

THE CONCEPT OF „ETHNIC CLEANSING” AND THE GENOCIDE PROCESSES AFFECTING THE BALKANS

ILLYÉS, SZABOLCS JÓZSEF, PH.D

¹ illyes.szabolcs.jozsef@szte.hu

² junior research professor, SZTE JGYPK SZTEPOL

ABSTRACT:

In parallel with the escalation of new types of security risks threatening the population of Europe due to geopolitical changes, the aftermath of decades-long and centuries-long conflicts affecting our immediate surroundings also poses significant challenges. Among the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans culminating in bloody wars, several phenomena carry the potential for violence, for the evaluation of which in this present study we invoke Michael Mann's innovative approach: the conflict matrix. The value scale is capable of forming an interpretive framework applicable from historical and social science perspectives for the scientific interpretation of the effects of ethnic cleansing realized at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives.

To utilize the concept of ethnic cleansing, first and foremost, the interpretive environment of ethnic groups as understood in the modern, European sense must be outlined in depth. Following this, the history of „cleansings” affecting the Balkans is reviewed, and then, with the interpretive analysis of the „MANN-matrix”, the relationship

between the various distinct levels of violence and the awareness of cleansings forms a new dimension of analysis for the conflicts.

Keywords: *ethnic cleansing, genocide, genocide-process, Balkan ethnical cleansing, Balkan wars, Yugoslavia, Srebrenica*

1. INTRODUCTION: ETHNICITY AND GENOCIDE - BALKANS: THE FURNACE OF TENSIONS

Without diminishing the weight of personal decisions, political, and other kinds of will behind the serious crimes against humanity committed in wars and other contexts, we can still attribute responsibility: it was „inevitable” that the growing ethnic tensions in the late ,80s and ,90s would lead to a societal explosion in the political Yugoslav (Socialist) Federal Republic. The phases of the Balkan wars at the turn of the millennium are linked to conflict clusters that resulted in the independence of certain republics that still exist today. Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence in 1992 in international legal terms, but this was not accepted by the Serbs, who considered part of the territory of the entity known as „Bosnia and Herzegovina” as their own state.

During the conflict, with the support of Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnian Serbs launched attacks against independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. Subsequently, the first „ethnic cleansing” operations associated with the Balkans end-of-century conflicts emerged, aiming to expel the non-Serb population from the areas they controlled. Among the genocidal processes of war, the most brutal act of genocide was the Srebrenica massacre in 1995, where approximately 8,000 Bosniak Muslim men and boys were killed by Bosnian Serb forces, according to primary sources. The Dayton Agreement temporarily halted the conflict, without specifically addressing the genocidal processes. The instability of the region - and the changes in the international security situation from 2022-23 onwards - may bring back into focus the conflict without a final resolution (PÉGORIER, 2013. 6-12).

After the war, the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) indicted several individuals for Bosnian genocide and other war crimes. RADOVAN KARADŽIĆ, President of the Republic of Serbia, and RATKO MLADIĆ, commander of Bosnian Serb forces, faced charges of genocide and other crimes. The war and the genocidal processes left deep scars on Bosnian society, with ethnic divisions still apparent in the region. Therefore, it is particularly important to sensitively handle the concept of „ethnic cleansing” already evident in the years preceding the war as part of the genocide escalation.

To understand the usability of the concept of ethnic cleansing, we must first outline the context of modern, European-based ethnic groups. The communal definition of ethnicity is well-known: groups with shared culture and origin. However, „culture” is a broad concept, and the question of origin – as seen in the conflicts examined in the context of Serbian hegemony – is often „foggy.” Common culture may refer to approximate characteristics such as shared religion or language. Claims of community among larger groups may actually encompass numerous descent groups. This study examines the conceptual and historical dimensions of cleansing at the macro-ethnic level. Regarding the causes, it attempts to explore substantive factors, such as social and historical characteristics playing a concrete role in the escalation of conflict as determinants of value junctions, or relevant in the establishment of social connections beyond biological or kinship relations. However, it can be stated as a premise: the conflicts examined in relation to ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian war did not occur based on natural or ancient „rules” but were always the consequences of human decisions (CARMICHAEL, 2002. 96-100.).

