneyimi*, p. 417-429.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

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yesterday, to suddenly know where they would stand”.⁵⁶ Nationalism, which remained alive in these warring nations until the formation of Yugoslavia, manifested itself with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Economic upheavals increased the importance of nationalism and the survival units of nation-states, distorting the figures of cooperation and competitive equilibrium in favor of competitive equilibrium.

4. Involvement and Detachment: Was Football Just a Game for the Former Yugoslavia?

Sociology, which Elias sees as a method, is about self-discipline. To him, the concept of sociology is a problem that involves both involvement in sociology and detachment from it.⁵⁷ Elias therefore asserts that a sociologist always looks at anything connected to involvement and detachment.⁵⁸

There is a relationship between self-discipline and knowledge of sociology. The sociology of knowledge is central to everything. When comprehending the mission of knowledge, there are a few key aspects to remember. For instance, this theory is significantly influenced by the objectivity, values, and perspective of a sociologist, and that is part of the knowledge of sociology and self-discipline. Elias claimed that human knowledge evolved over time.⁵⁹ People learn more about sociology and gain control over the environment. However, they also have an emotional cap. Elias employs a combination of involvement and detachment in a strategy to manage nature.

He proposed a theory about the process of balancing involvement and detachment. Being involved keeps a person from understanding knowledge’s reality. For example, the relationship between parents and children is an illustration of the involvement-detachment balance, as given by Özgören Kınlı. While parents actively integrate their children into their lives, they also actively distance themselves from them out of sensitivity.⁶⁰ Kilminster claims

⁵⁶ Maria Todorova, *Balkanları Tahayyül Etmek*, (trans.) Dilek Şendil, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2003, p. 21.

⁵⁷ Robert van Krieken, *Norbert Elias (Key Sociologist)*, Routledge, Oxfordshire 1998, p. 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68-69.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131-132.

⁶⁰ Özgören Kınlı, “Norbert Elias ve Figürasyonel Sosyoloji’ye Giriş”, p. 1390.

that participation and detachment are not mutually exclusive concepts but rather a “zero-sum game”.⁶¹

Elias examined violence from both an involved and detached standpoint.⁶² He asserts that no one can deny that it is more difficult to comprehend whether a person is involved or detached from something. Only infants, the extremely old, and the insane, according to Elias, may abandon their emotions and become involved in what they are living.⁶³ Whatever their feelings may be, people are free to join anything under these conditions. In typical circumstances, people vacillate between engagement and detachment because they can alter their viewpoints based on the circumstances. Detachment and involvement are not mutually exclusive ideas. The fact that both of these ideas are marginal terms unites them. But the journey between involvement and separation is the most crucial. While various individuals may incorporate or detach something, they may also demonstrate various methodologies.⁶⁴

The absence of emotional connection is the cause of both the social process and the natural process.⁶⁵ People became less emotionally invested as their knowledge of nature and societal systems increased. Elias does not see involvement and detachment as two opposing poles. These two concepts are interconnected, and they are in perfect harmony with one another.⁶⁶ Due to the need to be involved in emotional practice, every person appears to distance themselves from society.⁶⁷ Sport serves as a powerful illustration of how Elias manages his emotions and engagement. The development of sports and leisure is noteworthy in the civilizing process.⁶⁸

⁶¹ Richard Kilminster, “From Distance to Detachment: Knowledge and Self-knowledge in Elias’s Theory of Involvement and Detachment”, *Norbert Elias: An Introduction*, (eds.) Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, p. 25-41.

⁶² Krieken, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

⁶³ Kilminster, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

⁶⁴ Elias, “Problems of Involvement and Detachment”, *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1956, p. 226-227.

⁶⁵ Wouters, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

⁶⁶ Özgören Kınlı, “Figurational Analysis of Michael Haneke’s Time of the Wolf”, p. 44.

⁶⁷ Dolan, *op.cit.*, p. 2274.

⁶⁸ Krieken, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

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A practice-based, policy-, or problem-centered approach to sport is not intrinsically sociological, as noted by Elias and Dunning.⁶⁹ Elias contends that by supplying details about the uninteresting networks or figurations in which sports emerge, it is feasible to comprehend the forms and excitements of sports.⁷⁰ Elias' theory of a "civilizing process"-in which people gain self-control and their senses become more and more focused on civilized cultural activities-explains how modern sport came to be.⁷¹ As logical sports games gain popularity among civilized societies, tolerance for physical aggression declines.