2. THE CONCEPT OF „ETHNICITY” AND „ETHNIC CLEANSING”

The concepts of „ethnicity” and „ethnic cleansing” are known for their deep and multifaceted historical, social, and political implications. Ethnic identity and its role in conflicts are crucial for understanding modern societies and international relations. The interpretative frameworks of the concepts of „ethnicity” and „ethnic cleansing” have profoundly influenced the socio-historical narrative and the application dimensions in various fields of science. The dedicated aim of this study is to analyze in detail the interpretative framework of the concept of „ethnicity” from etymological foundations to the scholarly applicability of the interpretation framework of „ethnic cleansing” (STOETT, 2004. 32-35.).

In the field of social sciences, the routinely used term „ethnicity” derives from the Greek expression „ethnos,” which means people or nation. Over time, the concept has undergone significant expansion and now refers to a group with a particular cultural, linguistic, religious, or historical background. „Ethnicity” is often identified as a group sharing a common origin, traditions, language, and culture. Ethnic identity is a complex phenomenon that develops in the process of social interactions and individual self-definition. The historical role of ethnic groups is particularly important in the formation of nation-states and in the identity politics of various governments. Relationships and conflicts between ethnic groups have often fundamentally influenced the formation of political boundaries and social structures. Questions of ethnic diversity and social integration remain prominent in today’s global world (BULUTGIL, 2016. 22-23.).

Ethnic groups are defined as communities sharing a common culture and common origin. However, culture is nebulous, and descent is often fictitious. A common culture may refer to a relatively precise characteristic, such as a shared religion or language. But it might also merely refer to a claim of sharing a way of life – which cannot be precisely defined. Common descent is mythical for any group larger than a clan or lineage. Claims of commonality among large groups actually aggregate numerous descent groups. This book discusses these macro-ethnicities formed by social relations other than biology or kinship. None of the ethnic conflicts examined here are natural or ancient. They and their conflicts are socially created.

A common language is important in connecting Germans but not Serbs (their language is shared with Croats and Bosniaks). Religion is important for Serbs (their Orthodox Christianity distinguishes them from Croats, Bosniaks, and Albanians), but not for Germans (divided into Catholics and Protestants). Economic dominance or subordination can shape identities, as can military power. Imperial conquerors often create macro-ethnicities by assigning particular roles to groups they define as belonging to a single people or tribe. Lastly, a shared political history as an independent state or province is of ubiquitous importance – as it is for Scots, not distinct in language or religion from the English, but with a distinct political history. Given this diversity, it is safer to define ethnicities subjectively, in terms used by themselves and/or their neighbors (see: EVANS, 2008. 35-40).

An ethnicity is a group that defines itself, or is defined by others, as sharing common descent and culture. Thus, ethnic cleansing is the removal by members of one such group of another such group from a locality they define as their own. A nation is such a group that also has political consciousness, claiming collective political rights in a given territory. A nation-state arises where such a group has its own sovereign state. Not all self-conscious nations possess or desire nation-states. Some claim only local autonomy or entrenched rights within a broader multiethnic state.

In this context, the term „ethnic cleansing” refers to a violent, often state-organized effort aimed at primarily removing a particular ethnic, religious, or cultural group from a specific area using coercive means. The original use of the term is attributed to VIKTOR GUTIC, a Croatian fascist politician, who used it to refer to the removal of groups identified as political enemies as part of Croatia’s „purification plan.” Accordingly, cleansing often manifests in violent persecution or expulsion and can itself be part of a complex genocide process that may later lead to mass killings. Unfortunately, all of this is supported by detailed documented and thoroughly researched tragic sequences of events that underscore the human evil of the past centuries: the concept of ethnic cleansing began to be widely used in the 20th century. In the context of our topic, events relevant to the Balkan wars and World War II must be primarily focused on (HORVITZ-CATHERWOOD, 2006. 147-148).