Through what Elias refers to as "functional democratization", sport becomes a tool for balancing the power between the many social strata that make up society.⁷² Sport plays a significant role in people's lives and is utilized to promote regional and national identity.⁷³ Strong in-group and out-group identification is a result of sports, as fan interests take precedence over player interests.⁷⁴

Elias and Dunning stress that a developmental, process-sociological perspective is necessary when studying sports. The sport needs to be interpreted within a framework that determines cultural norms and behaviours as well as changes in emotional regulation.⁷⁵ Elias and Dunning assert that, while they use football as an example to discuss sporting setups, their approach applies to all sports. In this context, they stress that there is only one player configuration in a football game, with no differentiation between player configurations.⁷⁶

In this framework, we explain involvement and detachment figurations with the example of a football match in Yugoslavia. Along the

⁶⁹ Peter Bramham, "Explanations of the Organisation of Sport in British Society", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 26, 1991, p. 148.

⁷⁰ Elias, *Society of Individuals*, p. 2.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁷² Dunning. *op.cit.*, p. 354.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁷⁵ Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1986; Alan Tamlinson and Andrei Markovits and Christopher Young, "Mapping Sports Space", *Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 46, No. 11, 2003, p. 1463.

⁷⁶ Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, "Dynamics of Group Sport with Special Reference to Football", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1966, p. 390.

process of Yugoslavia's disintegration, as all the figurations collapsed one by one, the social control that had been tried to be internalized under Tito declared its defeat in a football match in 1990. In the 1990-1991 season, Red Star Belgrade won the European Club Cup, Europe's most prestigious trophy. This trophy catapulted the Red Star of Yugoslavia to the top of the European soccer scene. Ironically, however, this team is also a metaphor for the collapse of Yugoslavia.

If we look before the football match, it can be said that in the Red Star Belgrade team, Tito established the order he wanted to establish for Yugoslavia. In this team made up of soccer players from different nations, everyone has a duty, and only if they all do their duty can a successful team be formed. As Foer⁷⁷ describes it in *The Red Star*,

"...the Slovenes were super defenders, tirelessly chasing the opposing striker. The Croats, like the Germans, could attack suddenly for goal opportunities. The Bosnians and Serbs were creative in dribbling and passing, but sometimes their tactical grasp was poor. In the Red Star, these very different Yugoslavs were able to combine their skills into a blend that helped them defeat the superpowers of Western Europe".

In theory, the Red Star team was a manifestation of Tito's Yugoslav ideal, but in practice, it was far removed from it. When the Red Star team was considered an independent figuration, the answer sought in the sense of belonging that being a team should bring did not find a response. The lack of a proper relationship and connection and the absence of an emotional bond caused a crisis within the figuration. Despite the multi-ethnic nature of the team, the fan group "Delije" of the Red Star team did not refrain from making harsh Serbian nationalist statements and expressed their loyalty to Slobodan Milosevic, the leader of the Communist Party of Serbia, at every opportunity. Similarly, Dinamo Zagreb's fan group, "Bad Blue Boys," closely followed and supported Croatian leader Tudjman.

Ironically, this violence, which took to the streets on National Safety Day in Yugoslavia, was evident even before the match, which was never finished. The pre-match brawl between Dynamo Zagreb and Red Star Belgrade fans continued when the match started, with both sides breaking the fences and descending onto the pitch, prompting the police to intervene. In

⁷⁷ Franklin Foer, *Futbol Dünyayı Nasıl Açıklar?*, (trans.) Hakkı İsmail Çarak, İthaki Yayınları, İstanbul 2012, p. 12.

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the middle of the big fight on the pitch, Dinamo Zagreb captain Zvonimir Boban kicked a Serbian police officer in the chest while trying to save a Dinamo fan. Both sides blamed the other side for the escalation of violence.⁷⁸ Following the outbreak of armed conflict in Croatia and then in Bosnia-Herzegovina, football fan groups became important recruitment centers.⁷⁹ This football match, a symbolic manifestation of ethnic hatred in Yugoslavia, shows how the use of football as a tool for homogenizing collective identity depends on fragile variables.

As Özgören Kınılı⁸⁰ explains the fact that the high level of danger in the figurations brings with it emotional involvement, so a Croatian athlete kicking a Serbian policeman to save a Croatian fan makes it more difficult to examine the possible connections between the phenomena unbiased, objectively, and without emotional involvement.

Conclusion

The most significant catalyst for Yugoslavia to create a unique system of government was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform in 1948. The socialist self-management system was sought as a fresh interpretation of socialism that was distinct from the USSR. In essence, socialist self-management: despite the fact that the economy is entirely run by the workers in its society, Yugoslavia had developed a special form of self-government because it did not want to impose external actors who were seen as outside the system. These external actors include state bureaucracy and technocracy. With this structure, Yugoslavia ultimately hoped to put an end to exploitative relationships and create a system in which society could function independently of social classes and the state apparatus.⁸¹ While several layers of self-government are encouraged in order to achieve a classless and stateless society, it is evident that any attempt to forge a unifying identity will diffuse the region's naturally conflict-prone atmosphere. In this way, Yugoslav society has examples of the figuration kinds suggested by Elias.