3. HISTORICAL APPROACH: THREE CENTURIES OF THE BALKANS AND THE NETWORK OF ETHNIC TENSIONS

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The historical empire covering nearly a quarter of the known world before the Columbus turn, the Ottoman political formation named after the Ottoman tribe, could feel both like the first, classic caliphates of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Islamic expansion and the successor of the then nearly two-thousand-year-old, legendary, veiled-in-legends past, but since 1453, under Islamic rule – Byzantium – the eternal heir to historical Rome.

Throughout its history, the Ottoman Empire was characterized by the peculiar status quo of ethnic and religious diversity on the Balkan Peninsula. During the expansion and consolidation of the empire, suppressive and assimilationist policies were often implemented against various ethnic groups living in the Balkan territories, naturally in the interests of the empire's political and strategic goals. As a result, the ethnic nature of conflicts in the Balkans, dominated by tension passed down „from generation to generation” between central power and local resistance, can look back on centuries of history. This potential exploded in the bloody ethnic conflicts of the 20th century (HORVITZ-CATHERWOOD, 2006. 110).

In light of the above, during the existence of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the active decades of the 15th to 19th centuries, significant ethnic and religious diversity developed on the Balkan Peninsula. It is worth noting here that during the period in question, the empire's concept of power presented a more or less uniform picture, whose politics were fundamentally tolerant of religious and ethnic differences, at least formally. Non-Muslim communities, known by the technical term „*dhimmi*” communities, such as Christians and Jews, or the „People of the Book,” enjoyed a certain degree of religious and cultural autonomy in accordance with the basic principles of Islamic law in exchange for tax obligations („*zakat*”). Nevertheless, tensions arose from time to time when the central power attempted to extend its control beyond the boundaries of the existing status quo and enforce Islamic law, or began to enforce internal administrative norms in different areas (JELAVICH, 2000. 4-11.).

During the occupation of the Balkan territories, the Ottoman Empire, while recognizing the value of ethnic diversity, often applied various administrative and demographic measures for the stability and control of the territory for political interests. Ethnic pluralism within the empire, when „poured” into administration, not only meant cultural richness but also served as a source of further conflicts. Thus, concerning the expansion of the empire, the stabilization of its administrative

system, and the tensions between various ethnic groups, we can talk about ethnic cleansings of the era (BLOXHAM, 2008. 328-329).

Suppression and violent interventions against the Serbs, Greeks, and Bulgarians were primarily consequences of complex conflicts between the Porte and local resistance, some of which were built into the empire's political toolkit as constant, systematic government-military measures. One of the most famous among these is the so-called „*devşirme*” system. This was one of the empire's most well-known practices, involving the abduction of Christian children who were then raised in military and administrative positions. This practice deeply divided local communities as children were separated from their families and cultural roots.

Planned resettlements resembled the everyday administrative-economic and military practices of ancient Asian and pre-Asian empires: administration often moved various ethnic groups to different parts of the Balkans. The measures applied until the empire's final days - ultimately leading to dreadful genocidal processes - primarily aimed to break the unity of the local population and prevent potential uprisings. As a fundamental characteristic of administrative development, Turkish families and clans were settled in areas affected by deportations to strengthen the presence of Islam and develop administration. However, despite the deportations and cleansings, the practice of Christianity and other religions was still tolerated within the territories affected by these actions, albeit with tax payments and restrictions. While administrative tools and official „conversion” processes were not typical, the Porte indirectly sought to exert pressure on homogeneous cultural-religious blocs to convert to Islam through the above means (IBID).

The oppression of Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians often led to further uprisings, to which Ottoman power automatically responded with violent reprisals, involving the destruction of villages and settlements and the massacre or expulsion of the population. Following the northern advance of the 15th and 16th centuries, Serbian tribes organized several uprisings against Ottoman rule. Despite the limited results of these actions, as a result of the uprisings, the administration often persecuted the Serbian population in the form of ethnic cleansing and collective punishment actions. In the early 19th century, the Greeks launched an armed uprising against the abuses of Ottoman rule: a Greek rebel militia group led by ALEXANDER YPSILANTES fought in the Peloponnese. Alongside this, on March 25 in Patras, it was announced that the revolution had begun. During the nearly decade-long conflict, which ended in 1831, atrocities that could be measured by the criteria of „cleansing,” massacres of Christian populations, which could even be interpreted as genocidal processes, and reprisals against Muslims were characteristic on both sides (JELAVICH, 2000. 41-48.).

During the uprisings carried out as part of the Bulgarian national movement, ethnic cleansings were also frequent, such as during the April uprising of 1876, when the Bulgarian population became victims of mass slaughter. Confrontational tensions characterized numerous other conflicts escalating concerning several other ethnic groups within the empire's territory: massive atrocities were committed against Armenians and Assyrians at various times in the Ottoman Empire – even before the Armenian and Assyrian genocides of the 20th century. These events were often related to the empire's internal and external challenges, attempts to maintain territorial integrity, and the strengthening of national sentiment. In the eyes of posterity, the administrative-military operations of the Porte were systematically characterized by ethnic cleansings and genocidal processes, which, even if indirectly, still have lasting consequences for the peoples living in the Empire's territories, significantly influencing the formation of national identity, the creation of nation-states, and subsequent ethnic and religious conflicts. The wounds caused by Ottoman rule still have an impact on the geopolitical and social relations of the Balkans and the Middle East in the highlighted cases in this study (McCarthy, 1995. 23-35.).

THE BALKAN WARS

The Balkan Wars, which took place between 1912 and 1913, consisted of two main conflicts. The First Balkan War began in October 1912 when the Balkan League – Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro – united against the Ottoman Empire. The Second Balkan War broke out in June 1913 between Bulgaria and its allies. In the First Balkan War, as part of the processes that redraw the political landscape of the entire region in the 20th century, the alliance of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro conquered many territories from the Ottoman Empire. Alongside these territorial acquisitions, the Turkish population also faced ethnic cleansing in many places. Attacks were launched on several Turkish villages and settlements, and a significant portion of the population fled or was expelled, resulting in a decrease in population and demographic changes in the region (Hall, 2000. 22-44.).

During the Second Balkan War, when Bulgaria lost some of the previously acquired territories, violent acts against the Bulgarian minority also occurred, especially in Serbia and Greece. This included mass executions, the systematic destruction of villages and settlements, and the expulsion or resettlement of the population. Extensive population exchanges took place during and after both wars, often organized by the newly empowered governments. The processes of resettlement were often accompanied by violent atrocities, and in many cases, the resettled people lost their homes, lands, and way of life. As a result of the Balkan Wars, the

ethnic map of the region changed significantly. New borders were drawn, ethnic groups came under the control of other states, often leading to further tensions and conflicts (THER, 2016. 59-63.).

In the First Balkan War, the Ottoman Turkish population faced the most severe ethnic cleansing, especially in areas occupied by Serbian and Bulgarian troops. For example, under the leadership of the Kingdom of Serbia, during the reign of KING PETAR I KARADORĐEVIĆ, Serbian troops committed significant atrocities against Turkish civilians, touching on genocidal processes. Similar actions were committed under the rule of FERDINAND I, Bulgarian tsar. As a result of the war, hundreds of thousands of Turks were displaced from their homes, radically altering the ethnic composition of the Balkans. The majority of refugees migrated to safer areas of the Ottoman Empire, such as Anatolia (BLOXHAM, 2008. 333-339.).