⁷⁸ Ivan Djordjevic, "Twenty Years Later: The War Did (Not) Begin at Maksimir an Anthropological Analysis of the Media Narratives about a Never Ended Football Game", *Bulletin de l'Institut Ethnographique*, Vol. 60, No. 2, 2012, p. 202.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁸⁰ Özgören Kınılı, *op.cit.*, p. 1390.

⁸¹ Sancaktar, *Yugoslavya'da Sosyalizmden Kapitalizme Geçiş*, p. 297-298.

There are numerous examples of how Elias' figurations are reflected in everyday life. It is quite convenient to interpret Elias' figurations through the rise and subsequent fall of Yugoslavia, which represents the process of creating a shared identity. Tito's unification of Yugoslavia is a good example of the survival unit's struggle for survival. The conflicts between the countries that make up the state of Yugoslavia demonstrate how our identities emerge amid peril and how our internal and external balance is demonstrated. Again, with the effect of the survival unit, it is fascinating to see how these nations balance cooperation and rivalry.

Yugoslav society exists as a group of "I" with historical, cultural, and social ties. Yugoslav society appears as a collection of "I"s linked by historical, cultural, and social ties. While nation-states struggle as a "we" group, the scenario in federative states is different. "I" and "we" groups can develop in more than one layer in federative states. Tito's goal was to bring the people of Yugoslavia together under one banner, the Yugoslav identity. He intended to form a "we" organization. Tito thought that revealing the word "we" would help his survival unit. He claimed that the efforts of the Yugoslav states to live without unity would fail. Tito's Yugoslavia had emphasised "Yugoslav" identity throughout its existence. Despite all of the social and economic shocks, Tito, who was attempting to create "we," did not disregard "I" groups in this process.

The equal-distance approach to nations and the defence of minorities' rights and freedoms increased localization in Yugoslavia at the same rate as unification. There have been income disparities among the nations that control their internal markets, and as a result of the federation, wealthy nations have had to assist developing nations. This circumstance fueled separatist inclinations. In addition, the unaccustomed Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes were upset by the recognition of Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro as states, which fuelled expansionist and antagonistic sentiments toward these nations.

The Yugoslav Federation's balance of cooperation and competition alters from time to time. On the one hand, while different policies were implemented to reduce the countries' income disparities, the federation's powerful states also sought to create cooperation among themselves. The balance of cooperation and competition is critical in influencing the

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integration of societal structures with one another.⁸² While Tito's aim was to ensure the development of the federation through cooperation between the republics in the Yugoslav federation, he also wanted to achieve growth through competition. But instead of cooperating through different policies, the republics preferred to compete to defend their own markets. The emergence of competition leads to the growth of cooperation among various groups. The republics formed various alliances among themselves due to their lack of faith in the "Yugoslav" identity being "us." The republics' formation of a union other than the Yugoslav identity upsets the cooperation equilibrium. Numerical evidence of this reality can be found in Yugoslavia's population census for the last thirty years. According to the Yugoslav census, 317,000 people claimed to belong to the "Yugoslav" population in 1961.⁸³ In the 1971 census, the population was 273,000, accounting for about 1.3 percent of the population.⁸⁴ According to the 1981 census, the population was 1,219 million.⁸⁵ This wave chart of those who describe themselves as Yugoslavs shows us that Yugoslavian identity is directly influenced by the political conjuncture of the period.

The environment comes under greater human control. They do, however, have an emotional cap. Elias' approach to controlling nature combines involvement and detachment. He put up an idea regarding how to strike a balance between involvement and detachment. We take the example of a football game to demonstrate the process of involvement and detachment. Being involved prevents one from comprehending the actuality of information. A Croatian athlete kicking a Serbian policeman to save a Croatian fan illustrates the process of involvement and detachment since the high level of risk in the figurations causes emotional connection.

In short, this study wanted to show the importance of balancing the figurations envisaged by Elias in the example of Yugoslavia. While it was trying to get better, internal and external reasons that would cause the balance to be upset paved the way for the collapse of Yugoslavia. It should come as no surprise that Norbert Elias, who saw that many states were established and

⁸² Wouters, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

⁸³ Ralić Proslav, *Minority Rights in Serbia*, Ministry of Information of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade 1993, p.21.

⁸⁴ *The Population of Yugoslavia*, Demographic Research Center Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade 1974, p. 38-40.

⁸⁵ *National Separatism and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1996, p. 35.

many states were destroyed during his long life, made his sociological determinations so point-blank.

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