During the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria, trying to defend the territories acquired during the first war, found itself against its former allies. In Serbia and Greece, further atrocities against the Bulgarian minorities occurred, committed by Serbian royal troops and the Greek army. These atrocities included the destruction of Bulgarian villages, the execution and expulsion of civilians. Numerous population exchanges took place during and after the second war, organized by the political leaders of nation-states, such as NIKOLA PAŠIĆ, the leader of Serbia, and ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS, the Prime Minister of Greece. The purpose of these measures was to increase the ethnic homogeneity of nation-states. After the wars, newly formed states, such as Albania, faced new challenges in managing ethnic diversity. The conflicts had long-term effects on the region, foreshadowing the ethnic tensions and conflicts experienced during and after the First World War. The ethnic cleansing and resettlements caused by the Balkan Wars not only changed the lives of the victims and survivors but also had long-term geopolitical and social consequences, the effects of which are still felt in the region today (DONEY, 2017. 205-218.).

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND ETHNIC CLEANSING

During the Second World War, the diverse ethnic structure and political landscape of the Balkans were deeply affected by the brutal reality of the war and the ethnic cleansing carried out by Nazi Germany and its allies. During the war, battles raged on multiple fronts in the region, and among these, ethnic conflicts played a prominent role. Among the most serious atrocities were those committed by extreme Croatian ethnic groups (THER, 2001, 4-8.).

On April 10, 1941, under the leadership of ANTE PAVELIĆ, the Independent State of Croatia was established, which closely collaborated with Nazi Germany. The Ustasa, as an extreme nationalist and fascist movement under the leadership

of ANTE PAVELIĆ, carried out brutal ethnic cleansing, primarily targeting Jewish communities, Roma, and Serbs. The Jasenovac concentration camp was one of the most infamous sites where these genocidal processes took place. Estimates suggest that between 80 and 100 thousand people, including a large number of Serbs, Jews, and Roma, fell victim to the cruelty of the Ustasa. The Nazi killing machine deported and exterminated hundreds of Jews and Roma in various areas of the Balkans, including Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria. Nazi forces and local collaborators, including the Greek Security Battalions, participated in the deportation and killing of Jews and Roma.

PARTISAN MOVEMENTS AND ETHNIC RETALIATIONS

Yugoslav partisans, led by JOSIP BROZ TITO from the summer of 1941, showed significant resistance during the Nazi occupation period, not only fighting against Nazi and fascist forces but also, in many cases, carrying out ethnic-based retaliations, especially in areas where ethnic tensions existed before the war. The ethnic-based retaliations carried out by partisans mostly occurred in the final stages of the war when the resistance gradually regained control over occupied territories. These retaliations often targeted war criminals, collaborators, and other ethnic groups accused by the partisans of collaborating with hostile forces (CROWE, 2014. 147-148).

After the Second World War, the ethnic and political map of the Balkans underwent significant changes. Following the victory of Yugoslav partisans under TITO's leadership, a new socialist Yugoslavia was established, attempting to address the ethnic tensions and conflicts accumulated during the war. However, the ethnic cleansing and atrocities committed during the war left deep scars in the region, the effects of which are still felt to this day.

ETHNIC CLEANSING PROCESSES EMERGING FROM THE BALKAN CONFLICTS AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The series of Yugoslav Wars was one of the most tragic and complex conflict series at the end of the 20th century. The wars, triggered by ethnic-national reasons, broke out after the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The conflicts that took place from 1991 to 1999 primarily affected the processes resulting in present-day Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. With the support of the Croatian National Guard, FRANJO TUĐMAN declared Croatia's independence on June 25, 1991. Following the declaration of independence, fighting began between the Yugoslav People's Army and Serbian militias, accompanied by ethnic cleansing and atrocities on both sides. One of the bloodiest events in the complex conflict was the siege of Vukovar in November 1991, where the Yugoslav People's Army and

local Serbian paramilitary forces claimed numerous civilian victims (Ther, 2016. 211-239.).

The Bosnian War began on April 6, 1992, when Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence. Led by RADOVAN KARADŽIĆ, president of the Bosnian Serb Republic, and GENERAL RATKO MLADIĆ, Bosnian Serb forces carried out numerous ethnic cleansings and genocides on territories inhabited by Bosnian Muslims and Croats. As a consequence of escalating ethnic conflicts at the local, village-community levels, the Serbian-Muslim conflict culminated in the massacre in Srebrenica on July 11, 1995, which was one of the climaxes of the genocide process. Under the leadership of RATKO MLADIĆ, approximately 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were killed, resulting in the largest mass murder in Europe since the Second World War (HORVITZ-CATHERWOOD, 2006. 49-50.).

The Kosovo War began in February 1998 when the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) intensified its armed struggle against Yugoslav rule. SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ, the president of Yugoslavia, responded with significant military force, accompanied by ethnic cleansing and violence against the civilian population. NATO intervened in the conflict with airstrikes beginning on March 24, 1999, aimed at pushing back Yugoslav military forces and protecting Kosovo Albanians. Numerous local atrocities affected the civilian population during the conflict. Following the Yugoslav Wars, the political map of the region fundamentally changed, and the international community sought to restore peace and stability (IBID. 270-271.).

4. MANN-MATRIX: TYPES OF VIOLENCE AND CLEANSING IN INTERGROUP RELATIONS

MICHAEL MANN first in 2004 published, complex violence-analysis concept comprehensively interprets the „ethnic cleansing” concept latter more than a, „violence-conceived, born and experienced” century humaneness against committed violent events different types – and the genocidal processes in relation. The ethnic cleansing (purge) presence the MANN-concept according to integrated phenomenon the ethnic nature conflict system: minority ethnic group and majority group, power or hostile administration context even violence without, „voluntary submission” through even complete cultural assimilation until (MANN, 2005. 12.).

		Types of Cleansing		
	Types of Violence	NONE	PARTIAL	TOTAL
1	NONE	a, Multiculturalism / toleration; Consociational / Confederalism	b, Partial abandoning of identity, e.g., through voluntary official language adoption	Voluntary assimilation
2	Institutional coercion	Discrimination	a, Official language restrictions; Segregation	Cultural suppression
3	Policed repression	Selective policed repression	a, Policed partial repression of out- group's language and culture; b, Policed out-group settlement / displacement	a, Policed total suppression of out- group's language and culture; b, Population exchanges; c, Policed deportations and pressured emigration
4	Violent repression	Generalized policed repression	a, Pogromok, közösségi lázadások, nemi erőszak bizonyos formái; b, Erőszakos kitelepítések, erőszakos áttelepítések	a, Wild deportation and emigration; b, Biological sterilization, forced marriage, some forms of rape
5	Unpremediated mass deaths	Mistaken war, civil war and revolutionary projects, fratricide	Callous war, civil war and revolutionary projects	Ethnocide
6	Premeditated mass killing	Exemplary and civil war repression, systematic reprisals	a, Forced conversion; b, Politicide; c, Classicide	Genocide

1. Table: *Types of Violence and Cleansing in Intergroup Relations by MANN*

The types of violent events among, the violence intensity corresponding in ascending order six, ethnic cleansing interpretation designated steps, „level” distinguishes: „No” violence event level from (1.) the „institutional coercion” (2.), „paramilitary oppression” (3.), „violent suppression” (4.), and the genocidal processes escalated phases related, murders accompanied by „previously uncoordinated, mass killings” (5.) and „previously coordinated, mass killings” (6.) levels up to. The individual levels interpretation to the purges three levels distinguishes: „no cleansing”, „partial cleansing” and „full cleansing” forms in. The „rows” and „columns” juxtaposition a complex, depth and dimensions also new interpretation and analysis framework ensures matrix comes into being – whose applicability the Balkan conflicts some purges in respect of attempt interpret (IBID, 10-12.).

The individual analysis possibilities „line by line” examining the violence-level escalating order applied the traditional sense understood violence-events without ethnic cleansing interpretation possibilities real facts based on. The MANN-table column such cases contains, where ethnic groups violence without weaken or disappear. The „cleansing” itself thus „clarification as”, the individual groups consent come into being.

Such consent-types primarily in Western European ethnic homogenizations later stages characterized: up until the early 20th century in France or Great Britain barely had to use force the power to the minority languages eradication. The minorities „peacefully” accepted that their own regional language, for example the Breton the Welsh so-called „obsolete status” became. The 20th century immigration process in for example the North American states immigrants majority similarly voluntarily learned-are learning the English language. Particular assimilation

externality then, that the second-third generations children no longer learn the „ancestors” language, culture and the new, their ancestors chosen nation integrated members became-become. Descendants in such case a kind emotional level preserve their ancestors cultural treasures. The voluntary assimilation „clean” society result, not the dominant group hostile acts by, but positive incentives, own motivation result (CROWE, 2014. 52.).

The Balkan ethnic map in respect this level not so distinct and unique, like the homogeneous „neocultures”, or the peaceful nation-state development gone through, Western European countries stabilized ethnicities in relation experienced status. Typically the urban Jewry assimilation similarly happened the Balkans new nation-states in – all the way until the German Nazi terror appearance – like Eastern Europe other areas in. Stabilized religious and ethnic level characterizes the Ottoman influence Islamized, previously Christian tribes, clans cultural rooting – this an outstanding example the Bosniak Muslim communities stable., self-identical inculturation. This type voluntariness a peculiar level in the „ethnic cleansings” dimension, MANN according to essentially the „cleansing” word on this level exaggerated characterized can be considered.

The 2nd row analyzes the first level of direct violence: institutional coercion. With the likely application of discrimination, this is probably the most common political activity in the world of ethnic cleansing. This level distinctly limits the rights of a minority group, while allowing them to preserve their ethnic identity. Discrimination typically involves the spread of negative cultural stereotypes, offensive interpersonal behavior, and police harassment. Measured on this scale, several European countries discriminate against ethnic minorities. A typical example is the discrimination against blacks overseas in the 20th century – and the related phenomenon of the civil rights movement.

Severe discrimination can limit rights to education, voting, participation in public affairs, or property ownership. The dominant group may force minority groups to use their language in education – a typical example is the 2017 Ukrainian educational decree. Segregation and cultural cleansing can only occur at this level with the coercive activity of the ruling administration. Public institutions suppress the culture of minorities, forcibly assimilating their identity into the dominant group. The group’s language may be banned from schools or offices, their religion may be banned, and their characteristic surnames may be legally changed.

In the 3rd row, physical violence appears, primarily referring to the emergence of police-paramilitary atrocities. This level of cleansing in Western civilization can primarily apply to political protesters – thus related to the circles of analysis of the processes of politicide. In these processes, the oppressive attitude is consolidated compared to later, mass killing phases, laws are enforced with routine, legitimate

means, which generally involve some limited physical violence as well. In terms of the third column, complete cultural suppression, population exchange, police deportations, and directed emigrations, state-directed purges occur. This level can be interpreted in relation to the tensions between ethnicities in post-Yugoslav successor states – primarily the escalation of tensions between ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the establishment of the first, religious-ethnic „security zones”, i.e., ghettos and future concentration camps, and the resettlements there (see: ROHDE, 1997. 37-38).

The 4th row represents the first threatening level of escalation of physical violence. In the first column, this remains routine and orderly. General police atrocities target political extremists, protesters, potential insurgents, or terrorist groups – here, occasional fatalities may occur. If this becomes routine, the administration often deploys special paramilitary forces. This is a direct path to the escalation of genocidal processes – as seen in the ethnic conflicts in Kosovo (see: MAHMUTI, 2015. 207-2010).

The escalating systemic power aggression, possible pogroms generally trigger ethnic movements, massive emigrations. Deportations and state-directed emigrations, spontaneous ethnic movements, migrant activities result – the masses migrating during the wars in the former Yugoslavia are the indicators of this level. The escalation of power aggression leads to the emergence of directed marriage or sexual policies: violent sterilizations or sexual violence as manifestations of power aggression (THER, 2016. 211-220).

The framework of interpretation in the 5th row aids in analyzing the level of ethnic cleansing causing mass deaths. In the first column, spontaneous political errors result in degenerate violence, often forcing ethnic groups into working conditions that cause mass deaths. As an example of partially cleansing-driven, „spontaneous” ethnic cleansing leading to bloody events, we can mention partisan actions during the events of the Second World War. Openly ethnic cleansing-driven, but uncoordinated events, as examples of this, MANN mentions ethnocide. As one stage, „type”, of genocidal processes, ethnocide is one of the darkest human crimes involving mass loss of life. Through the means of execution, it is often difficult to decide: behind individual acts of violence, whether there is state coordination or other motivations. Thus, the first shots often „fire” from personal motives in a tense civil war situation, political protests, etc. – but this does not diminish the severity of the loss of life. Bosnian Serbs were responsible for the loss of life of many local Muslim men on several fronts – as evidenced by the mass graves since uncovered. Witnesses remained in only a few cases to prove whether the initial shots were systematic or whether there were other direct motives behind them (MANN, 2005. 15-16.).

The 6th row of the table facilitates the interpretation of the level of previously coordinated, mass killings, representing the most severe tragedies committed against humanity and in war. If there is no ethnic cleansing behind the perpetrators' motivation, we can speak of acts of war committed against entire nation-states, terrorist acts with brutal efficiency, or devastating, out-of-control civil war devastations. This type of violence primarily characterizes the Balkan region in the context of actions causing mass deaths carried out within the framework of war processes – such as bombings, blockades against major cities of former Yugoslavia, and sieges.

Partial cleansing, coordinated murder can only be distinguished from the implementation of violence campaigns targeting complete cleansing scenarios by very thin professional threads: this is the dimension of the culmination of genocide processes. MANN's assessment makes a faint distinction between ethnocide and violence acts that he clearly qualifies as genocide: in the case of ethnocide, it leaves room for the „spontaneity” of killings, that is, if the systematic nature of mass killings cannot be proven, but if a process of physical elimination of an ethnicity is taking place in all aspects, it may show a „milder” evaluation level on the violence scale. In this regard, as a critical remark, I would not make a difference in the degree of violence – because ethnocide is essentially one form of realizing genocide – the massacres committed against Bosnian Muslims, the Srebrenica tragedy can essentially be classified as ethnocide – although numerous condemnatory judgments have been made in this process with the legal designation of genocide crimes (KRAMMER, 2010. 71-76.).

5. SUMMARY: THE PLACE OF THE CONCEPT OF „CLEANSING” IN THE INTERPRETATIVE FIELD OF GENOCIDE PROCESSES

The Balkan Peninsula, being home to a multitude of ethnicities, still represents a powder keg in terms of ethnic conflicts. As it later turned out: based on a flawed concept, as part of the small-Antant plan executed side by side – and in many cases within each other's cultural, religious, and economic zones, different groups were assigned cohesion for the grand Yugoslav concept. Although for the greater part of the last half-century the Balkans were ruled as a single political unit, intending to further increase its original territorial unity, utilizing late-antique power and (at the time) modern religious factors, by the Ottoman Porte, the diversity of local ethnicities remained unbroken even during persecutions, assimilated into one – and even their present national borders were outlined around this time. The Ottoman administration consistently opposed any process aimed at self-determination: therefore, the MANN-scale is relevant in terms of ethnic cleansing during the era. From the Balkan wars to the conflicts arising from migration still experienced

today, the scale system assists in describing and analyzing every type. In any case, it makes the operation dimensions of the level of violence and the deliberate intent, professionalism of the oppressive power attitude spectacular (see: MANN, 2005. 18.).

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